

La Center Comprehensive Plan 2016-2035

City of La Center
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Introduction

Who We Are

The City of La Center is located in southwest Washington approximately 20 miles north of the Vancouver/Portland metropolitan area. Although La Center is only a 20-minute drive from the regional employment centers, attractions, and services of the major metropolitan area, it enjoys the feel of a small-town community.

La Center rises from the north bank of the East Fork of the Lewis River, where the town had its beginnings, upward through the old town area towards the hilltops overlooking the river and surrounding mountains. From the hills and plateaus above the river, residents and visitors enjoy sweeping views of the river, the Cascade foothills, and major volcanic peaks. There is a sense of open vistas here not found in other river towns.

As it enters town, the East Fork slows from its earlier cascade and forms a broad river basin known as the La Center Bottoms that includes a wildlife sanctuary teeming with aquatic birds and animals. A challenge for the community is to preserve the bottomlands and to help restore the water quality of the river, a critical habitat for birds, sea-running fish and other aquatic species.



Community Vision

La Center citizens take great pride in the small town atmosphere. Future residents should have the opportunity to know their neighbors and to be able to safely walk to each other's houses, or to parks, schools, or commercial stores. Sidewalks, trails, paths, and the river, as well as safe and good quality streets should tie the city together.

La Center will continue to strive to meet the housing needs of all residents in all age and economic levels. The community recognizes that there is a need for a variety of housing types and will strive to satisfy the need for a variety of housing lifestyles and family patterns ranging from low density dwellings to medium density dwellings and

group care facilities. East of the river housing lot patterns will be smaller and more urban. South of La Center Road, the recently annexed area will support larger lot development in the short term.

In the year 2036 La Center residents will enjoy a greater degree of economic independence than exists today. La Center will have a small, but active downtown commercial node with increased opportunities for dining, shopping for goods and services, or simply strolling and visiting with others. A few new neighborhood commercial areas might serve the needs of an expanding population and residential area. Home offices may become more prevalent, particularly in the old town area. The entertainment and casino industry may continue to play a large role in

La Center's economic future. Development of the Timmen Road mixed-use area will provide a new base for job opportunities for La Center residents and create a visual gateway into the city.

The La Center I-5 Interchange will become the economic and visual gateway to the community. The Cowlitz Tribe Reservation is developing 156 acres west of the I-5 interchange; the city worked with the Tribe to ensure responsible growth will occur at the interchange. The creation of a large casino complex has had significant impacts on the I-5 Interchange. The Cowlitz Tribe and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) constructed a new Interchange, including roundabout intersections and surface roads on either side of the Interchange. The development of the Tribal Casino also has had significant impacts on La Center services and facilities including utilities, housing demand, schools, city roads, and the La Center economy. Clark Public Utilities recently enhanced electrical power and potable water capacity at the Junction.

The city's capital facilities plans are updated to handle anticipated future burdens on La Center capital facilities and services, such as, roads, sanitary sewer, and parks. However, if future city revenues are not capable of meeting projected city and county land use goals, consistent with state law, the city will evaluate alternative land use strategies including, expansion of the UGA, rezoning property, and reducing capital expenditures.

In the year 2036 La Center will continue to strive to live in harmony with its unique natural setting. Critical lands and valued natural resources should be protected where the law requires or the community desires protection. Family-oriented recreational opportunities will be created and adequately maintained, such as trails, developed parks, open space buffers, and access to the East Fork of the Lewis River. With proper planning and hard work by the whole community, in the year 2036, our 7,642 residents will be proud to call La Center home.



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

This document is the Comprehensive Plan for the City of La Center. It contains the community's vision and goals for how land use and development should occur in the future. The policies contained within the Comprehensive Plan are the controlling document for guiding land use decisions. RCW 36.70A.

The Comprehensive Plan contains descriptions and analysis of what is happening in La Center today, as well as maps, policies, and recommendations for La Center's future. The focus of the La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan) is on land use and related issues. The Comprehensive Plan, along with the city's Capital Facilities Plan (CFP), addresses basic questions, such as how large the city should be, what types of development should be situated in different parts of the city, and what types of roads, utilities, and other public facilities and services are needed to serve development within and around the city.

The comprehensive plan is implemented by the City's other plans and its municipal code which ensure that growth occurs in a responsible manner and public facilities are provided concurrent with development. Supporting plans and regulations include:

- The Development Code (LCMC Title 18) establishes residential, commercial, open space, and industrial zones with a hierarchy of permitted uses and regulates the design of sites and buildings and protects critical areas. The I-5 Junction Subarea Plan creates a roadmap for current infrastructure needs, potential development, and economic opportunities at the interchange and is codified in LCMC Chapter 18.158
- The Shoreline Master Program (amended 2021): establishes goals, policies, and regulations for development of the City's shoreline jurisdiction located along the East Fork of the Lewis River.
- The La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines (May, 2005) includes design guidelines to be used in working with the development community to encourage and guide new downtown investment. The plan is implemented by the Downtown Overlay District in LCMC Chapter 18.155.

- The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (May, 2017) identifies goals, objectives existing conditions, and future recreational needs for La Center. Chapter 18.147 of the La Center Municipal Code requires that new development is consistent with and implements the plan.
- The Transportation Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) prepares La Center to accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic within its Urban Growth Area (UGA) by looking at the city's expected growth and travel trends over the next 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan outlines La Center's general goals to address these diverse infrastructure and mobility needs in one unified vision.

What's in the Comprehensive Plan?

Introduction and Vision, describes a 20 year vision for the community and describes how the Comprehensive Plan is structured and how it works.

Chapter 1, Land Use, describes the vision for land use and development of the built environment.

Chapter 2, Transportation, describes the vision for transportation and transportation facilities within La Center and its Urban Growth Area (UGA).

Chapter 3, Housing, describes what will be done to ensure that adequate housing will be available for all economic segments of the community.

Chapter 4, Capital Facilities and Utilities, describes how roads, water, sewer, parks, and other public facilities and services will be provided.

Chapter 5, Economic Development, describes what will be done to enhance job growth and retention.

Chapter 6, Parks, Recreation and Open Space, describes community-wide goals and standards for parks and recreation facilities.

Chapter 7, Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Preservation, describes the community goals for enhancing and marketing the historic, archaeological, and cultural assets found within La Center.

Chapter 8, Urban Growth and Annexation, guides growth of the City.

Chapter 9, Environment, describes how critical environmental resources will be protected.

Chapter 10, Government, establishes policies for open and effective land use administration, and describes how La Center will work cooperatively with other government agencies.

Why Plan Now?

La Center residents recognize growth will continue over the next 20 years, but at the same time, they are concerned with some of the impacts that growth may generate. Through the growth management planning process, the community developed a consensus about where growth should occur and what it should look like. Growth management is generally defined as the combined use of a wide range of techniques to determine the amount, type and rate of development the community desires and the mechanisms to channel that growth into designated areas.

Given the trends and changes coming to La Center, maintaining and/or enhancing our quality of life will require considerable foresight, ongoing cooperative and broad-based planning, consistent monitoring of the Comprehensive Plan implementation, and revisions to the plan where necessary. The results of the decisions the community makes or fails to make now will be with us for generations to come.

Through the planning process we have learned that most of us desire a high quality of life. That vision is comprised of:

- Healthy, safe and productive neighborhoods and communities;
- Friendly, cooperative and engaged residents who celebrate diverse backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures;
- A variety of housing options;
- A thriving, sustainable economy with private and public workplaces and business centers that act responsibly toward their employees and the communities that foster their success;
- Quality schools meeting the educational and training needs of all residents;
- Public and private institutions working in true partnership with the community to deliver high quality services; and
- Open, responsive and accountable local government that works to create a true sense of community within democratic processes on all levels.

What Geographic Area Does the Comprehensive Plan Cover?

The La Center Comprehensive Plan covers the present corporate limits of the City of La Center and the surrounding region in which the city is anticipated to grow in the next 20 years, the Urban Growth Area (UGA). The La Center UGA is under the planning jurisdiction of Clark County, and will remain so until the city annexes UGA land.

Because the Comprehensive Plan encompasses areas within both La Center and Clark County, both governmental bodies have collaborated to produce this Plan. The policies of the La Center Comprehensive Plan apply to lands inside city limits, and Clark County plans and policies apply to lands outside city limits. Similarly, the city will review land use applications inside the city limits, and Clark County will review land use applications within the UGA but outside the corporate limits of La Center.

Either jurisdiction will have the opportunity to comment on land use actions within the other's jurisdictional area.



Community Involvement Process

The La Center Comprehensive Plan is the result of a two-year process involving a series of workshops and hearings before the La Center Planning Commission, the La Center City Council, and the Clark County Board of Commissioners. The City sought and received input from citizens throughout the La Center area.

Goals and Policies

The La Center Comprehensive Plan includes the essential elements of an inventory of existing conditions and a forecast of future needs. Each chapter contains one or more goals and multiple policies designed to implement the goals. The Comprehensive Plan does not prioritize goals and it does not prioritize policies in support of a goal.

The GMA requires cities and counties to conduct public outreach to ensure “early and continuous public participation” when developing and amending comprehensive plans and development regulations (RCW 36.70A.140). The GMA also requires that local programs clearly identify schedules and procedures for public participation in the periodic update process (RCW 36.70.A.130(2)(a)). At the beginning of the Comprehensive Plan update process the Planning Commission developed a Public Participation Plan (PPP) to ensure early and continuous opportunities for the public to engage in the plan review and amendment process. The city sent a draft of the PPP to the Washington Department of Commerce 60 days prior to Council final action on the participation plan.

The Goals of the Public Participation Plan were to:

1. Ensure broad participation by identifying key interest groups, soliciting input from the public at large, and responding to the issues raised.
2. Maintain effective communication and coordination.
3. Focus resources on issues most likely to be of interest to the public.
4. Distribute information and public notices early and efficiently.

The Scope of Work for the PPP was divided into three (3) phases of activity:

Phase I: Review Comprehensive Plan and Development Code for compliance with state law; identify plan areas to be amended; scope the breadth of the update publicly.

Phase II: Address the issues identified in Phase I.

Phase III: Conduct public hearings and take legislative action.

The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on the PPP and sent the recommended PPP to the City Council in April 2014. The City Council reviewed the Planning Commission’s recommendations and adopted the PPP after conducting an independent public hearing in June 2014. (See Appendix A – Public Participation Plan)

Elements of the Public Participation Program included:

- Posting meeting notices online, in print, and by mail for all Planning Commission and City Council meetings and hearings.
- Posting all planning documents related to the update on the city web pages

- Using of interactive and mailed community surveys related to the economy, housing and parks.
- Using the city reader board to announce meetings.
- Maintaining an email distribution list and database to disseminate public information and notices of meetings.
- Conducting an Open House to solicit public feedback.
- Maintaining active coordination with Clark County in terms of topics and timelines.

Public Participation Policies

The City of La Center values citizen participation in all aspects of the land use process, including the comprehensive plan, development regulations, sub-area plans, and development review. The city's public involvement plan is based on several policies.

Policies

- PP.1** Public Opportunity. Provide opportunities for meaningful public comment during the long-range planning process including, work sessions, special meetings, and public hearings.
- PP.2** Communications. Provide public notice of workshops, meetings, special meetings and hearings through a variety of communication venues, including, newspaper of record, reader board, email lists, city website, mailings, and/or other electronic means available to the City.
- PP.3** General Information. Strive to keep its website current to the best of its ability.
- The website will include current information about long range planning activity at the Planning Commission and City Council level, public hearings, pending development review, a calendar of upcoming events and meetings, and may use the website for interactive surveys and feedback.
- PP.4** Consideration and Response. Compile responses to surveys and polls and to general questions or comments and will post them on the website at regular intervals.
- PP.5** Adaptability. Proactively adopt new means and forums for communication and will actively seek public advice on how to best communicate.
- PP.6** Electronic Media. Allocate resources, as available, to assist in providing information to the public via electronic media including the city's web site.

I Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan provides overall direction but it intentionally lacks many of the finer details. Other plans and documents, such as the La Center Municipal Code (LCMC) and the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP), which provide greater detail, must be consistent with and implement the Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Use chapter guides how land will be developed in La Center during the next 20 years; establishing the urban pattern for the city by directing the location of residential, commercial, and industrial growth. The goal of the Land Use chapter is to ensure that as growth occurs the new and existing uses are compatible, that together the new and the old create attractive neighborhoods and vibrant commercial areas.

If future land uses are well planned, provision of capital facilities will be more cost effective. Central to the land use chapter and the comprehensive plan as a whole is the comprehensive plan map, which establishes a policy framework for regulating the locations and intensities of future land uses. (Figure 1). The city's municipal code and other development regulations must be consistent with the comprehensive plan map, the accompanying narrative contained within this land use chapter, and the other comprehensive plan chapters.

Population and Demographics¹

La Center adopted its first Growth Management Act comprehensive plan in 1994. At that time the population of the city was 759 persons. In April 2015 the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that the population of the city was 3,100 persons. From 1994 through 2015 the city's population increased four-fold. Between 2004 and 2014 the Washington Office of Financial Management reported that La Center witnessed annual growth rates as low as 1% and as high as 10%. The average growth rate over



¹ Data sources consulted include: www.data.wa.gov; www.ofm.wa.gov; www.census.gov; and www.factfinder.census.gov.

the ten-year period was 4.3%. The city anticipates that the population will double over the next 20 years to 7,642.

In 2014 the La Center population mix was roughly 51% female and 49% male. Approximately 46% of the population was between the ages of 20 to 54. Approximately 9.3% of the population is age 65 or older. The median age is 35.3 years.

In 2010 there were 942 households in La Center and 2.97 persons on average per household. Clark County and all jurisdictions in the county use 2.66 persons per household as a basic planning assumption for forecasting new growth. The county average reflects the lower number of persons per household in the Vancouver area and the higher number of persons per household in northern and rural Clark County. The La Center UGA is sized using the 2.66 persons per household.

Employment data is difficult to obtain for the city of La Center because of its smaller population total. The employment data provided in the Comprehensive Plan was gleaned from US Census data, Clark County sources and city records. In 2014 there were 1,366 people in La Center in the regional workforce.² However, La Center accounted for only 825 of those jobs.

Approximately ninety percent (89.8%) of those employed drive to work with a mean travel time of 28 minutes. Sixty seven percent (67%) are employed in the private sector, 27% are employed in government sector (of which 27% are employed by schools, health care or social services) and only 7% are self-employed.²

The underlying population and employment projections are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 – Population & Employment Projection

Year	Projected Population	Projected Households (2.66p/hh)	Projected Employment	Projected Jobs/Household
2010	2,800**	942**	800+	0.85
2015	3,100*	1,166	825+	0.71
2036	7,642***	2,659	2,876***	0.92

+ Estimated

* Washington State Office of Financial Management intercensal estimate, April 1, 2015

** 2010 US Census Data – actual

*** Clark County Projection, March 2016

Description of Land Use Designations / Overlays

The La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan has four basic land use designations:

- Urban Residential,
- Commercial/Mixed Use,

²www.factfinder.census.gov

- Industrial, and
- Public Facilities/Open Space.

These designations correspond to and guide the application of more discrete zoning districts detailed within the La Center Municipal Code. For example, if the Comprehensive Plan Designation is 'Urban Residential' the two zones which implement the plan designation include Low Density Residential (LDR) and Medium Density Residential (MDR). In the Commercial/Mixed Use (C/MX) plan designation there are four types of commercial and mixed-use zones to implement that Plan designation: C-1, C-3, MX, Residential Professional (R/P), and the Junction Plan (JP) Zoning District. Urban Public zones, for example schools and parks, are allowed in all Plan designation areas.

Changing zones within a plan designation, for example from LDR to MDR, requires a zone change. Changing from one plan designation to another, for example, C/MX to UR, requires a comprehensive plan amendment. The city, by law, may only amend the comprehensive plan once a year and must consider all proposed plan amendments concurrently. Zone changes may be requested at any time. Table 2 lists the allowable zoning districts within each of the land use designations.

Table 2 – Comprehensive Plan Designation and Overlay Districts

Plan Designation	Urban Residential (UR)	Commercial Mixed Use (C/MX)	Industrial (I)	Public Facilities/ Open Space (PF/OS)
Implementing Zone	Low Density (LDR-7.5) Medium Density (MDR-16)	Commercial (C1, C3) Mixed Use (MX) Residential Professional (RP) Junction Plan Zoning District (JP)	Employment Campus (EC) Light Industrial (LI) Junction Plan Zoning District (JP)	Urban Public (UP) Parks & Open Space (P/OS)
LDR-7.5				
MDR-16				
C-1				
C-3				
RP				
MX				
EC				
LI				
JP				
P/OS				
UP				
UH-10				

Urban Residential

All residential lands have an Urban Residential (UR) Comprehensive Plan Designation. The Urban Residential designation includes two implementing zones: Low Density Residential (LDR-7.5) and Medium Density Residential (MDR-16).

