



# Policy Workshop Summary

October 21, 2023

This document summarizes feedback collected during the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Goal and Policy Workshop held on October 21st, 2023. The Workshop brought together members of the City Council, Planning Commission, and other City Commissioner to review the existing Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. The Workshop was designed to collect high-level direction on how goals and policies should be updated and amended to meet new state, regional, and local planning requirements while reflecting community aspirations and local context.

Event participants were broken into small groups to discuss each Comprehensive Plan Element. Each group’s feedback was collected digitally by a note-taker and captured by a group scribe on notepads. Groups also took turns reporting out their key discussion points to the larger group. Some invitees, including those who were unable to attend the in-person event, provided additional feedback digitally before and after the Workshop via a collaborative PDF annotation software called Konveio. The following summarizes the key themes collected for each Comprehensive Plan Element.

## Attendees:

Rituja Indapure	Sid Gupta	Mark Baughman	John Bachman
Ajay Chakrapani	Seyed Safavian	Pam Stuart	Karen Howe
Kent Treen	Kerry Bosworth	Kali Clark	Roisin O’Farrell
Joyce Bottenberg	Sudeshna Dixit	Sudharani Sunkara	Mike Bresko
Nancy Way		Grace McIntryre	Julie Varness
Robert Ruiz			

## Staff + Consultants:

Scott MacColl	Jeff Arango
David Pyle	Lesley Bain
Anjali Myer	Sarah Lukins
Audrie Starsy	Tyler Quinn-Smith
Kellye Hilde	
Miryam Laytner	
Evan Fisher	
Kevin Teague	



# Land Use

## Workshop Themes

- The Land Use Element is foundational to how Sammamish grows: it should ensure a healthy and equitable balance of land uses, appropriate infrastructure, and a development pattern that is both economically and environmentally sustainable.
- The Land Use Element should help define and enhance Sammamish's community identity. Its policies must protect the natural environment while providing high-quality places to live, work, and play. It's also a tool to implement urban design best practices and differentiate the physical characteristics between neighborhoods and mixed-use centers.
- It establishes a clear hierarchy between different types of neighborhoods and activity nodes. The range of urban typologies (residential neighborhoods, neighborhood centers, mixed-use centers, urban villages, and activity centers) must be clearly articulated in maps and policies.
- The Land Use Element must avoid neighborhood character, quality of life, and other nebulous terminology. Instead, the goals, policies, and supporting information in this element should clearly define what makes Sammamish unique and prioritize values for sustainability and equity.
- It should implement the City's goals for climate resilience and mitigation, a distinctive parks system, and the Emerald Necklace. The Future Land Use Map and corresponding policies should integrate wildlife corridors, tree canopy preservation, WUI best practices, and other climate mitigation measures across the city and dictate how new development can reduce GHG and VMT.
- Coordination with public facilities and local schools is critical to the Land Use Element.
- Connectivity between new and existing neighborhoods must be prioritized. The element must ensure a balanced distribution of land uses and require street or non-motorized connections to fix the limited transportation network (no more culs-de-sac).
- Community benefits for subarea planning and other large-scale development should be well-articulated.

## New Policy Direction (if any)

- Implement clear design standards and urban design best practices to differentiate neighborhoods and strengthen community identity.
- Integrate climate mitigation best practices and Emerald Necklace vision in FLUM and policies.
- Create connectivity requirements
- Strengthen coordination between new development, infrastructure needs, public facilities, and local schools



## Non-policy Items

- Clear definitions and direct terminology
- Establish community benefits and explain subarea planning process (generally)