The designation allows for a broad range of residential living including attached and detached units, duplexes, apartments, cottage housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and other low and medium density residential developments. The designation assures residential developments maximize public services and that medium density housing will be located near employment centers, schools, and transportation facilities.

If modifying a zone from low density to medium density, or vice versa, the process requires a zone amendment rather than a comprehensive plan amendment.

Commercial/Mixed Use (C/MX)

All commercial lands have a C/MX Comprehensive Plan Designation. Zoning districts which implement this designation include Commercial 1 & 3; (R/P), Mixed Use, and the JP Zoning District. Changing from one zone to another within the C/MX plan designation requires a zone change rather than a plan amendment.

The C/MX designation provides land for small to medium-scale commercial retail and services, offices, and residential uses compatible with the existing character of downtown as implemented by the C-1 and R/P zones. The designation also provides for mixed use development opportunities at the junction that will diversify La Center's commercial, residential, and office economy where compatible commercial office, and medium density residential uses can locate in close proximity including in the same buildings. The Cardroom Commercial (C-3) zoning overlay is only applied to land within downtown and is intended to control the location and expansion of cardrooms. The C/MX designation also allows for horizontal mixed use development south of the Timmen Road and La Center Road junction.

The C/MX designation strongly discourages strip commercial development. Strip commercial developments attract excessive vehicular traffic which greatly reduces the traffic capacity of the abutting publicly funded streets while increasing the potential for traffic accidents. The linear nature of these developments, the number of driveways crossing sidewalks, and the lack of alternative cross-traffic, or pedestrian circulation, make these areas convenient and accessible solely to automobile traffic.

Industrial

The primary goal of the industrial designation is to promote more intensive job-related land uses that pay higher wages, such as professional offices, and research and technology related industries located in a campus-like setting. These areas may also be

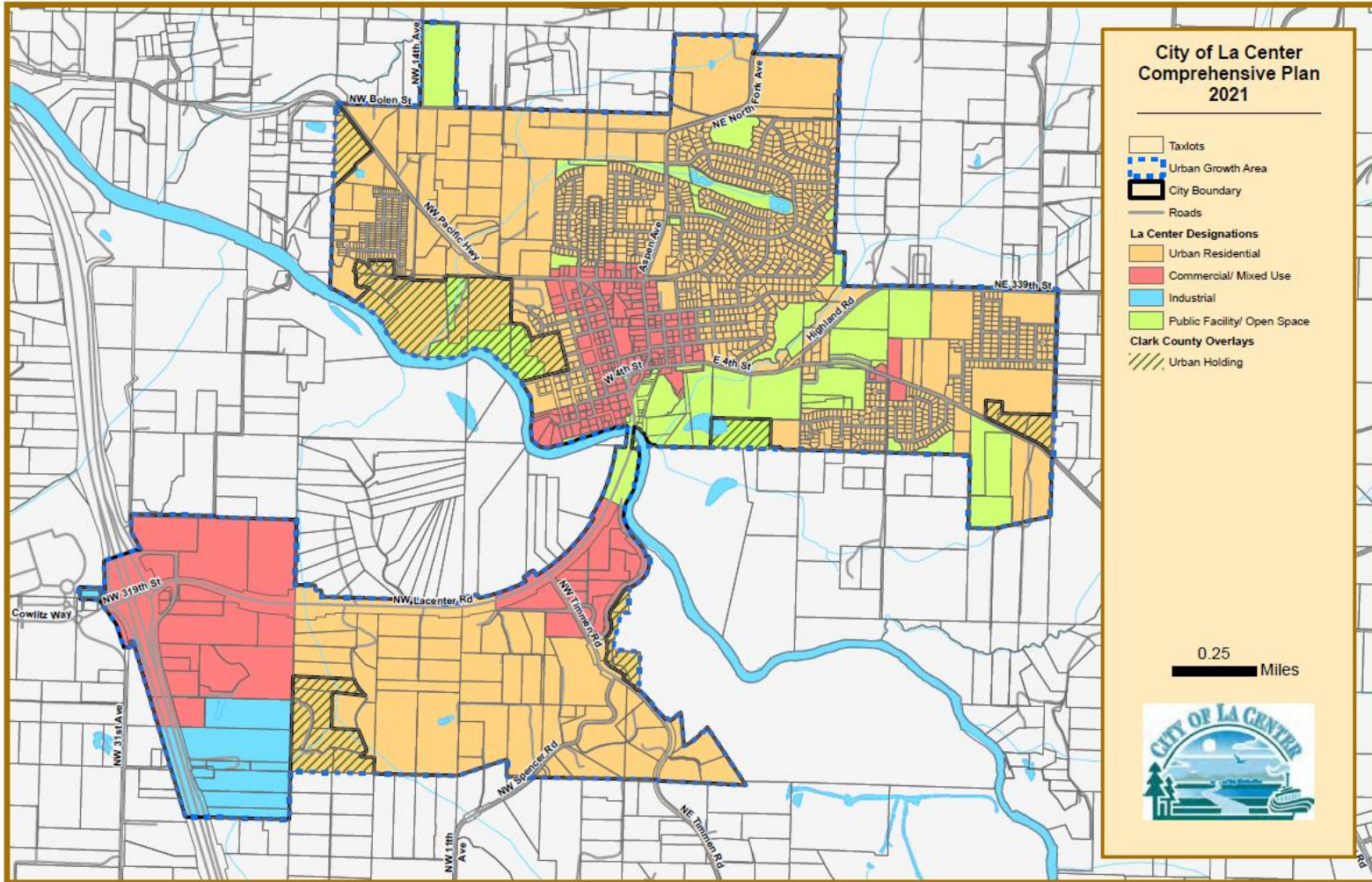
targeted by special public and/or private incentive programs that provide up front public service improvements or other inducements to attract family-wage employment where higher job densities are encouraged. These areas are specifically intended by local government and private sector job development organizations for special incentives to attract large scale businesses including public improvements, tax incentives, expedited development review or other considerations. Changes between zones within the industrial plan designation require a zone change, not a comprehensive plan amendment.

Consistent with these goals, the Industrial plan designation allows for light industrial and business park developments as implemented by the Junction Plan zoning district. This designation promotes light manufacturing and limited services that support industrial uses. The designation also supports job-related land uses that pay higher wages, such as professional offices and research and technology related industries. Industrial lands are located in areas of compatible land uses and in areas with arterial access to the regional transportation network.

Public Facilities /Open Space

This designation provides for public park and open spaces to serve the recreational needs of the community and land for public facilities such as schools, community centers, and government buildings, and public and private utility uses including water towers and sewer treatment plants. The implementing zones are the Parks and Open Spaces (P/OS) and Urban Public District (UP).

Map 1 – La Center Comprehensive Plan Map



Land Use Planning Assumptions

La Center is an 'Urban' area, as defined by the Growth Management Act. Because County and city plans must be consistent with each other La Center planning assumptions mirror Clark County's 'Urban' planning assumptions. Because La Center does not have planning jurisdiction over 'Rural' lands, it does not adopt Clark County's 'Rural' planning assumptions. Table 3 identifies the planning assumptions underlying the La Center Comprehensive Plan.

Table 3 – La Center Planning Assumptions and Targets

	2016
12/31/15 Population	3,163
20-Year Population Projection	7,642
Planned Population Growth (new)	4,433
Assumed Annual Population Growth Rate	1.12%
Minimum Density Target Overall	4 units per net acre
Housing Type Ratio	75% low density, 25% medium density
Persons per Household	2.66
2015 Jobs	825
New Jobs	2,051
Industrial Jobs	9 per acre
Commercial Jobs	10 per acre
Jobs to Household	1:0.92
Infrastructure Deduction (Residential)	27.7%
Non-residential Infrastructure Deduction	25%
VBLM (definition of vacant)	\$13,000 residential, \$67,500 commercial & industrial
Market Factor	15% residential, 15% commercial, business park, industrial

Vacant Buildable Lands

Clark County produces an assessment of vacant buildable lands (VBL) county-wide and for each city and urban growth area. Table 4 represents the available vacant and buildable land within the 2016 La Center Urban Growth Boundary. The La Center VBL is based upon 4 units per net acre overall.

Table 4 – 2015 Vacant Buildable Lands Model – La Center

Residential	Gross Acres	Will not convert Acres	Infrastructure Acres	Net Developable Acres	Housing units	Persons
	888	373.1	142.2	373.2	1492	3971.3
Commercial	Gross Acres	Will not convert Acres	Infrastructure Acres	Net Developable Acres	Jobs	
	63.6	4.6	14.7	44.3	884.4	
Industrial	Gross Acres	Will not convert Acres	Infrastructure Acres	Net Developable Acres	Jobs	
	84.4	19.3	16.3	48.8	439.6	

The city projects a population growth of 4,433 new persons and the County VBL model projects only enough capacity to accommodate 3,971 new persons. The city anticipates that these additional 462 people can be accommodated by a combination of up-zoning land from low density to medium density and by allocating some of the population to the Mixed Use and (R/P) zoning districts both of which allow up to 16 units per net acre. These steps will help ensure that the city has an adequate supply of residential land and ample housing importunities. See page 38 for discussion of VBL allocation of population to low density, medium density, mixed use and residential professional areas.

The County projects that La Center will see a net increase of 2,051 new jobs and the VBL projects that the city has capacity to accommodate only 1,324 new jobs. The city anticipates that the additional 727 new jobs can be accommodated by a combination of adding 56.55 gross acres of land to the Urban Growth Area at the La Center Junction and by allocating additional jobs to the Mixed Use and R/P zoning districts.

The vacant buildable land in the (R/P)zone has the potential to accommodate 38 new low density units, 98 medium density units and 190 new commercial jobs. The addition of 56.55 gross acres of employment land at the La Center Junction has the potential to accommodate 350 industrial jobs or 850 commercial jobs.

Land Use Goal

La Center shall provide an adequate supply of land zoned for commercial, industrial, residential and other purposes to meet the needs of the community for the next 20 years.

Land Use Policies

General Development

- 1.1.1. Construct commercial, industrial, residential and other developments in a manner which generally fosters community identity and continuity, through the use of materials, architectural design, or other means consistent with La Center's heritage and character.
- 1.1.2. Locate and construct commercial, industrial, residential and other development in a manner which allows for and facilitates travel to and between other uses in the city, through automobile, bicycle or pedestrian means.
- 1.1.3. Plan for development within the city limits of La Center to occur in a logical manner which allows for orderly and efficient provision of roads, sewer and water, and other services.
- 1.1.4. Require development to make provisions for adequate road dedication and improvements, sewer and water improvements, and other capital improvements as needed to directly serve such development.
- 1.1.5. Consider standards or guidelines to foster greater compatibility in cases where adjacent uses differ. Standards might include beveling lot size, building scale, landscape buffers, or public trails or parks, and other effective means to create separation between uses.
- 1.1.6. Adopt mandatory impact fees, to be collected consistent with state statute in an amount proportionate to the capital services and facilities required by those developments. Funds collected through impact fees shall be allocated towards the cost of providing such capital services and facilities.
- 1.1.7. Base land use designations on City and County comprehensive land inventories which shall consider the need for land used for public purposes, such as, utilities, transportation corridors, sanitary treatment facilities, stormwater management facilities, recreational areas, schools, open space, wildlife habitat and critical areas, and other public purposes the City deems important to the health, safety and welfare of the community.
- 1.1.8. During Clark County's vacant buildable lands and periodic Growth Management update, the City shall consider and provide input to the County

on population and employment projections, land capacity analysis, and comprehensive plan map designations.

- 1.1.9.** Partner with Clark County and the city of Ridgefield to define the scope of an open space corridor between the two cities.
- 1.1.10.** Coordinate with local agencies to anticipate the long-term opportunities for urban growth in the area between La Center and Woodland.
- 1.1.11.** Work with the U.S. Post Office to ensure that all land within the city limits has a La Center U. S. mail address.
- 1.1.12.** Zone changes within a Comprehensive Plan district, for example changing from low density to a higher density zone within an Urban Residential Plan District, shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Residential Development

- 1.2.1** Provide an adequate supply of land zoned for residential purposes in order to meet the residential needs of the city. Developments shall emphasize low density residential uses, but also allow for, and encourage, medium density development in certain areas.
- 1.2.2** Encourage residential development to use opportunities provided through infill development and redevelopment of existing housing stock, in addition to new construction on larger undeveloped lands.
- 1.2.3** Provide at least three (3) land use designations in which residential uses are allowed. They include:
 - a) "Urban Residential District" designation, in which low density residential uses with minimum 7,500 square foot lot sizes and medium density residential uses with a minimum density of 8 units per acre and a maximum density of 16 units per acre are permitted.
 - b) "Residential/Professional District" designation in which low density residential uses (minimum of 4 units per net acre), medium density residential uses (range of 8 to 16 units per net acre), and commercial (maximum 22 units per net acre) are permitted.
 - c) "Mixed Use" designation in which residential uses, primarily in upper stories, may be permitted in conjunction with commercial or office uses.
- 1.2.4** Allow "Urban Residential" lot size for newly created lots to reach 11,000 square feet where the lot abuts the Urban Growth Boundary, particularly if there are no roads at the boundary.
- 1.2.5** Monitor overall population density and annually report findings to the City Council. Provide a variety of housing products citywide and ensure that no single type of housing product, for example single family detached dwellings,

comprises more than 75% of all housing stock overall. The city may accomplish this by allowing detached and attached housing and manufactured homes.



Commercial and Industrial Development

- 1.3.1** Cooperate with Clark County to maintain an adequate supply of commercial and industrial lands within the present and future urban growth area.
- 1.3.2** Provide zoning districts designed to encourage commercial development. Commercial use districts include:
- a) "Downtown Commercial", provides for convenience shopping needs in the downtown core. Typical allowed uses include convenience food markets, beauty and barber shops, bakeries and limited service industries.
 - b) "Residential/Professional", provides opportunities for light retail and office uses as well as medium density and low density uses surrounding the downtown commercial core.
 - c) "Card Room" overlay provides for card rooms within the "Downtown Commercial" zone.
 - d) "Mixed Use", provides an opportunity to create a planned development of office, commercial and upper story residential uses in a compact area, such as the intersection of La Center Road and Timmen Road.
- 1.3.3** Encourage downtown commercial development which fosters La Center's small town, "Main Street" ambiance. The following aspects of this ambiance should be consistent with Chapter 18.150 LCMC and the La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines.
- a) Store fronts should be located on the street along right-of-way lines. Business activity should be oriented towards the streets, through use of sidewalk cafes, tastefully designed awnings or similar features.

- b) Parking areas should be located behind, or at the sides of buildings.
 - c) Commercial activities should use original building facades and appropriately sized and designed signs. New construction should be compatible with surrounding buildings in terms of scale, massing, materials, height and color.
 - d) With the exception of gas stations, financial institutions and temporary coffee carts, the city discourages new drive through facilities in the downtown commercial area.
 - e) Support public and private efforts to create tourism related businesses and activities.
- 1.3.4** Evaluate opportunities to create public parking areas downtown and to reduce the burden of on-site parking on smaller lots.
- 1.3.5** Encourage commercial and industrial development in areas which directly benefit the La Center School District.

Development at the Interstate-5 Junction

- 1.4.1** Plan for the La Center Junction, the intersection of the La Center Road and Interstate-5 (I-5), to become an employment area for the benefit of the citizens of La Center and north Clark County.
- 1.4.2** Consult all affected agencies, interested property owners, and parties when planning for and constructing capital facilities for the Junction.
- 1.4.3** Planning for the I-5 Interchange area should address the following objectives:
- a) Adopt a regional vision and long-term planning horizon by encompassing lands on both sides of I-5 south to NE 299th Street and north to the Lewis River.
 - b) Dedicate industrial activity at the La Center Junction to Employment Campus and/or Light Industrial use and supporting commercial activity. Heavy industrial uses are disfavored.
 - c) Encourage development within city limits which provides jobs, goods or services primarily for the local area.
 - d) Pay for transportation, utility, or other improvements required for initial development at the Junction with public and private funds to the extent such funds are available. The city shall use development agreements, contribution or latecomers' agreements, or other tools to ensure the orderly and cost-effective construction of infrastructure improvements.
 - e) Encourage development within city limits at the Junction that complements the development and uses in downtown La Center.