# Housing

## Workshop Themes

- Refined and new housing policies and actions must include incentives for what we need (diverse housing types affordable to a range of incomes) and discourage what we don't (McMansions).
- The Housing Element must also emphasize the strategies beyond zoning required to make affordable housing feasible: Funding opportunities, using publicly-owned land, facilitating new public-private partnerships, and innovative ways to reduce development costs.
- Policies and actions must prioritize context-sensitivity and urban design in new and existing neighborhoods. Design standards can reinforce building traditions unique to Sammamish (e.g. craftsman) and thoughtful approaches to infill can preserve existing homes and natural features.
- Stronger and more direct policy language with stricter mandates, such as density minimums, must be applied throughout the Housing Element. Similarly, ambiguous language must be eliminated.
- The Housing Element should double as an educational tool for this highly-complex topic.
- It must include effective mechanisms to monitor progress toward affordable housing allocation and local housing goals. Anything we can include to ensure accountability is key.
- HOA coordination is required to enable more housing choice citywide.
- Climate resilience and mitigation best practices must be integrated in housing policy and actions.
- The Housing Element must clearly articulate specific housing types that are necessary to support existing and future household demographics.
- Goals, policies, and actions for housing affordability must satisfy state mandates but also framed to support the next generation.
- The Housing Element must align with Economic Development to rectify the current imbalance of housing and jobs.

## New Policy Direction (if any)

- Specific incentives (and disincentives).
- Enable publicly-owned land for housing development with affordability bonuses.



- Directives to spur new partnerships.
- Directives to collaborate with HOAs for more housing choice in CCRs.
- Integrate climate mitigation and resilience best practices.

#### Non-policy Items

- Clear definitions and direct terminology
- Establish effective monitoring mechanisms
- Clearly link specific housing typologies with relevant household demographics

## Environment & Conservation

#### Workshop Themes

- This element must be improved for navigation and useability: Eliminate redundancies, reorganize, shorten, and clarify priorities.
- Balance the protection of the natural world with built environment and development. Clarify what can be done by individual landowners to enhance habitat, decrease water usage, and reduce the carbon footprint at the property-level.
- Education must be included in the element or an outcome of implementation: wetlands, passive versus active uses in the natural environment, local vulnerabilities to natural hazards, tree management, and strengthen the connection to smart growth and housing densification.
- Missing components of the Environment and Conservation Element: the role of forestry professionals, solid-waste pollution, invasive species, green roofs, community gardens, pollinator pathways, fish passage, opportunities for HOA tracts, and drought tolerant plants.
- This element should include policies that protect forested or open space areas without critical area designations.
- Incentives are required for individual landowners, institutions, and businesses to implement stormwater and transition to low-impact, drought tolerant yards.
- Policies need to integrate climate action.
- Policies and actions must balance critical areas, buffers, and other habitat with wildfire vulnerabilities.
- Regular monitoring.

#### New Policy Direction (if any)

- Remove statements of fact
- Individual parcel contribution toward wildlife habitat, species selection, tree management



- Integrate climate action (most via new Climate Element, but some here too)
- Craft development standards, rebates, and other incentives to encourage stormwater implementation, species selection, ground cover, etc.
- Establish criteria for protecting/designating forested or open space lands that don't have critical area protections.
- Establish new policies or actions that create City forestry professionals and manage solid-waste pollution, invasive species, green roofs, community gardens, pollinator pathways, fish passage, opportunities for HOA tracts, and drought tolerant plants.
- Coordinate with land use policy and FLUM to strengthen wildlife corridors and acknowledge vulnerabilities to natural hazards.

#### Non-policy Items

- Clear definitions and direct terminology
- Efficient organization and priority-setting
- Educational sidebars
- Strengthen connection to other elements: land use, housing, parks, climate and resiliency

## Transportation

#### Workshop Themes

- Local transit investment is needed to connect people to jobs, activities, and regional transit routes.
- Rethink LOS and concurrency to prioritize non-motorized modes. Leverage private development by requiring multimodal improvements as a condition for approval.
- Support non-motorized opportunities via more trails, including private trails, and by connecting dead-end streets.
- Coordinate construction to minimize transportation delay.
- Co-locate EV infrastructure for bikes and cars.
- Emergency considerations must be included in the Transportation Element to support rapid mobility on/off the plateau.
- Walk/Bike/Roll support: bike lockers, street design, dedicated bus/bike lanes, bridges, citywide bike program, and bike parking/charging.
- Create and improve shelters, lighting, seating, and other pedestrian infrastructure to support transit.
- Strategies for funding limitations and opportunities.
- Monitor travel times for all modes to evaluate progress.



#### New Policy Direction (if any)

- Establish a micro-transit system locally.
- Rework LOS standards and concurrency requirements to prioritize non-motorized modes.
- Require trail connections, disallow dead-ends, and enable new trails between disconnected neighborhoods.
- Establish development standards that require non-motorized amenities.
- Improve street design standards.
- Funding strategies

## Capital Facilities & Utilities

#### Workshop Themes

- The existing electric grid needs to be assessed for gaps, and capacity adjustments made by adding alternative clean energy sources, especially solar.
- The utilities element needs to emphasize the importance of partnerships with local private purveyors, as not every utility is city-owned.
- Resilience for utilities (undergrounding utilities, water supply monitoring) and facilities (emergency/community centers, stormwater runoff management) will be key to resilience moving forward.
- Public broadband should be explored as an equitable and scalable solution for internet access, particularly as it relates to the rise in work-from-home.
- Cybersecurity measures that protect infrastructure should not be forgotten, as this is a rising threat to public safety that has impacted other communities.
- Equity considerations should be incorporated into all strategies.

#### New Policy Direction (if any)

- Emergency management facilities should be expanded
- Exploring public/municipal-owned broadband should be prioritized
- Prioritize transition to a sustainable power grid

#### Non-policy Items

- Reframe the goals and policies to make them more impactful. Right now they read as boring, despite being a vital part of the plan/city's future.
- Emergency management plan (and facilities) need an evaluation and update



# Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

## Workshop Themes

- Parks can be better utilized as active spaces and community gathering places. Potential ways to involve the community include:
  - Structured recreation activities like intramural sports, facilitation of unstructured play as well
  - Music in the park
  - Community classes held in parks
  - Hosting sports tournaments
  - Renting spaces for private events
  - Bringing in food trucks
  - Co-use with neighborhood commercial
  - The amount of park space available means that this does not need to come at the expense of passive or non-structured uses as they currently exist
- Development of the Emerald Necklace should be a goal and used to institute policies to support wildlife corridors and tree canopy while tying into economic development.
- Connecting the parks system to one another (Emerald Necklace) as well as to the wider regional trail network is important. Parks also serve as wildlife corridors.
- Land acquisition is not a vital concern, though it could be done piecemeal through discussions with people interested in legacy-gifting property.
- Creating parks amenities that serve an aging population/changing population needs is important.

## New Policy Direction (if any)

- Parks can work for Sammamish beyond being green/open spaces. Using them as community assets and as opportunities for economic development and gathering places can strengthen community ties.
- The existing focus of the policies on new athletic fields and other recreation facilities can be pulled back.

## Non-policy Items

- Some goals are too specific (naming specific parks and parcels).
- Current policies about actualizing the Emerald Necklace are too vague for such a key component of Sammamish's identity and future.
- Need to have emergency plan more accessible to the public – parks can be a place for evacuation/act as resilience hubs.



# Economic Development

## Workshop Themes

- Focusing on smaller, local businesses can provide opportunities for both economic development and arts and culture.
- Business incubators could be a way to help local entrepreneurs get off the ground.
- Mixed use areas with commercial/residential and community gathering spaces would be most attractive and help define Sammamish's identity.
- Incorporating the wealth of existing parks into these plans would help create places to enjoy and linger.
- Development should serve the needs of the existing community first (economic engines do not match the existing population level)
  - Broadband infrastructure to support work from home is going to need major updates.
  - Putting amenities closer to where people live can capture economic productivity.

## New Policy Direction (if any)

- Strive for economic development that matches the increasing cultural diversity of the population.
- Developing new mixed-use areas to serve as economic and cultural hubs.
- Work from home is here to stay, meeting residents where they are at by co-locating amenities will help boost economic activity.

# Climate Change & Resiliency

## Workshop Themes

- Green energy infrastructure, including electric vehicles, solar, and natural gas to electric conversion, is an area where the City can act as a regional leader.
- Prioritizing responsible waste management includes an increased focus compost and recycling, but also finding new and creative ways to reduce and reuse unwanted materials.
  - Repairing instead of replacing
  - Reuse of rejected items
  - Tool library
  - Little free library
  - Public art





- Designing buildings for passive thermal regulation (canopy cover, cross-ventilation, envelope design) and stormwater management (green roofs, vegetation) can beautify while being performant.

New Policy Direction (if any)

- Incentives and dedicated funding for energy conversion and building design will be vital for success across the private sector