- f) Discourage development within city limits at the junction which provides low levels of employment (fewer than 9 employees per acre).
- g) Development within city limits at the Junction should be consistent with minimum design standards, including limiting signage height; outdoor storage areas, if any, shall be fully screened from surrounding uses and rights-of-way; and installing landscaping along commercial and industrial property lines, as necessary, to provide a visual buffer of structures from public rights-of-way, including the I-5 freeway.
- h) The plan should consider the effects of federal authority over land or resource use within the planning area, including jurisdiction on land owned or held in trust by the federal government as provided in WAC 365-196- 730(1)(b).

II Transportation

The transportation chapter establishes the city's goals and policies for developing the transportation system within the La Center urban growth area. It is a guide for making long-term and short-term transportation decisions. The transportation chapter discusses roadway mobility and accessibility needs, improvements needed to enhance safety, non-motorized travel (bicycles and pedestrians), and public transit, and addresses the impacts of future land development activity. The transportation chapter summarizes the city's transportation system plan.



Growth Management Act

The GMA transportation goal requires a comprehensive look at the local transportation system including:

- Encouraging efficient multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans
- Establishing consistency with county-wide policies and city and county land use plans;
- Estimating traffic impacts on state-owned facilities;
- Providing an inventory of existing transportation services;
- Providing a financing plan for new improvements.

The GMA also establishes a “concurrency” requirement. Concurrency requires adequate and necessary public services and facilities at the time of new development to accommodate the impacts of the development. Alternatively public services or facilities must be programmed and available within a specified time or when a particular impact threshold is met.

Regional Coordination

The city's transportation chapter is consistent and coordinated with regional transportation plans. Regional partnerships are maintained with the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, Clark County, C-TRAN, Washington State Department of Transportation, and other cities in Clark County. The city participates in the Regional Transportation Council, which serves as the area's federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization and state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization. The Regional Transportation Council maintains and runs traffic models for all jurisdictions within Clark County based on Clark County's comprehensive plan map. As a result, each jurisdiction's land use and transportation plans are consistent with other jurisdictions.

Existing Conditions

Inventory

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The city adopted standard specifications to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle use of streets. The city adopted the Standard Specifications for Road, Bridge and Municipal Construction published or adopted by the Washington Department of Transportation and the American Public Works Association (APWA) and all subsequent revisions thereto. The design criteria set forth in LCMC 12.10.050 and drawings of typical sections for roadway construction are on file with the city.

To further support multimodal travelers, the city also adopted a complete streets ordinance in 2019. The ordinance requires every construction project within the city limits to implement safe roads for drivers, bicyclists, transit vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities in accordance with LCMC 12.30. The policy creates an equitable transportation system for all people using the public road system regardless of how they choose to travel.

Striped shoulders exist along La Center Road. On other roadways within the city, bicycle users currently share the roadway with motorized traffic. Sidewalks exist in much of the downtown area and throughout most of the newer residential areas. In the older sections of town, sidewalks exist only sporadically. The city requires construction of sidewalks in all new residential developments.

Transit

C-TRAN, Clark County's public transit provider, currently provides limited transit service in the plan area via the La Center connector, with regular service to Vancouver's Rose Village neighborhood and the cities of Camas and Ridgefield.

Streets

The existing street network is made up entirely of two-lane roadways. Turn lanes exist at several intersections. Roundabouts are located at Pacific Highway and 4th Street and at the interchange with Interstate 5. Traffic control is provided by posted stop sign controls at many intersections. No traffic signals currently exist but one is planned at the intersection of 4th Street and Highland Road as part of the 4th Street widening project. The highest traffic volumes occur along La Center Road between I-5 and downtown. The Regional Transportation Council, as part of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning process, classifies streets according to their functional classification system:

- Arterials (principal and minor arterials) consist of a connected network of rural routes with appropriate extensions into and through urban areas, which serves regional and subregional trips. Direct access from abutting properties is typically prohibited or restricted.
- Collectors provide connections through and between neighborhoods and sub-regions of the county, and serve as the principal means of land access to residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, and into and through industrial and business parks. Access is provided to adjacent land uses, but is often managed to occur at appropriately spaced locations and is often shared between adjacent land uses.
- Local Access streets lack essential arterial characteristics and are designated as local or neighborhood access roadways.

The existing physical roadway characteristics and traffic control for the city's urban growth area. La Center developed a functional classification system for its street facilities. Functional classifications and corresponding design standards are compatible between the city and county (see Table 5). This coordination allows the facilities to blend and function well (i.e., the sidewalks align; lanes are of similar width and configuration, etc.).

Table 5 – Functional Street Classifications

Street	City Classification	Federal/County Classification*
La Center Road	Principal Arterial	Major Collector
Pacific Highway	Minor Arterial	Rural Major Collector
E. 4th Street	Minor Arterial	Major Collector
NW Timmen Road	Minor Arterial	Major Collector
NE Lockwood Road	Minor Arterial	Major Collector
NE Highland Road	Major Collector	Minor Collector
Aspen Avenue	Major Collector	Major Collector
North Fork Avenue	Major Collector	Not Classified

Street	City Classification	Federal/County Classification*
NE 339th Street	Major Collector	Minor Collector
NW Spencer Road	Major Collector	Minor Collector
NW 324th S	Minor Collector	Not Classified
NW Paradise Park Road	Major Collector	Not Classified

* Inside City/Outside City Limits

Future Demand

The city relies on the regional transportation planning model, developed and maintained by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, to analyze the La Center transportation network. This computer model is based upon existing road conditions and known travel demand. Where projected demand exceeds current or proposed capacity, new capital facilities projects are identified to correct the problem.

Bicycle/Pedestrian

La Center has adopted and periodically revised its standard street specifications (Chapter 12.10 LCMC) that accommodate non-motorized uses within public rights-of-way.

Bicycles – The City of La Center should plan for bike lanes to be provided on all arterials and collectors within the next 20 years. In addition, bike lanes should be striped on arterial and collector streets where existing pavement widths allow. These improvements could be gained at a relatively low cost. On neighborhood connectors and local streets, traffic volumes and speeds are expected to be relatively low and bike lanes are not appropriate.

Striped shoulders – On other roadways within the city, bicycle users share the roadway with motorized traffic. Future bicycle improvements identified in conjunction with street improvements will provide bicyclists with full accessibility on the city's major streets.



Pedestrians

Several streets in La Center have either no sidewalks or sidewalks on only one side of the street. The City's development codes require all new roads to include sidewalks on both sides.

Transit

C-TRAN, Clark County's public transit provider, currently provides limited transit service. The tribal casino, Ilani, is served by the C-TRAN La Center Connector dial-a-ride service and the casino's private bus service. Additional service is not expected in the near term.

Streets

Local conditions are expected to be exacerbated by rural traffic traversing the city to cross the East Fork Lewis River, estimated at 45% to 53% of the total bridge traffic.

The bottle neck effect currently caused by rural and card room traffic coupled with additional residential development and the tribal casino at the Junction could exceed bridge design capacity within the planning horizon (2036). Consequently, the city intends to relieve bridge pressure by encouraging residential and mixed-use development on the southwestern side of the river to balance commute and home-to-school travel patterns. Addressing the issues and constructing improvements noted below could help provide a more complete circulation system in the city and increase network capacity:

- Interstate 5 at NW 319th Street. The development of the tribal casino at the interchange resulted in rebuilding and re-aligning streets at the interchange in 2017, including Paradise Park Road.
- NW Bolen Street (NW 9th Avenue to NE Aspen Avenue). Construct a new roadway with sidewalks.
- NW La Center Road at NW Timmen Road. This intersection is expected to exceed LOS F without signalization. Roundabout construction was added to the 6-year TIP in the CFP costing \$1.5 million.
- NW 4th Street at N Aspen Avenue. The southbound to eastbound left turn movement is expected to exceed LOS D without improvements.
- NW 4th Street from Cedar Avenue to Highland Avenue – Widen the road corridor to accommodate bicycle lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the roadway to comply with the City's Complete Streets Ordinance. The improvements will also include a new traffic signal at Highland Avenue and NW 4th Street. Funding has been appropriated for design from the Department of Commerce and this project is currently under design.

- Second Bridge across the East Fork Lewis River. Although expensive, a second crossing of the East Fork Lewis River (extending from the interchange area to NW 14th Avenue) could relieve the downtown area of considerable congestion and provide secondary access for emergency medical services currently located southwest of La Center. The need for such a crossing is beyond the 20-year planning horizon, but should be evaluated in a future update.

Transportation Goal

La Center shall provide a multi-modal transportation system which safely, attractively and efficiently serves existing and proposed uses within the Urban Growth Area.

Transportation Policies

- 2.1.1** Coordinate with the Regional Transportation Council, Clark County, Washington State Department of Transportation, C-TRAN and other carriers to ensure that La Center transportation facilities, services and policies function as part of a cohesive regional system.
- 2.1.2** Adopt specific level-of-service standards for roads and intersections within the urban growth area.
- 2.1.3** Analyze development projects for potential significant impacts to the La Center transportation system. The city shall impose mitigation measures when development proposals would result in safety hazards, or a decline of level of services below adopted city level-of-service standards.
- 2.1.4** Direct residential driveway access onto arterial streets shall be prohibited with access to local streets encouraged.
- 2.1.5** Direct commercial/industrial driveway access onto arterial streets shall be encouraged where practical with access to local streets prohibited to avoid impacting residential neighborhoods.
- 2.1.6** Require street improvements (roadbed, curbs, gutter, sidewalk, planting strips and lighting) concurrent with new commercial, industrial and residential development.
- 2.1.7** Require sidewalks for new residential, industrial and commercial developments.
- 2.1.8** Coordinate with C-TRAN or other service providers to provide bus stops and park-and-ride facilities as needed. La Center shall encourage the use of public transportation, car-pooling, and other strategies to reduce traffic congestion.
- 2.1.9** Promote local street patterns which inherently control speeding while providing adequate connectivity for emergency services and local traffic.
- 2.1.10** Develop and implement transportation impact fees within the city consistent with state law.

- 2.1.11** Consider the feasibility of a second east-west traffic and or pedestrian corridor within the city limits.
- 2.1.12** Develop transportation concurrency regulations consistent with RCW 36.70A.070(6)(b) and shall evaluate the need for transportation demand management strategies as an chapter of its transportation capital facilities plan
- 2.1.13** Require new development to provide bike lanes, proportionate to the development's impacts, on all major roadways, such as arterials, and collectors. The city may provide bike lanes when feasible and when resources are allocated to such improvements.
- 2.1.14** Promote pedestrian and bicycle trails which provide transportation utility as well as recreational opportunities. Where practical, trail design should accommodate emergency vehicles.
- 2.1.15** Require new development to provide LED street lighting and full cutoff acorn lights, which minimizes glare and light pollution, to comply with the 'Dark Sky' design guidelines.
- 2.1.16** Develop an arterial / collector arterial network that facilitates emergency services access.
- 2.1.17** Promote park-and-ride facilities on the arterial and collector street network.
- 2.1.18** The single crossing of the East Fork of the Lewis River presents significant emergency access and public safety concerns. At the next update to the La Center Comprehensive Plan, the city shall study opportunities for creating an additional river crossing, such as, upgrading or replacing the existing East Fork bridge, a second river crossing, or other alternatives.
- 2.1.19** The City, in coordination with private developers, Clark County, and funding partners such as WSDOT should construct an uninterrupted pedestrian connection along NW Pacific Highway from the northwestern City limits to downtown so that pedestrians, including children walking to school, can walk safely.

III Housing

La Center’s residential neighborhoods are a defining chapter of this community.

La Center is committed to maintaining and enhancing our existing neighborhoods while accommodating future growth in new quality neighborhoods. New neighborhoods must be consistent with the city’s small town feel, and residential infill development that is compatible with existing neighborhoods. The housing chapter provides the tools to accomplish this goal.

The housing chapter and the land use chapter contain the essential; goals and policies which will guide the residential growth of La Center over the next 20 years. The land use goals and policies ensure that the city maintains an adequate supply of residential land. The housing goals and policies emphasize preserving existing residential neighborhoods, creating infill opportunities and identifying zones where new medium and low density housing will develop.



Housing Inventory and Analysis³

In 2015, there were 1,176 dwelling units in La Center, an increase of 320 units above the 856 units available in 2006. All of the new housing developments occurred north of the East Fork of the Lewis River because sanitary sewer service was not available in the newly annexed areas. (See Map 2 – Approved Subdivisions.)

In 2015 approximately 97% of the housing units in La Center were low density detached units. On average, each unit contains approximately 2.97 persons per household. The targeted persons-per-household ratio, as established by the Board of Clark County Commissioners, is 2.66.

³ Data sources consulted include: www.data.wa.gov; www.census.gov; www.factfinder.census.gov; and La Center building permit data.

The 2015 year-end population was 3,163 and the projected 2036 population is 7,642. To accommodate the additional population of 4,433 persons the city will need an additional 1,667 dwelling units. By 2036 the total number of dwelling units in La Center may be 1,767.

The 2015 Clark County Vacant Buildable Land (VBL) analysis indicates that the La Center UGA contains approximately 258 net buildable acres of low density residential land. At 4 units per net acre, the VBL projects that these lands can accommodate 1,032 new single family homes. On the medium density side, the VBL indicates that the La Center UGA contains about 33.4 net buildable acres (75 gross acres). Medium density zoning districts should generate between 8 to 14 housing units per net acre. These lands could generate between 267 and 468 new medium density units. Finally, the Mixed Use (MX) land use zones contain about 16.7 net acres and are planned to build between 8 and 16 units per net acre. MX zones have the capacity to generate 134 to 267 new medium density units.

Consequently, the Comprehensive Plan anticipates that the La Center UGA has sufficient residential land capacity to accommodate the projected 2036 population.

Demographic trends⁴ provide a snapshot of the current growth patterns and provide evidence of future activity:

- In 2010 the U.S. Census reported a total of 158 rental units in La Center.
- Over forty five percent (45.3%) of the housing stock was built after 2000 while 85.4% of the housing units were built after 1985.
- Estimated median household income in 2014 was \$71,948, significantly higher than the state-wide median (\$58,686) and the Clark County median income (\$59,341).
- The estimated median La Center house value in 2015 was \$339,800, higher than the Washington median house value (\$268,400).⁵
- About 5.2% of La Center residents live below the federal poverty line.

Statement of Policies that Encourage Affordable Housing

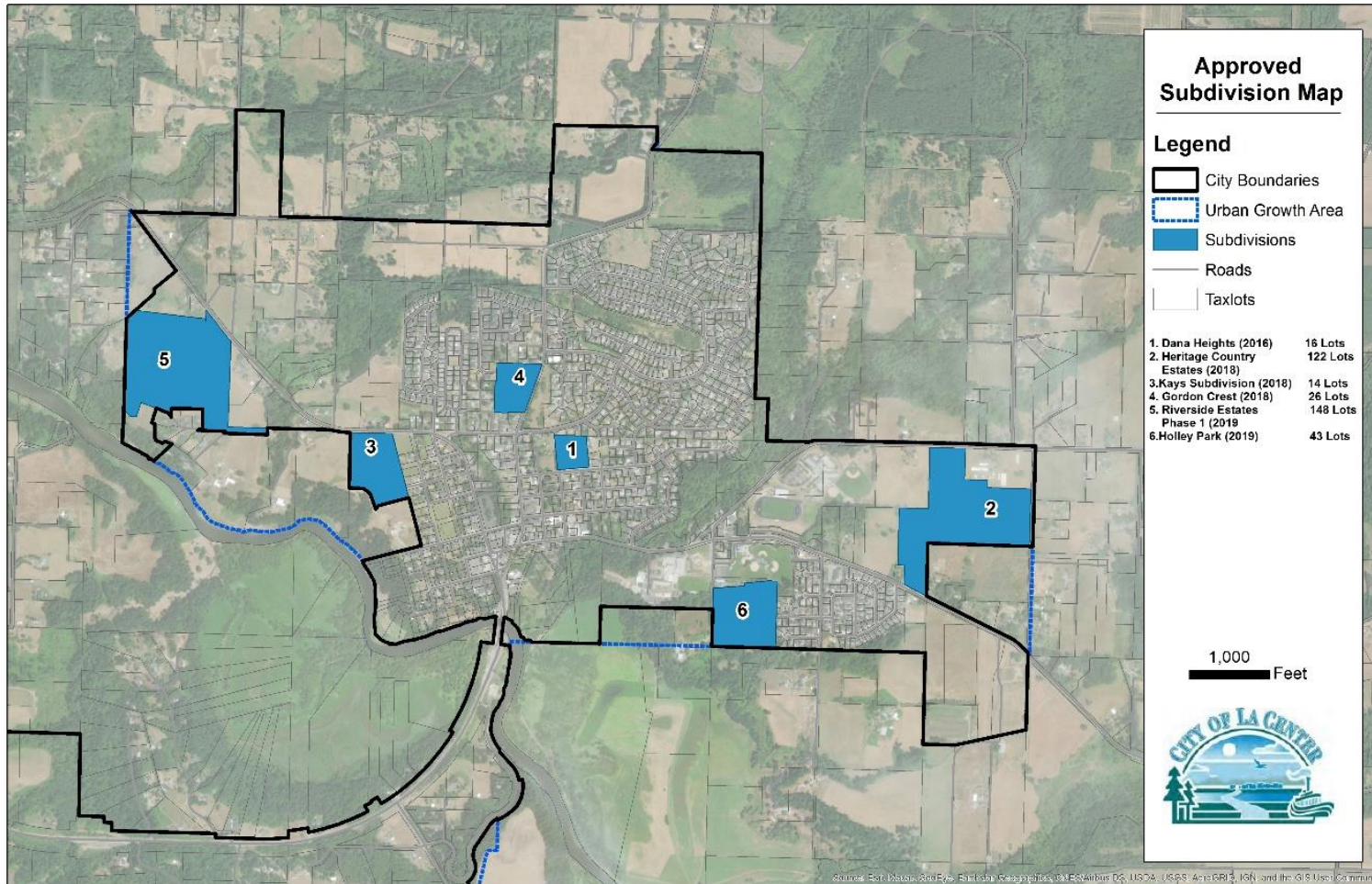
- The city residential and mixed use zoning districts establish minimum densities.
- The Comprehensive Plan provides for a wide variety of housing options, such as, townhomes, condominiums, manufactured homes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), cottage housing, and 'patio' homes (detached housing on lots as small as 3,000 SF).

⁴ Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

⁵ www.zillow.com

- The Residential-Professional zoning district surrounding downtown is effectively a 'horizontal' mixed use district. Low density residential, medium density residential, commercial and office uses are all allowed individually or as a vertical mix of uses.
- The development regulations require lot size 'beveling' to help blend the transition between low density and medium density zoning districts.
- Consistent with state law, 'stick-built' and manufactured housing are allowed in all residential districts.
- The introduction of a variety of medium density housing products, and renewed emphasis on mixed use, should provide a more diverse housing stock and a greater range of housing choices and prices for people seeking home ownership.

Map 2 – Approved Subdivisions



Growth Management Act

The GMA requires that a housing chapter be included in the comprehensive plan. Advanced planning for housing ensures that adequate and affordable housing is available to the community, and helps to plan for needed infrastructure improvements such as parks, schools, roads, water systems, etc. The GMA established the following housing goal:

- 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.
- The *"Procedural Criteria For Adopting Comprehensive Plans and Development Regulations for the Act"* further specifies that the Housing Chapter of the 20-Year Plan (WAC 365-195-310) shall, at a minimum, contain:
 - An inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs;
 - A statement of goals, policies, and objectives for the preservation, improvement and development of housing; An identification of sufficient land for housing, including government-assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, medium density housing and group homes and foster care facilities;
 - Adequate provisions for existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.

The Act further requires inter-jurisdictional coordination and development of county-wide policies considering affordable housing and its distribution regionally.

A 1993 legislative amendment requires that all cities and public agencies develop an inventory of public properties no longer needed for public use and which may be available for affordable housing. The inventory identifies individual property locations, size, and current zoning category. Public agencies include all school districts and state departments of natural resources, transportation, social and health services, correction, and general administration. The inventory is provided by the city to the Washington State Office of Community Trade and Economic Development and is to be updated annually by November 1. The city is required by the State Housing Act of 1993 to adopt provisions for accessory housing. (RCW A.63.230).

Housing Goal

La Center will provide a sufficient supply of land and allowances for variety of housing types, including, but not limited to, low density detached and attached housing, manufactured housing, and medium density housing.

Housing Policies

- 3.1.1.** Work to ensure that medium density housing accounts for 25% of new residential construction overall during the life of this Plan.
- 3.1.2.** Encourage flexible and cost efficient land use regulations that allow for the creation of creative housing types which will meet the needs of an economically diverse population.
- 3.1.3.** Adopt implementation measures to assure that new residential development shall occur at an average density of four (4) units per net acre.
- 3.1.4.** Reevaluate the status of local medium density housing opportunities at the time of updates to the Comprehensive Plan or Urban Growth Boundary and adjust policies accordingly, if the goals of providing an average of four (4) units per net acre in the low density zones and 8 units an acre in the medium density zones are not met.
- 3.1.5.** Encourage, where practical, the preservation and improvement of existing housing stock.
- 3.1.6.** Allow special needs housing, as necessary. Special needs housing may include emergency shelters, transitional housing, nursing homes, congregate care facilities, or housing for the elderly or disabled, consistent with state and federal law.
- 3.1.7.** Support programs that assist individual homeowners and property owners in upgrading and rehabilitating historical and other housing units in need of repair.
- 3.1.8.** Integrate public safety into the design of neighborhoods.
- 3.1.9.** Enhance neighborhood attractiveness by linking neighborhoods to public amenities such as greenbelts, open spaces, parks, downtown.
- 3.1.10.** Work to buffer neighborhood edges adjacent to major streets and areas of commercial development,
- 3.1.11.** Encourage the blending of new and existing neighborhoods,
- 3.1.12.** Identify mature neighborhoods that may benefit from revitalization and/or redevelopment and, to the extent that resources are allocated, pursue reinvestment through public projects, private and individual initiatives, and other incentives.
- 3.1.13.** Study the need for, and opportunity to create, senior housing facilities to meet the needs of our aging population.

- 3.1.14.** Develop regulations to allow gated residential subdivisions and housing complexes and ensure that gated developments do not impede emergency services or safe and direct walking to school or essential public facilities.
- 3.1.15.** Consider how a Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance might enhance opportunities for a variety of housing types and develop regulations to implement a PUD ordinance.

IV Capital Facilities & Utilities

The capital facilities chapter addresses the infrastructure the city envisions necessary to meet the needs of its citizens. This chapter coordinates and provides consistency among the many city plans for capital and service improvements.

It ensures the timely and efficient provision of adequate public facilities that support planned growth and existing uses. Future services and facilities, and levels of service, are coordinated with the planned population and growth patterns established by the comprehensive plan's land use and growth management chapters. Proposed major capital expenditures planned throughout the city are identified, and six-year financing strategies and requirements are addressed for all major city capital programs.

The capital facilities Chapter emphasizes services the city provides, in particular, storm drainage and sewer services. School and fire services information is also presented this chapter. This Chapter relies heavily on the 2019 La Center Urban Area Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) which the City updates periodically. The CFP ensures the timely and efficient provision of public facilities needed to support planned growth and existing uses. Future services and facilities, and levels of service, are coordinated with the planned population and growth patterns established in the Land Use and Growth Management chapters.

Capital facilities plans for transportation services, also mandated by the GMA, are provided separately within the transportation chapter. City park facilities are summarized in the parks chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.



Existing Conditions – City Services

Sanitary Sewer

In 2006, the city reacquired the wastewater conveyance and treatment systems from Clark Public Utilities' (CPU) who had owned and operated the facilities since 1992.

The City measures sewer waste capacity in terms of Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs). One ERU is equal to approximately 300 gallons of waste per day. In 1994, CPU provided service to approximately 240 Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs). The present capacity is 5,558 ERUs.

Future Demand

To accommodate La Center's 2036 population growth, the city expanded its wastewater treatment plant. The expanded plant consists of:

- Two (2) fine screens
- One grit removal system
- Two (2) Membrane Biological Reactors (MBRs)
- Three (3) ultraviolet sterilization unit
- Two (2) Biosolids dryers
- Two (2) Biosolids Dewatering units and
- Handling equipment

The expanded plant has the potential treatment capacity of 5,558 ERUs, which is in excess of capacity needed to serve the projected 20-year demand. The city is planning for future commercial and industrial development at the La Center I-5 Junction. The city has the treatment capacity to serve the Junction but does not have the collection system in place.

Law Enforcement

La Center maintains its own police department. Washington State Patrol has concurrent jurisdiction on all state routes within the County, including the I-5 freeway. La Center shares use of the main Clark County Jail, Municipal Court facilities in Battle Ground, the 911 Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency, and the Child Abuse Intervention Center. All law enforcement personnel are required to pass annual training by the Washington State Criminal Justice Commission.

La Center maintains 24-hour law enforcement service.



Inventory

Staff – The La Center Police Department is authorized 5 officers, 2 police sergeants, 1 police chief and 1 support position.

Vehicles – The Department operates an automobile fleet of five vehicles (4 patrol, and 1 dedicated vehicle for the chief which can be placed on patrol duties).

Facilities – The Department 's current office facilities, consisting of approximately 1,890 square feet, are located at 105 West 5th Street in La Center, Washington.

Future Demand

Staff – The City of La Center is planning for a population of 7,642 in the year 2036. The Department will provide staff support as necessity demands and resources are available.

Vehicles – The La Center Police Department replaces aging cruisers every forty-eight months or 100,000 miles traveled.

Facilities –Over the ensuing twenty-year period, the department may need to add additional office, holding and storage space.

Existing Conditions – Services Provided by Others

Potable Water

Clark Public Utilities (CPU) provides public water service to La Center and the surrounding area. The system currently provides water to approximately 1,600 homes, businesses, and schools in the La Center area. The system is hydraulically connected to the CPU water network, which extends throughout much of the Clark County rural area. The source for the full system is approximately thirty-four production wells and the storage need for the La Center system is provided by reservoir in the northern portion of the city.

The CPU La Center water system consists of:

- Three reservoirs (0.52 Million Gallons, 0.44 MG, 1.1 MG)
- Two Boosters
- Pumping Stations
- Approximately 28.5 miles of pipe

Future Demand

Improvements to the public water system are needed to accommodate the city's projected population growth for the year 2036. To the north, a 1,000 gallons per minute (GPM) booster station and a back-up generator station will be needed.

To serve the tribal casino and the projected future commercial and industrial development at the La Center I-5 Junction, CPU has developed a new well field west of I-5 and north of the East Fork of the Lewis River. The well field has a total capacity of 14.4 million gallons per day (MGD) over the planning period. This well-field is anticipated to supply a good portion of the water needed to meet the projected peak day demands for the City of La Center.

Recommended capital improvements for the Clark Public Utilities water system that will serve the La Center UGA include improvements to the following:

- Source of supply and treatment facilities,
- Distribution storage facilities and booster pumping stations, and
- Distribution piping and appurtenances.

Booster pump improvements will include new pumping stations and upgrades to increase capacity at existing pumping stations as well as several emergency generator installations. These improvements will increase fire flow and peak hour pressure to existing pressure zones in the northeast and northwest of La Center. CPU will also reconstruct the existing flow control/pressure regulating station at NE Timmen Road to improve capacity and reliability.

Fire Protection

Clark County Fire and Rescue (CCF&R) serves the city of La Center. CCF&R is a combination district serving 155 square miles in northern Clark County including the cities of Ridgefield, La Center, Woodland, and unincorporated areas. It operates one fire station within the La Center city limits. The district responded to over 5,000 calls across its service area in 2014, the last year data were available. The District also protects the major north-south rail line and interstate. The District provides various services to the citizens within its service area including:

- Responding to all fire related emergencies.
- Providing BLS (Basic Life Support) at the EMT (Emergency Medical Technical) level including semi-automatic defibrillation.
- Providing ALS (Advanced Life Support) at the paramedic level.
- Responding to hazardous material emergencies with the ability to mitigate most emergencies and a contract with a regional hazardous materials team to handle extraordinary emergencies.
- An active public education program that targets the elderly and young children.
- Providing education aimed at the general population.
- Working closely with the County Fire Marshal to enforce the fire code.
- Responding on many non-emergency type calls.
- Offering home safety surveys, address identification, and smoke detector checks.

Clark County Fire & Rescue is regularly assessed by the Washington Surveying and Ratings Bureau (WSRB). WSRB evaluates all Washington communities for their fire protection/suppression capability using a schedule approved by the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner. WSRB assigns each community a Protection Class of 1 through 10, where 1 indicates exemplary fire protection capabilities, and 10 indicates the capabilities, if any, are insufficient for insurance credit. As of 2015, La Center and the surrounding areas scored a 4. The benefits of these ratings are passed down to residents by having low insurance premiums and quality emergency services.

Future Demand

CCF&R has identified priorities for future equipment and staffing to maintain emergency response times as the city grows. As the city grows, the number and type of calls will be influenced by several factors: increases in population and density, number of aging structures that have not had ongoing maintenance, lower income levels that restrict the ability of residents and owners to maintain and repair their homes and businesses, number of senior, nursing and skilled care facilities, and increasing age of the baby boomer generation. The need for additional response units

(engines, trucks, etc.) is based on the many of these factors and on the number of emergency calls per response.

Solid Waste Facilities and Services

All cities and towns in Clark County have delegated responsibility for solid waste transfer and disposal planning to the County through 2021. The adopted Clark County Solid Waste Management Plan (CSWMP) of 2015 is updated regularly and reviewed by the County Solid Waste Advisory Commission. Agreements between Clark County and its cities commit each to the plan and to the plan's waste disposal system. Counties and cities in the State of Washington are required by RCW 70.95 to:

- Prepare and maintain coordinated solid waste management plans
- Determine the nature and extent of various solid waste streams (for example, from households, industries, offices, etc.)
- Establish management strategies for the handling, utilization, and disposal of solid waste
- Identify waste reduction, source-separated recycling, and waste separation programs as priority management tools

Waste Connections of Washington is responsible for collecting both garbage and recyclable materials. There are no permanent solid waste facilities within the city of La Center. Over half of the waste generated in the county is recycled or recovered, with the remainder disposed of in landfills. The city of La Center helps sponsor and manage an annual solid waste and recycling day which is very well attended.

Future Demand

Total waste generation is expected to continue to increase across the county as the population grows. The county has projected a 1.3% increase in total waste per year, including a 1.6% increase in landfill tonnage and a 2% increase in residential recycling tonnage. Clark County evaluated the capacity of its transfer stations and landfills and concluded that they can accommodate the projected waste increase through 2034.

The CSWMP establishes several overall goals for waste management over the 2015-2020 timeframe including:

- Increase recycling rate to 55% and the total diversion rate to 70%.
- Reduce per person per day landfilled volumes by 5%.
- Reduce total amount of waste generated per person per day by 5%.

Public Schools

Existing Conditions

The La Center School District (LCSD) is comprised of approximately 31 square miles. The district is bordered by the Woodland School District to the north, the Green Mountain School District to the northeast, the Battle Ground School District to the southeast and the Ridgefield School District to the west. The district offers one elementary school (grades K-5), one middle school (grades 6-8) and one high school (9-12).

In 2020 student enrollment was 1,488. Grades K-5 enrolled 629 students grades 6-8, 366 students; and grades 9-12, 493 students. The average class size for grades K-5 was 22, for grades 6-8 was 21, and grades 9-12 was 14. On average, teachers have 16 years of classroom experience and 72.7% of LCSD teachers have Master's Degrees.⁶ The School District supports a high school, middle school, elementary school and home school academy.

La Center schools are a hub for community activity. During the daytime the school facilities are used for classroom education and at night for both student instruction and community events and activities. Parents and community members actively support the mission of the La Center School District through their involvement in school programs, fundraising and volunteerism.

Future Demand

The city of La Center regularly adopts the LCSD capital facility plans as a mechanism to collect school impact fees for all new residential development. Through the development review process the city ensures that new subdivisions provide safe walking routes to local schools. The LCSD secured a contractor in December 2019 and began constructing a new middle school in May 2020 on property located at the SW portion of the city. The new middle school will open to students in the 2021-2022 school year.

⁶ <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>

Library Services

La Center is part of the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District (FVRL or District) provides library services in four counties in southwestern Washington (Clark, Skamania, Klickitat, Cowlitz). FVRL serves a total population of 464,240 and an area of 4,200 square miles, with a collection of 751,470 volumes. The District has 15 libraries across four counties, anchored by the 83,000-square-foot Vancouver Community Library recently completed in 2011.



The La Center Community Library is located in the historic Old Hospital Building at 1411 NE Lockwood Creek Road and is an integral part of the community. Mrs. Margaret Colf Hepola and other prominent citizens spearheaded the drive to relocate the Old Hospital and reuse it as a community library. The restoration and reuse retains historic elements while allowing the building to serve as a 3,380-square-foot modern library on three floors. In 2014 the La Center Library had a circulation of 64,747 items. It recorded 37,973 visits and offered 202 programs attended by 6,002 people. There are no plans to expand or relocate the library.

Private Utilities

Electricity

Clark Public Utilities (CPU), a customer-owned public utility district, provides electric service throughout Clark County. About half of the power the utility sells its customers is purchased from the Bonneville Power Administration, a federal agency that markets power generated at federal dams in the Pacific Northwest. Additional power is provided from renewable energy purchases and power generated at the River Road Generating Plant, a combined-cycle combustion turbine that uses natural gas to produce electricity.

The CPU system consists of more than 130 miles of high-voltage transmission lines (69,000 and 115,000 volts), 54 substations/switching stations, about 7,400 miles of overhead and underground distribution lines, and 57,500 utility poles. The facilities

serve about 211,000 customers. CPU routinely reviews the county's growth plans and coordinates the construction of new electrical facilities with those plans. State law requires utilities to provide electricity to all who request it.

The utility believes it has adequate supplies of electricity to meet anticipated customer demands. Utility officials routinely prepare projections of future demand for electricity and review available supplies. CPU Enterprise power substation at the La Center Junction to serve development on the Cowlitz Indian Reservation as well as future demand in North Clark County. CPU also completed new and upgraded transmission and distribution lines between the substation at Union Ridge in Ridgefield and Enterprise substation at the La Center Junction.

Natural Gas

NW Natural Gas is the sole purveyor of natural gas in Clark County. The company serves over 50,000 residential, commercial and industrial gas customers in the county. Its customer base has grown rapidly over the past 10 years, reflecting a strong preference by builders for natural gas heating in new homes as the county's residential population increases.

Despite historic fluctuations in energy prices, as the local distribution company of natural gas, NW Natural anticipates continued strong growth in customer additions in Clark County and is planning for future infrastructure construction and maintenance to serve the expected need. Additional distribution lines will be constructed on an as-needed basis in accordance with local, state and federal regulations and codes covering land use and safety issues.

Telecommunications

The telecommunications industry is currently in the midst of tremendous advances in technology. Cellular and optical fiber technologies are transforming the way service is delivered. In addition, the physical barriers that separate data, video, and voice technologies are rapidly disappearing. Lewis River Telephone Company was the historic provider of telephone service in La Center, Lewis River Telephone Company is a subsidiary of TDS Telecom, headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin. TDS Telecom is a wholly owned subsidiary of Telephone and Data Systems Inc, and is the seventh-largest local exchange carrier in the U.S. Many telecommunication companies provide landline and cellular service to the La Center area. These include CenturyLink, Frontier Communications, AT&T, Sprint, and Verizon. Comcast provides cable television and internet access.

Essential Public Facilities

RCW 36.70A.200 states that essential public facilities (EPFs) are facilities that are typically difficult to site but that provide a broader state or local benefit. Essential

public facilities can be government owned and operated facilities, or privately owned facilities that are regulated by public entities. EPFs include:

- airports
- state education facilities
- state or regional transportation facilities
- state and local correctional facilities
- solid waste handling facilities
- regional parks/trails
- in-patient facilities, including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, and group homes
- transportation facilities of state-wide significance defined according to RCW 47.06.140
- secure community transition facilities
- hospitals and medical clinics

EPFs are typically difficult to locate because of perceived or real environmental, economic, or social costs. However, RCW 36.70A.200(2)(5) states that “No local comprehensive plan or development regulation may preclude the siting of essential public facilities.” Interstate 5 is the only EPF currently in the La Center UGA.

Future Demand

The process for siting essential public facilities (EPFs) depends on whether the facility is a state-wide EPF (like a university or prison), a local, or a regional EPF. The state-wide process is managed by a board or council comprised of representatives from state and local agencies. Local or regional facilities are reviewed by local governments using the existing GMA process and local land use regulations.

Capital Facilities & Utilities Goal

La Center shall provide adequate capital facilities and utilities to serve city residents living within the Urban Growth Area

Capital Facilities & Utilities Policies

- 4.1.1.** Adopt and annually update a Six-Year Capital Facility Program. The Six-Year Program shall include all capital improvements necessary to correct existing deficiencies, replace worn out or obsolete facilities, or accommodate desired growth.

- 4.1.2. Pursue grants and other forms of financial assistance as a means of funding or partially funding identified capital projects.
- 4.1.3. Ensure that public utilities, facilities and such services necessary to support proposed development are adequate to serve such developments at the time the development is available for occupancy or use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.
- 4.1.4. Adopt and review Level of Service (LOS) standards for certain public facilities and services, such as streets, water, sewer, and parks and recreation. The city shall reassess the land use chapter of this plan if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and shall evaluate reasonable measures to ensure that the land use chapter, capital facilities chapter, and financing plan within the capital facilities plan are coordinated and consistent.
- 4.1.5. Coordinate with Clark County, affected tribal governments and special districts to ensure that the provision of public facilities and services are consistent and designed to implement the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- 4.1.6. Establish a process to re-evaluate the land use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan if a determination is made that adequate financial resources do not exist to provide necessary public facilities and services to implement the plan.
- 4.1.7. Use impact fees or system development fees as a method of financing public facilities required to support new development.
- 4.1.8. Coordinate with the County and special districts to develop financial tools and techniques that will enable the City to secure funds to achieve concurrency.
- 4.1.9. Attempt to maintain an inventory of the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including, but not limited to, electrical lines, telecommunication lines, natural gas lines and water and sewer lines.
- 4.1.10. Support La Center School District efforts expand its tax base by moving the school district boundary to include the La Center I-5 Junction.

Regarding Sanitary Sewer, Water, and Storm Drainage

- 4.2.1. Develop and adopt levels of service standards for sanitary sewer, domestic water and stormwater facilities serving new development within the UGA. In order to receive permit approvals, proposed developments shall demonstrate that these levels of service standards will be met prior to occupancy or that improvements needed to ensure compliance are planned for or constructed within six years.
- 4.2.2. Clark Public Utilities (CPU) is the designated water service provider for the City of La Center.

- 4.2.3.** The City of La Center should not allow extension of sewer service outside its urban growth area except in those limited circumstances shown to be necessary to protect basic public health and safety and the environment and when such services are financially supportable at rural densities and do not permit urban development.
- 4.2.4.** Require all new construction and land divisions within the city limits to connect to public sewer and water if the facilities are available.
- 4.2.5.** Allow on-site water provisions and sewage treatment on legal lots within the UGA that predate the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan (December 31, 2003) if the following conditions are met:
- a) The proposed on-site sewer and water systems are approved by the Clark County Health Department, with provisions for future maintenance established.
 - b) The city may require connection to public sewer or water at the owner's expense when public sewer or water service becomes available within 200 feet. Property owners shall provide a signed agreement to this effect.
- 4.2.6.** The City should update its Stormwater Management Manual periodically.
- 4.2.7.** In exchange for receiving extra-territorial sewer service outside the city limits but inside the city's UGA, owners of private land shall execute an annexation agreement with the city, which shall provide for annexation at the time of connection or upon demand by the city. Land owned or held in trust by the federal government is not subject to the Growth Management Act, and annexation shall not be required in connection with extension of sewer service to such federal property or trust land either inside or outside the La Center UGA. In lieu of annexation, the city shall execute a development agreement or inter-governmental agreement that provides for payment of infrastructure costs to serve the federal property or trust land, and any other matter that the city deems necessary or appropriate to address in such an agreement.

V Economic Development

For a city of its size, La Center delivers a high level of service to its residents. Historically, this has been possible, in large part, because of the disproportionately large portion of the city revenues that come from the La Center card room industry. The challenge is one of economic diversification. The City is actively working to attract new job and development opportunities to increase employment diversification by seeking funding for essential public infrastructure that will decrease development costs for the private sector at the Interstate 5 junction, a natural location for such diversification. Our challenge now is to overcome these recent setbacks and to continue to plan for and encourage economic diversification.

We have done the following:

- Rezoned the remaining area at Interstate 5 to allow for mixed use, and light industrial land uses;
- Rezoned the Timmen Road area as a Mixed Use district to encourage commercial activity and medium density housing; and
- Created a (R/P) zoning district which allows a mix of residential, commercial and office uses close to downtown.



La Center's ability to grow at Timmen Road and the Interstate 5 junction is dependent upon its ability to build essential capital facilities such as wastewater, internet, water, and roads to serve these areas. This effort requires partnerships with utility providers and funding from public and private entities to contribute to the cost of such essential services. The City will continue to search for and encourage such partnerships. La Center's ability to grow at Timmen Road and the Interstate 5 junction is more attainable with the recent construction of the La Center Road sewer and water lines.

In 2013 the US Census calculated 690 primary jobs (one person holding one job and excluding part time employees) in La Center. Approximately 80% of all jobs in La

Center come from three industries: Arts & Entertainment, Education, & Retail Trade. The largest employer in La Center in 2013, more than 47% of the employment sector, is the gaming industry. (See Table 6 – La Center Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector.)

Educational service, the La Center School District, is the second largest employment sector. The tribal casino opened at the La Center Interchange in 2017, which adversely affected the downtown card room industry. Consequently, this Plan advocates that the city work diligently towards creating alternative forms of employment in our community.

Table 6 – La Center Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector (2013)

	Count	Share
Transportation and Warehousing	2	0.3%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	3	0.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	6	0.9%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	10	1.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	10	1.4%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	14	2.0%
Wholesale Trade	15	2.2%
Information	19	2.8%
Manufacturing	30	4.3%
Public Administration	30	4.3%
Retail Trade	72	10.4%
Educational Services	154	22.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	325	47.1%

The majority of jobs currently in La Center enable the worker to rise above the federal poverty level. Only 15% of the 690 jobs in La Center pay \$15,000 or less per year.

These workers make \$7.50 per hour or less. Thirty nine percent (39%) of the workers earn between 15,000 and \$39,996 per year and 45% of the work force earns more than \$40,000 per year. The work force is relatively young, approximately 59% of the employees working in La Center are between the ages of 30 and 54. The US Census classifies the work force as 83% White, 11.5% Asian, and all others under 2%.

In 2013 the 961 primary workers lived in La Center but only 54 workers, less than 8% of the in-town workers, live and work in La Center.

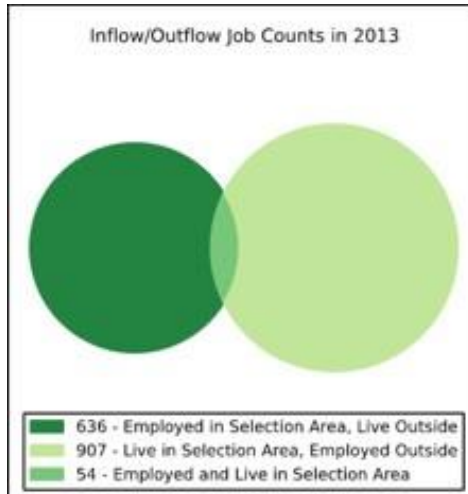


Figure 1 – Inflow and Outflow of Jobs (2013)

The largest employment sector for this out-migration of jobs is Manufacturing, presenting 13.8% of the jobs people travel

for. Health Care and Social Assistance is the second largest sector as 12.3%. (See Table 7 – Outflow Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector.) More than half (53.4%) of these workers earn more than \$39,960 per year.

Table 7 – Outflow Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector (2013)

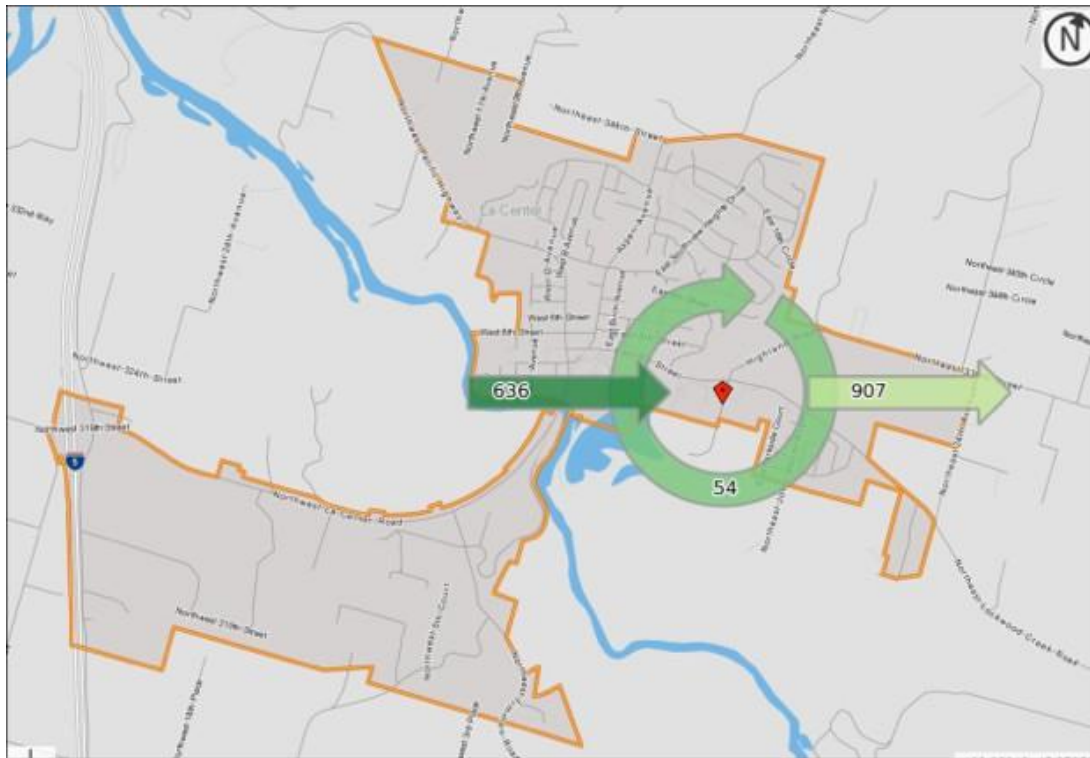
	Count	Share
Manufacturing	133	13.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	118	12.3%
Educational Services	81	8.4%
Construction	78	8.1%
Retail Trade	78	8.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	58	6.0%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	56	5.8%
Public Administration	51	5.3%
Wholesale Trade	48	5.0%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	45	4.7%
Transportation and Warehousing	40	4.2%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	39	4.1%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	33	3.4%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	22	2.3%
Finance and Insurance	19	2.0%
Utilities	17	1.8%
Information	17	1.8%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	15	1.6%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	12	1.2%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1	0.1%

Every work day in 2013 54 people lived and worked in La Center at one of the 690 local jobs. However, 907 La Center residents commuted to jobs outside of La Center. A challenge for La Center is to slow the leakage of better paid workers leaving La Center every day by creating opportunities for job creation in the UGA. The expanded UGA at the I-5 Junction has the potential to generate higher paying jobs.

The MX and RP zoning districts have the potential to generate office and retail jobs. Map 3 is a graphic representation of the inflow and outflow of jobs in La Center.

The challenge for the city is create the opportunity for job growth within the city limits. The city's goals and policies and the zoning districts established for job creating enterprises are a step towards addressing this issue.

Map 3 – Inflow and Outflow of Jobs (2013)



Economic Development Goal

Provide for, encourage, and actively market to industrial and commercial businesses of various sizes in order to attract them to locate within La Center's Urban Growth Area.

Economic Development Policies

- 5.1.1.** Strive toward economic diversity by providing for orderly long-term commercial and industrial growth and an adequate supply of land suitable for compatible commercial and industrial development.
- 5.1.2.** Encourage long-term growth of business.
- 5.1.3.** Support and promote local education programs as a means of improving the quality of high school graduates and the skills of the labor force.

- 5.1.4. Support and participate in activities of the local business organizations to facilitate economic development and diversity in the La Center area.
- 5.1.5. Actively explore means of attracting additional locally oriented commercial activity to the downtown area through incentives, marketing programs, or other methods.
- 5.1.6. Establish benchmarks to measure economic development that has taken place within the city's Urban Growth Boundary.
 - a) The city shall make reasonable efforts to develop an inventory of local economic indicators, such as population, employment, sectors of employment, types and location of business, and sales.
 - b) Economic development planning should include an acknowledgment of the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy, including such factors as land use, transportation, utilities, education, work force, housing, natural and cultural resources, competition and cooperation.
 - c) The City shall consider developing a comprehensive economic development strategy.
 - d) The City shall engage in cooperative relationships with its sister jurisdictions.
- 5.1.7. The city's long term goal is for the La Center Junction to provide an employment area for the benefit of the citizens of La Center and north Clark County.
- 5.1.8. Develop a strategic action plan to help the city prepare for and adjust to potential seismic changes in the city economy at the I-5 Interchange and in the downtown core.

VI Parks, Recreation and Open Space

La Center adopted its first parks master plan in 1991 and has since made great progress in making parks, trails and recreational facilities a priority. In 2008 the City adopted the “Parks Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. The previous parks master plans created a vision that resulted in major improvements, such as, non-motorized



trails connecting community centers and parks, accessibility for special needs, securing land with level topography for formal sports, historic preservation, and expanding greenways. The establishment of Sternwheeler Park on the waterfront is a prime example, combining cultural and recreational opportunities, wetland preservation, and a connection to the City’s history as a riverboat hub. Not only does the park provide open space for residents, it underscores the community’s identity. The city updated the Master Plan in 2016.

The parks, recreation, and open space chapter of the Comprehensive Plan establishes a long-term direction for the city’s parks infrastructure, while the “Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan” is the city’s short term blueprint for acquiring and improving parks, trail and recreation areas. In 2015 and 2016 the city surveyed the community via mailings, the city’s web site and an open house to gauge the community’s appetite for park, trails and open space. The city used the survey responses to help establish the goals and policies of this Chapter.



Existing Conditions

The parks and recreation planning area includes the city limits of La Center (approximately 574.4 acres) plus 314.4 acres of unincorporated lands within the city's urban growth area. Totaled, the planning area encompasses approximately 888.50 acres. Generally, the boundaries of the planning area extend from the Pacific Highway and Interstate 5 to the west, NW Bolen Street to the north, the East Fork of the Lewis River to the south and 309th Street, and NE 24th Avenue to the east. (See Map 4 – Existing Parks and Facilities.)

Community Parks



Pollock Park Boat Launch – The park was constructed in 2018 at the north end of Pollock Road, on the western banks of the Lewis River, west of the La Center Bottoms. This 1.6-acre park is the newest city-owned facility and contains a gravel parking area, ADA accessible parking spaces, picnic tables, and a small boat launch for non-motorized watercraft such as kayaks and canoes. The park is popular with both locals and visitors.



La Center Holley Park – This 11.14 acre community park situated on the south side of 4th Street and Lockwood Road is maintained by the city of La Center. Located near the commercial center of the city, it provides a meeting place for community events and activities. Park facilities include a community center building (which has standing capacity for 245 persons and seated capacity for

114 persons), three baseball fields, one tennis court, swings, slides, covered picnic structure, picnic tables, basketball court, skate area, splash pad, landscaping, walking path, 147 parking spaces, including one ADA parking space, and restroom facilities.



Sternwheeler Park – A 7.44-acre community park located on Bottom Lands between 4th Street and the East Fork of the Lewis River, Sternwheeler Park is a newly developed natural preservation area maintained by the city of La Center. Improvements in this park include play equipment, unique wooden sculptures, restrooms, multi-use trails, wetland preservation, interpretive signs, and public seating for concerts and picnic areas.

Neighborhood Parks



Heritage Park – This 2.05-acre neighborhood park is located north of E. Heritage Loop in Southview Heights, a residential neighborhood just north of downtown. Maintained by the city of La Center, the park facilities include a play structure, swings, walking path, restrooms, picnic tables, benches, a gazebo, and significant landscaped and natural open spaces.



Elmer Soehl Park – This small 0.21-acre neighborhood park is located northeast of the City center at the intersection of 7th St. and Elm Avenue. The city of La Center maintains this park, which includes a bench, play structure, on-street parking, and a chain link fence surrounding the play area.

Open Space Inventory

The primary open space corridors in La Center Planning Area include the McCormick Creek drainage way corridor just outside of the existing western City limits. The East Fork of the Lewis River generally to the west and south of the City limits. The Legacy Lands in the La Center Bottoms. Heritage Trails open space and wetlands in South View Heights. Then finally, the Brezee Creek corridor that bisects La Center, just east of downtown, extending to the Bottoms area and in a northeast direction beyond the La Center High School.

Trail Inventory



Currently, there are four trails in the city of La Center. The Sternwheeler Park Trail is approximately 4,500 linear feet (0.85 miles) and stretches from the park to the La Center Holley Park. The Heritage Park Trail is approximately 2,052 linear feet (0.39 miles) and runs throughout that park and open wetland spaces. The Heritage Trail Extension is approximately 2,055 linear feet (0.39 miles) and connects three subdivisions to the Heritage Park trail system, park and neighborhood. The fourth trail, Brezee Creek Trail, connects to the historical downtown area. It is approximately 2,860 linear feet (0.54 miles) and features wildlife viewing shelters. Combined, La Center has 11,467 linear feet of trails or approximately 2.17 miles.

La Center School Facilities



The La Center comprehensive and capital facilities plans encourage the city to form an interagency agreement with the La Center School District. The agreement would help facilitate and formalize the existing practice of the school district allowing the community at large to make use of school district recreational facilities and property. Both the La Center park system and school district mutually benefit from each other's facilities. The majority of

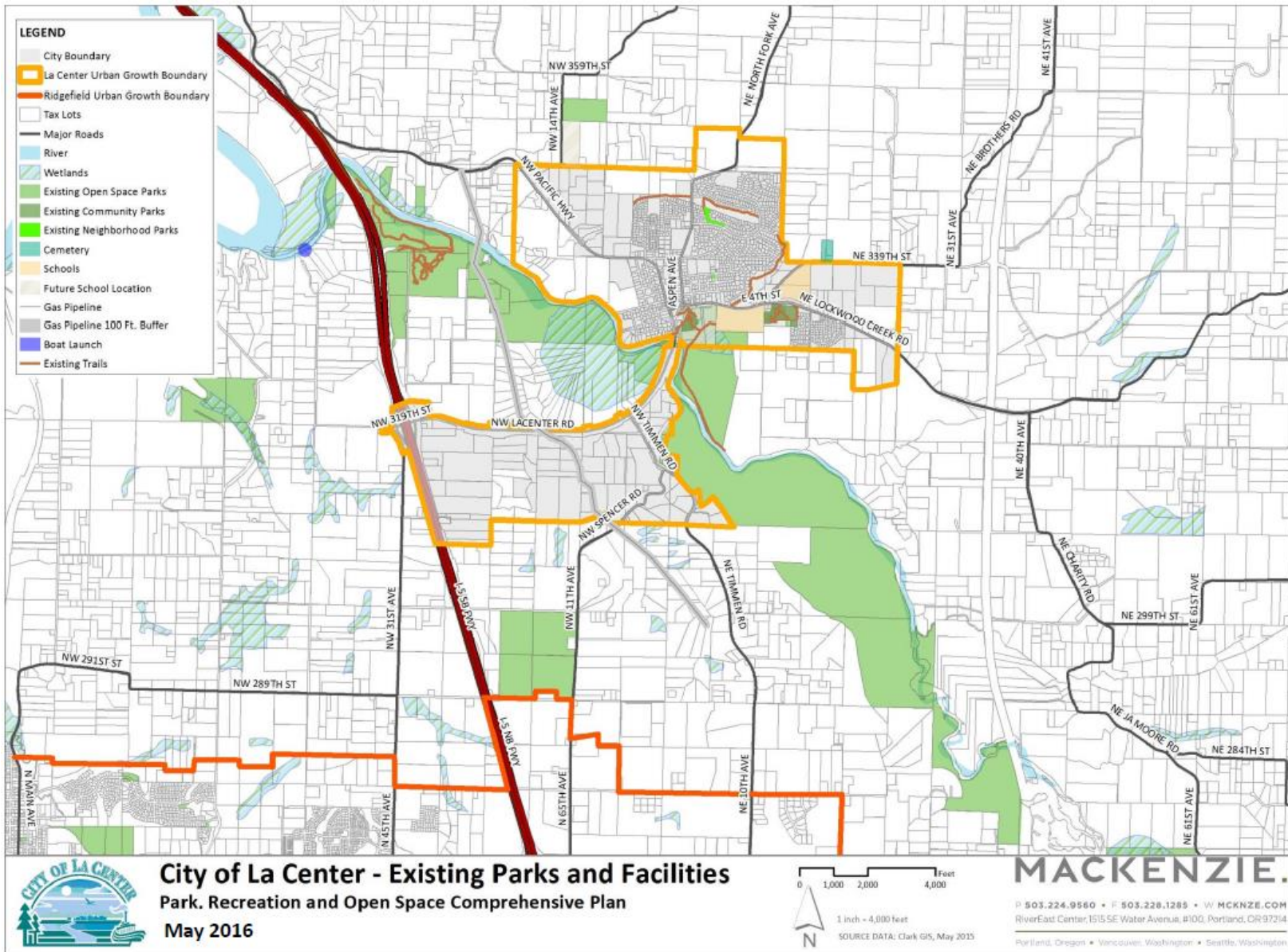
the athletic playing fields within the urban growth area are owned and operated by the La Center School District. These facilities are generally open for public recreational use at no charge. However, the school district charges a small fee for use of the playing fields by profit making ventures. Following is a list of the facilities that exist in the La Center School District:

La Center High School – The public school facility, located at 1780 Highland Road, encompasses about 12 acres and includes football, baseball, softball and soccer fields, and a full-size track.

La Center Elementary School – Located at 700 East 4th Street, the facility totals about 20 acres and includes playgrounds, basketball courts, and baseball and football fields.

La Center Middle School – A new middle school is being built on a 77-acre site at the east end of the City just south of Lockwood Creek Road. The school is being constructed to facilitate approximately 550 students and 41 employees, and includes parking and pedestrian access. The school will have playgrounds and sports courts.

Map 4 – Existing Parks and Facilities



Needs Assessment

The 2016 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan surveyed existing conditions, identified the city park and recreation service area 4) and forecasted future needs based upon the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) level of service standards (LOS) used throughout America. The NPRA standards are provided in Table 8.

Table 8 – NPRA National Standards

Park/Facility Type	Population Ratio (acres/population)
Neighborhood Park	1-2 acres per 1,000 people
Community Park	5-8 acres per 1,000 people
Baseball/Softball	1 field per 5,000 people
Soccer	1 soccer field per 10,000 people
Football	1 football field per 20,000 people
Tennis	1 court per 2,000 people
Basketball	1 court per 5,000 people
Swimming Facilities	1 indoor pool per 20,000 people
Trails	0.5 miles per 1,000 people

The 2016 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan projects the La Center park and recreation needs over the 20-year planning horizon and forecasts that the city will need to invest in new land and facilities as follows (See Map 5 – Proposed Parks and Recreation Service Area).

Regional Boat Launch Trail Head

Improvements would include parking and storm water, a restroom, group picnic shelter, picnic tables, boat launch, benches, interpretive and way finding information and lighting. The boat launch provides access to the East Fork of the Lewis River for small boats, kayaks, canoes and would be a regional launching or unloading point for the planned water trail. The trail head would provide access to the county trail system for multiple user groups, such as biking and equestrian.

Neighborhood Park (NP-1)

A neighborhood park, in the vicinity of Jenny Creek, could serve residents in the northwest area of the city. Task: Acquire a suitable site in the general vicinity on the parks plan in accordance with the design guidelines. If possible the park should connect to the proposed West Side Connector Trail (T-2) or Bolen Creek Trail (T-4).

Neighborhood Park (NP-2)

A neighborhood park in the vicinity of Bolen Creek at NW "E" Avenue could serve residents in the north central portion of the city. Task: Acquire a suitable site in the general vicinity on the parks plan in accordance with the design guidelines. If possible,

the park should connect to the Bolen Creek Trail (T-4) or the Heritage Trail Extension (T-6).

Neighborhood Park (NP-3)

A neighborhood park west of the downtown core just outside the city limits could serve residents in the south west corner of the city. Task: Acquire a suitable site in the general vicinity on the parks plan in accordance with the design guidelines. If possible this trail should connect to the East Fork of the Lewis River Water Front Trail (T-3) and Pacific Highway Pathway (T-5).

Neighborhood Park (NP-4)

A neighborhood park between west 16th Street and West 18th Street west of the Hannas Farm subdivision to serve the future residents in the northwest side of the city. Acquire a suitable site in the general vicinity on the parks plan in accordance with the design guidelines. If possible, the park should connect to Bolen Street Pathway (T-7) and/or the North Fork Avenue Pathway (T-21).

Neighborhood Park (NP-5)

A neighborhood park is recommended in the vicinity of Lockwood Creek Road area. This neighborhood park can serve residents in the east end of the City. Acquire a suitable site in the general vicinity on the parks plan in accordance with the design guidelines. If possible, the park should connect to the Lockwood Creek Road Pathway (T-10), NE Highland Road Pathway (T-9) and La Center Community Park.

Neighborhood Park (NP-6)

A neighborhood park in the vicinity of Pollock Road could serve residents in the southeast corner of the city. Task: Acquire a suitable site in the general vicinity on the parks plan in accordance with the design guidelines. If possible, the park should connect the future County East Fork of the Lewis River Regional trail, planned unit development proposed in the Timmen Landing area, the Timmen Road Pathway (T-14) and/or La Center Road Pathway (T-5).

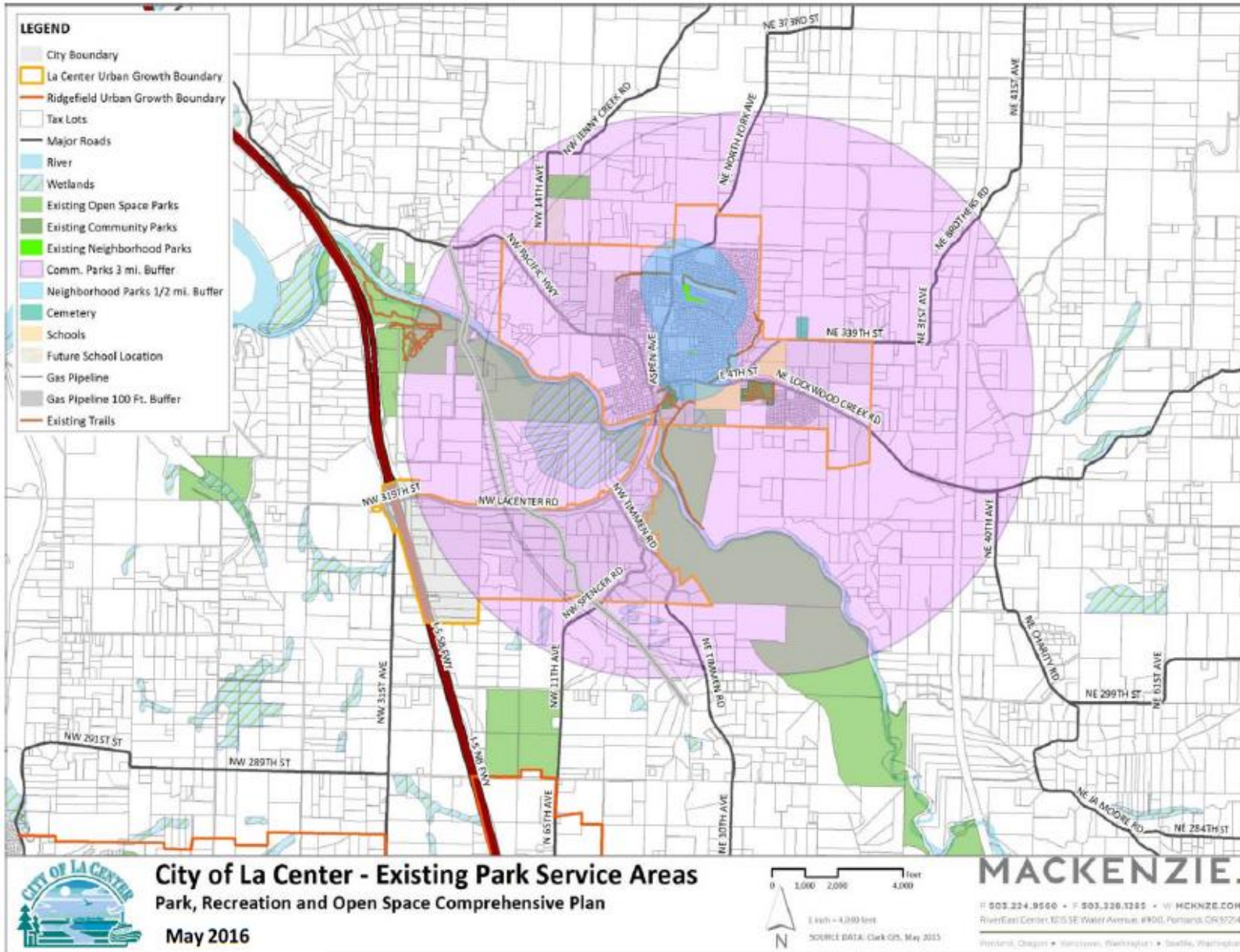
Neighborhood Park (NP-7)

A neighborhood park in the vicinity of NW Timmen Road area could serve residents in the south central end of the city. Task: Acquire a suitable site in the general vicinity on the parks plan in accordance with the design guidelines. If possible, the park should connect to the Timmen Road Pathway (T-14) and/or the NW Spencer Road Pathway (T-15).

Neighborhood Park (NP-8)

A neighborhood park in the vicinity of McCormick Creek could serve residents in the south west corner of the city. Acquire a suitable site in the general vicinity on the parks plan in accordance with the design guidelines. If possible, the park should connect to the McCormick Creek Trail (T-16) and/or the Tri Mountain Trail (T-17).

Map 5 – Proposed Parks and Recreation Service Area



Parks, Recreation & Open Space Goal

The City of La Center shall ensure that park, recreational and open space land is acquired, developed and maintained in an economically efficient way to meet the needs of its residents.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space Policies

- 6.1.1.** Provide for the development of parks in order to meet the recreational needs of the City as described in the Parks chapter of the La Center Capital Facilities Plan.
- 6.1.2.** Continue to coordinate with Clark County, Clark Public Utilities and other agencies to preserve and enhance recreational, educational, wildlife, and wetlands values.
- 6.1.3.** Update the La Center Parks and Recreation Master Plan during the comprehensive plan update period or sooner if the need arises.
- 6.1.4.** Use park impact fees to partially fund park capital facilities.
- 6.1.5.** Accept land dedications, when appropriate, as a partial credit towards impact fees consistent with city park plans and needs.
- 6.1.6.** Encourage and promote the acquisition and development of a citywide pedestrian and bicycle trail system to connect schools, parks, neighborhoods, and other features and facilities.
- 6.1.7.** Pursue the development of facilities and programs consistent with the 2012 Parks & Recreational Needs Assessment survey results.
- 6.1.8.** Develop a stewardship program for open spaces to preserve, enhance, and/or maintain sensitive natural areas and bodies of water within the La Center UGA, as resources are available.
- 6.1.9.** Encourage, support, and initiate activities, where possible, to preserve, conserve or improve the natural shorelines of the East Fork Lewis River, Brezee Creek and McCormick Creek.



VII Historic, Archaeological and Cultural Preservation

Historic Context

The city of La Center is located within territory historically occupied by native Cowlitz and Chinook peoples of the Lower Columbia River. The term “Chinook” refers to both a linguistic classification as well as a cultural one. Traits common to Chinookan-speaking groups include a reliance on aquatic resources (primarily anadromous fish), woodworking (exemplified by planked houses and dugout canoes), twined basketry, untailed clothing, a distinctive art style, and a social emphasis on rank, including the practice of slavery. Ethnographies place the Lewis River Cowlitz in this area at the time of European contact.

The Multnomah sub-group of the Upper Chinookan speakers occupied the Columbia River from near Deer Island to just east of the Washougal River. William Broughton reported Multnomah villages on Wapato Island (now Sauvie Island) in 1792. Lewis and Clark reported two settlements located along Vancouver Lake, and Cathlapottle, located near the mouths of Lake River and the Lewis River.

Native populations centered their tribal activities along major salmon streams, but they also harvested resources from the productive inland prairies. Lodging consisted of cedar longhouses in the winter and temporary camps in the spring through fall as people traveled to traditional areas to dig wapato and camas and seek game and berries. Rivers, such as the East Fork of the Lewis, were important transportation corridors and sources of food.

By the late 18th century, the Native Peoples of the Lower Columbia had come into contact with Euro-American traders who plied the Northwest Coast trading with the natives, primarily in furs. Newcomers carrying disease unknown in the Lower Columbia

Basin devastated the native populations, essentially destroying their traditional lifeways within a single generation.

In 1825, the Hudson Bay Company established Fort Vancouver, the first permanent non-native settlement in the Pacific Northwest. Fort Vancouver was an important trade center and provided a strong foothold for Euro-American settlement. In 1848, by an Act of the United States Congress, the La Center area became part of the Oregon Territory. The earliest map of the La Center area is the 1854 General Land Office map of Township 4 North, Range 1 East, W.M. This map depicts unclaimed land along the shores of the East Fork Lewis River, then known as the "South Fork Cattlepootle River".

The earliest Euro-American settlers to stake a claim in the area were John Pollack in 1849 and John H. Timmen and Aurelius Wilkens who staked claim upriver in 1852. The early homesteaders cleared farms and grazed cattle. By 1870, sternwheelers (or lighter boats, when the water was low) plied the East Fork Lewis River trading dry goods and groceries for cash, butter, eggs and honey. In 1872, at the site of present-day La Center, sternwheeler captain William G. Weir built a house and opened a store and a post office. Mr. Timmen filed the town's first plat in 1875, naming the community "Timmen's Landing".

Important events in the town's early history include:

- 1876 – The region's first commercial logging operations were underway.
- Mid-1880s – the town included two hotels, a Methodist church, a grist mill, a brickyard, a post of the Grand American Army of the Republic, and a grange hall.
- 1888 – The town's name changes to "La Center".
- 1907 – The population reaches approximately 300. Eight sawmills operated within five miles of town, and the town accommodated four general stores, one drugstore, two hotels, one restaurant, one livery stable, two blacksmith shops, one saloon, one hospital, one furniture store and one pool room.
- 1909 – La Center incorporates on August 23rd and Clark County acknowledges the municipality of La Center. Population growth slows and even dips down to 200 people as the nearby forests are logged-out.
- 1918 – The Pacific Highway, the major north-south highway on the West Coast was routed through La Center.
- 1985 – La Center legalized card-room gambling which provided a significant boost to the local tax base.
- 1994 to present – faces explosive growth, slowed only by the Great Recession of 2007.

La Center residents are proud of their history, their connection to the river, and their small town character. However, there are no local buildings or structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. La Center area properties listed on the Clark County Register of Historic Places include:



The Francis G Lawton House (1900) 5404 NE Lockwood Creek Road
Summit Grove Lodge (1927) 30810 NE Timmen Road

Other significant buildings and structures in La Center include:

- La Center Cemetery, West of La Center High School
- La Center Community Library (Old Hospital) (Circa 1905 – moved to present location in 2001), 1402 Lockwood Creek Road
- Old Church and Parsonage (pre-1914), NE corner of 4th Street and Birch Avenue
- La Center Grange (No. 48) (1899), 328 West 5th Street
- La Center Tavern (1923) (Former City Council Chambers), 107 East 4th Street.
- John Pollack's Grave, NW Pollack Road

Historic, Archaeological & Cultural Preservation Goal

La Center shall identify and encourage the conservation of federal, state, and local historic, archaeological, and cultural lands, sites, and structures of significance within the City of La Center and its UGA.

Historic, Archaeological & Cultural Preservation Policies

- 7.1.1.** Work with Clark County and other interested agencies and organizations to help maintain and update the current inventory of historic, archaeological and cultural resources in La Center.
- 7.1.2.** Work to increase recognition and public awareness of historic, archaeological and cultural resources.

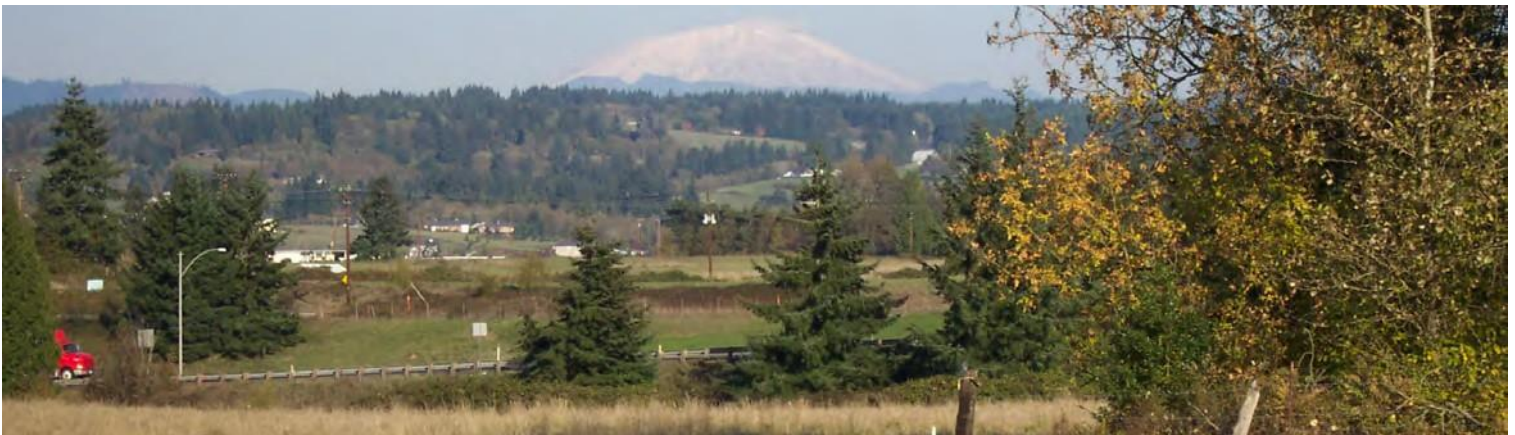
- 7.1.3.** Protect archaeological resources in accordance with state and federal laws.
- 7.1.4.** Provide assistance to developers, landowners, and the construction trade regarding appropriate re-use and rehabilitation of identified historic sites and buildings, when appropriate.
- 7.1.5.** Provide assistance to developers, landowners and others interested in obtaining grants and receiving available tax incentives for re-use and rehabilitation of identified historic sites and buildings, when appropriate.

VIII Urban Growth and Annexation

Growth Management Act (GMA)

The GMA, 36.70A et seq., establishes several mandatory goals for all jurisdictions fully-planning under the GMA. The La Center Comprehensive Plan includes the mandatory goals:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing
- Capital Facilities & Utilities
- Economic Development
- Parks, Recreation & Open Space



A central element of the GMA planning process is the Land Use Chapter. The Land Use Chapter establishes Comprehensive Plan land use designations and Zoning Districts with sufficient land capacity to accommodate the city's 20-year population growth. Three statewide planning goals established by the GMA are relevant to the land use chapter:

- Urban Growth – Encourage new development to occur in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- Reduce Sprawl – Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.

- Property Rights – Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.

County-Wide Planning Policies

The Clark County Community Framework Plan establishes a regional vision for how growth should occur in unincorporated Clark County and the cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Vancouver, Washougal, and Yacolt. See Appendix B: Countywide Plan Policies.

The Framework Plan encourages La Center to develop citywide residential densities averaging four units per net residential acre. Higher densities are planned to occur within medium density residential districts.

The Clark County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan policies establish three land use goals that guide development in the county:

- Adopt UGA boundaries to accommodate residential and employment increases projected within the boundaries over the next 20 years.
- Encourage more compact and efficiently served urban forms, and reduce the inappropriate conversion of land to sprawling, low-density development.
- Integrate land uses to reduce sprawl, promote physical activity through active transportation and foster neighborhood and community identity.

Annexation

The GMA requires counties to establish 20-year Urban Growth Area boundaries to accommodate for projected growth, and encourages cities to annex lands within the UGA and provide urban-level services to these areas. Lands outside the UGA cannot be annexed. The Community Framework Plan adopted by Clark County and other local cities also requires annexation of lands in the UGA. La Center's annexation policies are closely aligned with the Clark County Community Framework Plan.

A property owner or the city may initiate an annexation. The 60 percent petition method is the most common annexation process used in La Center. (See RCW 35A.14.120.) The owners of at least 60 percent of the property value in the proposed annexation area, computed according to the assessed valuation of the property for general taxation purposes, must petition the City Council to annex. The City Council will review the proposal to ensure the annexed area has access to public services consistent with city regulations.

Urban Growth & Annexation Goal

La Center shall establish the orderly transition of unincorporated area within the Urban Growth Boundary from county jurisdiction to within the La Center City limits, either through annexation or incorporation.

Urban Growth & Annexation Policies

- 8.1.1.** Establish an Urban Growth Area as provided under the Growth Management Act In cooperation with the County, other municipalities, and special districts. Lands held in trust or owned by the federal government are not subject to the Growth Management Act. The city may not allow or facilitate urban development on land that is subject to the GMA and designated as rural.
- 8.1.2.** Include within the Urban Growth Area areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the City for the succeeding 20-year period.
- 8.1.3.** Locate Urban Growth primarily in areas already characterized by urban growth that have existing public facilities and service capacities to adequately serve such development, and secondarily in areas already characterized by urban growth that will be served by a combination of both existing public facilities and services that are provided by either public or private sources. Urban governmental services shall be provided in urban areas. Urban governmental services include those sources historically and typically delivered by cities and towns, and include storm and sanitary sewer systems, domestic water systems, street cleaning services, fire and police protection, and other public utilities not normally associated with non-urban areas.
- 8.1.4.** Urban growth is defined as growth that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures, and impermeable surfaces to such a degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of such land for the production of food, other agricultural products, fiber, or the extraction of mineral resources.
- 8.1.5.** La Center and Clark County, consistent with RCW 36.70A, shall review its designated Urban Growth Area or areas, and the densities permitted within the incorporated and unincorporated portions of each urban growth area.
- 8.1.6.** Use base population projections for designation of urban growth areas provided by the Office of Financial Management and appropriate bi-state/ regional sources.
- 8.1.7.** Work with Clark County and special districts to develop realistic levels of service for urban governmental services.

- 8.1.8.** Coordinate plans for providing public facilities and services with plans for designation of urban growth areas, rural uses, and for the transition of rural lands to urban uses.
- 8.1.9.** Plan for public facilities and services so that service provision maximizes efficiency and cost-effectiveness and ensures concurrency.
- 8.1.10.** Establish La Center's Urban Growth Area to be consistent with the goal of protecting the environment and enhancing the city's high quality of life. Establish urban growth areas in a manner consistent with the preservation of land, sites and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.

Regarding Future Annexation

- 1.** Designate areas to be annexed, adopt criteria for annexation and a plan for providing urban services and facilities within the annexation area. Phase annexation to coincide with the city's ability to provide a full range of urban services to areas to be annexed.
- 2.** Do not annex territory subject to the Growth Management Act beyond the City of La Center's Urban Growth Boundary.
- 3.** Developing areas within the urban growth area that are privately owned and eligible for annexation should annex or commit to annex to the City of La Center before receiving urban services. Annexation shall not be required for lands not subject to the GMA, e.g., lands owned or held in trust by the federal government for a federally-acknowledged Indian Tribe, but such lands shall be subject to a development agreement or inter-governmental agreement in exchange for receiving city services. Unincorporated areas that are already urbanized and legally eligible for annexation are encouraged to annex to the City of La Center in order to receive urban services.
- 4.** Within the Urban Growth Area, the City of La Center shall be the exclusive provider of sewer and any other urban services provided by the city. La Center shall not allow the extension of utilities beyond its corporate limits without a development agreement or inter-governmental agreement (in the case of land owned or held in trust by the federal government) or an annexation agreement (in the case of private land or land otherwise legally eligible for annexation. Exceptions may be made in cases where human health is threatened. La Center, Clark County and Clark Public Utilities should coordinate the provision of urban services for land within the UGA consistent with adopted city development standards, but in all events the city shall be the exclusive provider of sewer service to all lands within its UGA.
- 5.** An inter-jurisdictional analysis and process which assesses the fiscal and other impacts related to annexation on the county, the city, and special purpose

districts shall be developed consistent with the policies contained in the annexation chapter.

Regarding La Center's Goals for Growth and Annexation

- 1.** Encourage future growth which balances the need to expand employment and economic opportunities for the people of the La Center area, while maintaining a safe, cohesive, attractive small town atmosphere.
- 2.** Establish an Urban Growth Boundary and annexation policy which encompasses adequate areas for commercial and industrial use in order to enhance the economic and fiscal stability of the city.
- 3.** Encourage urban growth within the city's Urban Growth Area to occur on lands within city limits prior to occurring on lands outside city limits.
- 4.** Urban development within the city's Urban Growth Area may occur on lands outside city limits when the following conditions have been met:
 - a) All urban services needed to serve the development are in place or will be installed concurrent with the development.
 - b) Arrangements for capital facilities prior to annexation have been completed.
 - c) The development can be shown to fulfill a need which cannot be served within the city limits.
 - d) An interlocal agreement is struck with Clark County for land use development review consistent with the City's adopted comprehensive plan.
- 5.** La Center recognizes that annexation depends on the requests of those non-city property owners who would be annexed. The city will provide impacted parties with access to all information needed to make responsible decisions regarding annexation and shall encourage an open discussion of all related issues.
- 6.** Coordinate with Clark County and other appropriate jurisdictions and service providers in establishing and implementing policies regarding annexation by the City. The city's annexation policies and practices shall observe all applicable requirements of the Growth Management Act, the County Wide Planning policies, and other applicable State and County laws and standards.
- 7.** Prioritize development of the I-5 Junction, the Timmen Road/La Center Road intersection, and the city center.
- 8.** Work with Clark County to establish an Urban Reserve Area beyond the Urban Growth Boundary. The purpose of the Urban Reserve Area is to provide an

indication as to where future urban growth should be directed when the 20-year UGA is expanded.

9. Work with Clark County to establish policies to ensure interim development which would preclude or significantly complicate future urbanization does not take place.

IX Environment

La Center's environmental goals and objectives build upon what we already achieved. We recognize that a healthy environment is essential to creating a livable community. The state-of-the-art wastewater treatment facility is prime indication of our focus on the environment and our willingness to invest in it. The numerous parks and trails also show our focus on the environment, as do less obvious things such as the constant maintenance of wastewater drains and the enactment of rules to deal with tree removal at construction sites and the use of invasive plant species.

Environmental conservation will be important to our long-term economic prosperity, and this Chapter reaffirms our desire for environmental sustainability and support of good development decisions. The Environment Chapter provides information about local natural resources. It is the foundation for developing critical area protections and to help property owners and city decision makers make wise and sustainable decisions about where and under what circumstances development will occur. The natural environment of La Center consists of many interrelated components: geology (earth, soil, minerals); biology (living plants, animals microorganisms); water resources (groundwater, surface water, streams); and air. Critical areas, identified in state statute (RCW 36.70A.050), and protected under city regulations (LCMC 18.300 and the La Center Shoreline Master Program).



Existing Conditions

Surface Water – The East Fork of the Lewis River and its tributaries, such as Brezee Creek, Jenny Creek, and McCormick Creek, form the primary drainage system in the area and flow west to the Lewis River and Columbia River. Rivers and other surface waters are important means because: they provide habitat for wildlife and marine creatures, of their scenic value, they convey storm waters away from the land, and for the transportation function they played in the development of La Center.

Ground Water – Ground water is replenished from precipitation and surface water filtering through the ground to aquifers. The ground water system is interconnected, and localized pollution in one area may influence the quality of water used elsewhere. The Critical Areas Ordinance specifies the types of land uses that are acceptable within the aquifer recharge area. All proposed developments in the zone will be required to comply with the Critical Areas Ordinance.

Frequently Flooded Areas – The Federal Emergency Management Agency has defined the extent of the 100-year flood boundary (i.e. areas subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year) in order to establish actuarial flood insurance rates and assist communities in efforts to promote sound flood plain management.

Development on flood plains retards their ability to absorb water, restricts the flow of water from land areas, and causes hazards downstream. The extent of flood plain areas in La Center is limited to the East Fork of the Lewis River, a short reach of Brezee Creek.

Wetlands – Wetlands are fragile ecosystems that assist in the reduction of erosion, flooding, and ground and surface water pollution. Wetlands also provide an important habitat for wildlife, plants, and fisheries. The city has wetlands inventory information from the National Wetlands Inventory [NWI] maps. The city also has maps showing hydric soils. The NWI and hydric soil maps guide the city in determining where wetlands might exist.

The city's wetlands program includes provisions for acquisition of certain high value wetlands, restoration of degraded wetlands, public education about wetlands values and management, use of innovative land use techniques to minimize impacts of development, and control density around key wetlands. Others include scenic and recreational, agricultural, and water supply recharge. In general, development within delineated wetlands is prohibited.

Air Quality – There is limited information available regarding air quality in the La Center area. This indicates that no chronic problems exist or events have occurred to warrant investigation by the Southwest Clean Air Agency or the Department of Ecology. There has not been any development in or around the community that causes long-term adverse impacts to the air shed, and we can assume that local residents will continue to enjoy clean air for years to come.

Vegetation and Wildlife – Disturbance of ecological communities and division into isolated habitats are the major cause for the decline in animal and plant species. Conserving viable ecological habitats in an interconnected system is the most effective way of conserving vegetation and wildlife. Many habitats that are conserved for environmental or scenic reasons cannot survive division into small isolated land parcels.

Species of interest that are known to frequent or inhabit the East Fork of the Lewis River basin and which the city protects through implementation of the Critical Areas Ordinance are listed in Table 9.

Table 9 – Species of Interest⁷

Common name	Species	Status
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Federal Species of Concern
Coho Salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>	Federal Threatened
Chinook	<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	Federal Threatened
Fall Chinook Salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	Federal Threatened
Fall Chum	<i>Oncorhynchus keta</i>	NA
Dolly Varden/Bull Trout	<i>Salvelinus malma</i>	N/A
Cutthroat	<i>Oncorhynchus clarki</i>	Federal Candidate
Steelhead	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	Federal Threatened
Sockeye Salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus nerka</i>	N/A

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas: The city relies on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife classification system for fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas. The city recognizes that the urban environment is shared with fish and wildlife and that the associated habitats exist within a regional habitat system. Consequently, the city will coordinate the local management program with other jurisdictions in the bioregion. The city protects fish and wildlife areas through application of the Critical Areas Ordinance.

Habitat areas of interest which the city protects through implementation of the Critical Areas Ordinance are listed in Table 10.

Table 10 – Habitat Areas of Interest⁸

Common Name	Priority Area
Oak Woodlands	Terrestrial Habitat
Freshwater/Forested Shrub Wetland	Aquatic Habitat
Freshwater Emergent Wetland	Aquatic Habitat
Waterfowl Concentrations	Regular concentrations
Cavity-nesting ducks	Breeding area

Open Space: Open spaces perform important functions, such as, buffering different land uses, increasing property values at the edge of open space, and improving the quality of life in the community. Open space can include parks, trails, utility corridors, critical

⁷ Source: <http://apps.wdfw.wa.gov/phsontheweb/>, see also Appendix B, WDFW PHS 2013 Distribution by County

⁸ Source: Id

areas and their buffers. One mechanism the city uses to create open space is by application of the Critical Areas Ordinance during the development review process.

Applicable Legislation

Federal Endangered Species Act

Our area contains critical habitat needed for endangered anadromous fish species. Critical habitat areas include the East Fork of the Lewis River, Brezee and McCormick Creeks. The listing process for endangered anadromous fish species is handled by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and NOAA is responsible for identifying critical habitat and developing recovery plans. The City of La Center responds to the federal Endangered Species Act mandates through a variety of regulatory and action-based mechanisms.

Federal Clean Water Act (Section 404)

The city contains several federally regulated wetlands areas, protected under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Wetlands dredge and fill activities are regulated at the federal level by the U.S. Army Corps (the Corps) of Engineers. A person or agency having a project that impacts wetlands must submit a permit application to the Corps for review, such an application also being reviewed by the Washington Department of Ecology.

Shoreline Management Act

Washington's Shoreline Management Act (the Act) governs the use and development of Washington's shorelines and creates a unique partnership between local governments and state government. The goal is to provide responsible shoreline use and development, environmental protection, and public access. Local governments develop programs based on the Act and state guidance. La Center has such a program and participates in its administration.

Growth Management Act

The GMA defines critical areas as wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas. Jurisdiction planning under the GMA must develop programs to protect and manage critical areas based on Best Available Science. RCW 36.70A.060 and 36.70A.172. La Center has developed and administers a critical area review program consistent with Best Available Science.

Environmental Goal

La Center shall ensure the preservation and protection of natural resources, critical areas, open space, and recreational lands within its Urban Growth Area through adequate and compatible policies and regulations.

Environmental Policies

Regarding Critical Areas

- 1.1.11. Adopt Best Available Science guidelines for environmental protection.
- 1.1.12. Ensure that the following areas are adequately protected from development:
 - 1.1.13. Wetlands
 - 1.1.14. Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water
 - 1.1.15. Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
 - 1.1.16. Frequently flooded areas
 - 1.1.17. Geologically hazardous areas
 - 1.1.18. Clearly define, identify and update maps of various types of environmentally critical areas throughout the City, using federal, state or other accepted definitions where appropriate
 - 1.1.19. Update, develop and/or maintain regulatory and incentive programs for the protection and conservation of environmentally critical areas, including wildlife habitat areas, wetlands and shorelines, and the underlying watershed processes. Emphasis should be given to policies and standards to protect and conserve critical areas as larger blocks, corridors or interconnected areas, rather than in isolated parcels. Coordinate and cooperate with other agencies to protect environmentally critical lands, particularly ecosystems and watershed processes that are located within the City's UGA.
 - 1.1.20. Encourage the use of northwest native plants in landscaping, particularly adjacent to critical areas, and discourage the use of invasive non-natives.
 - 1.1.21. Protect and conserve groundwater and surface water as a resource for drinking water, commerce, recreation and for wildlife based on quality and quantity.
 - 1.1.22. Reduce risk to life and property from hazards associated with development in geologically hazardous and floodplain areas by:
 - a) Prohibiting, discouraging, or mitigating development in areas of steep slopes or other areas with high potential for geological hazards;

- b) Limiting the removal of vegetation during development in order to reduce storm runoff and erosion;
- c) Requiring geo-technical studies to determine construction methods and technologies necessary to further public safety in geologically hazardous areas, including landslide areas and steep slopes. Development design and construction technology used shall be appropriate to the soil limitations of the particular site; and
- d) Continuing to prohibit development in the floodway. In the flood fringe, development impacts shall be mitigated through the use of appropriate construction designs, methods and timing. Floodplain functions will be protected to the extent possible.

1.1.23. Encourage habitat protection that will provide a diverse and sustainable population of fish and wildlife.

1.1.24. Solicit review assistance from the Department of Fish and Wildlife for development proposals directly affecting state or federal sensitive, threatened, or endangered species.

1.1.25. Limit clearing of vegetation from stream banks, and restore the integrity of stream banks where degraded by development.

Regarding Endangered Species

1.1.26. Consult with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDF&W) when future land uses have a probable impact on listed species and their habitat.

1.1.27. Establish appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures that functionally replace or improve affected species habitat.

Regarding Stormwater

1.1.28. Implement stormwater basin planning to effectively address stormwater management in developed and urbanizing areas.

1.1.29. Adopt stormwater standards substantially equivalent to current adopted Washington State standards, and continue to monitor and update the stormwater control ordinance and related policies and standards to implement and enhance stormwater management.

1.1.30. Maintain clear development review standards for the control of the quantity and quality of stormwater discharge from development projects, which emphasize on-site retention, treatment and infiltration of run-off to minimize impacts on the established wastewater system and local streams, rivers, wetlands, and lakes.

- 1.1.31. Limit the removal of vegetation during development in order to reduce stormwater run-off and erosion.

Regarding Shorelines

- 1.1.32. Ensure that land use designations and development activities adjacent to shorelines are compatible with the State Shoreline Management Act and consistent with the City of La Center Shoreline Master Program, which is a chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Regarding Air Quality

- 1.1.33. Develop and implement policies that help to preserve air quality.
- 1.1.34. Evaluate potential impacts to local air quality during the development review process.

Regarding Water Quality

- 1.1.35. Protect the quality and quantity of ground water used for public purposes and, through Critical Area regulations and other mechanisms, shall identify and protect wellhead areas, critical aquifer recharge areas and surface water sources.

Regarding Wastewater

- 1.1.36. Design and develop infrastructure supportive of anadromous species habitat (e.g., effluent purity, temperature, and turbidity) to the extent practicable.

X Government

Good Government

The goal of the Center city government is to provide open, transparent and accountable public service. In La Center, citizen voices matter. City Council meetings are well attended and people never fail to speak during the public comment period set aside at every meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission.

The five-member City Council is the legislative body and sets policies for the City of La Center by ordinance, resolution and motions decided by a majority vote. Council terms are four years in length. The La Center Planning Commission consists of six citizen volunteers. The role of the Planning Commission is be a positive link between the community and city government by focusing on land use issues and regulations affecting the health, safety and quality of life of residents and businesses.

Procedural Goal

La Center shall plan for the community in an open and objective manner. The city will strive to have maximum citizen input so that its decisions will benefit the community as a whole.



Procedural Policies

1.1.37. Strive to the maximum long-term benefit of the community as a whole, rather than any individual or individuals, when developing and implementing the Comprehensive Plan and associated ordinances, and when processing land use applications upon completion of the plan and ordinances.

- 1.1.38.** Under no circumstances will any individual or individuals be deprived from obtaining all economic use of their property, as defined by state and federal law, due to governmental action.
- 1.1.39.** Conduct the development and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and associated ordinances and the processing of land use applications in an open and public manner. The city shall make an effort to include as broad a range of citizens and representatives of the La Center community as is reasonably possible.
- 1.1.40.** Develop and implement a zoning ordinance and a land use review process which allows for location of uses in a manner consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and implementing ordinances.
- 1.1.41.** Process and render decisions for land use applications in an objective, open, consistent and professional manner, with full opportunity for public comment and input, in accord with the substantive and procedural goals and standards of the Comprehensive Plan and associated ordinances. All land use decisions shall be enforced to the fullest extent possible.
- 1.1.42.** Require new development to pay an appropriate share of development costs including extension and improvement of public facilities and, where required, mitigate the adverse impacts of development on neighboring properties and the UGA as a whole.
- 1.1.43.** Adopt zoning or other ordinances necessary to implement this Comprehensive Plan.
- 1.1.44.** Revise the Comprehensive Plan annually or on an emergency basis, as necessary.

Governmental Coordination Goal

La Center shall maximize governmental efficiencies and minimize duplication of public efforts.

Governmental Coordination Policies

- 1.1.45.** Work cooperatively with Clark County in the implementation of the County-wide Plan Policies.
- 1.1.46.** Work with the State of Washington and affected local units of government to ensure that all public planning efforts are coordinated.
- 1.1.47.** The La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan is designed to be consistent with the Clark County Comprehensive Plan and, to the extent reasonable and practicable, should be interpreted consistent with one another.

- 1.1.48.** Essential state and regional public facilities are depicted on the La Center Capital Facilities Plan maps.
- a) In the event that additional, essential state or regional facilities are identified, a plan amendment shall be required.
 - b) When siting state and regional public facilities, land use compatibility, economic, social and environmental impacts shall be considered. The siting of these facilities shall be consistent with the La Center comprehensive plan, capital facilities plan and development regulations. The City shall not construe its planning documents to preclude the siting of essential public facilities as defined by RCW 36.70A.200(1) and (2).
 - c) State or regional facilities which generate substantial travel demand shall be sited along or near major public transit corridors and shall mitigate their adverse impact to the La Center transportation system.
- 1.1.49.** Amend the La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan and Capital Facilities Plan based upon changing circumstances or public need.
- a) A plan amendment may be initiated by public bodies or private individuals in a manner consistent with Title 18 of the La Center Municipal Code.
 - b) Amendments shall be consistent with the language and intent of applicable state or federal law and the City Council shall make a finding of compliance with such laws prior to adopting a plan amendment.
 - c) Prior to adopting a plan amendment, the City shall notify Clark County of its intent to amend the plan and of the substantive content of the amendment. Prior to adoption of any plan amendment, the City shall make a finding that the plan amendment is consistent with the goals and policies of the La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan and applicable portions of the Clark County Comprehensive Plan and County-wide Plan Policies.
 - d) Plan amendments, other than emergency amendments, shall be considered in conjunction with the annual update of the La Center Urban Area Comprehensive Plan.

