

**STAFF REPORT  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TEXT AMENDMENT  
LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT**

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**I. DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENT**

The request has been initiated by the City of Sumner for a Comprehensive Plan Text Amendment addressing policies related to Low Impact Development (LID).

**II. WHY THE AMENDMENT IS BEING PROPOSED**

The applicant, the City of Sumner, is requesting the amendment because Low Impact Development is a growing and progressive science and is becoming more common as an alternative to more conventional stormwater control techniques and methods. These methods are recognized by environmental agencies such as Department of Ecology, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and federal services as a preferred alternative for controlling and managing stormwater run-off.

**III. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT CRITERIA**

Only those amendments which are found to be in substantial compliance with all criteria listed below shall be approved (SMC 18.56.147(N)):

- 1. An amendment is necessary to resolve inconsistencies between the Sumner comprehensive plan and other city plans or ordinances; or, to resolve inconsistencies between the Sumner comprehensive plan and other jurisdictions' plans or ordinances.**

*The proposed text amendment is necessary to resolve inconsistencies between the Sumner Comprehensive Plan and the Department of Ecology Stormwater Manual and an ever growing body of knowledge related to these alternative methods of managing and controlling stormwater run-off. Amendments create greater consistency with the overall Environment goals in the Comprehensive Plan.*

- 2. Conditions have so changed since the adoption of the Sumner comprehensive plan that the existing goals, policies, objectives, and/or map classifications are inappropriate.**

*Over the last 10 years, Low Impact Development concepts have moved from a progressive and somewhat experimental level to mainstream acceptance by the environmental community, engineering community, and urban planners for stormwater management and control. In order to keep up with this changing technology it is necessary to update and amend goals and/or policies related to LID.*

**3. The proposed amendment is consistent with the overall intent of the goals of the Sumner comprehensive plan.**

*Goals and policies in the Environment Element of the Comprehensive Plan pertain to the amendment request and are summarized below.*

*The Environment Element contains policy 1.4 which states, “Protect surface water quality and quantity from significant degradation.” (Page 72). Likewise, Policy 1.4.6 specifically addresses the need to “seek opportunity to implement “low impact development” technology such as porous asphalt, bio-retention, green roofs and other innovative methods for infiltrating, metering, and treating stormwater run-off.” The amendments as proposed would expand upon this and provide greater clarification for LID and protection of the stormwater quality and metering of quantity.*

**4. The proposed amendment is consistent with chapter 36.70A RCW, the county-wide planning policies for Pierce County, and the applicable Multi-county planning policies.**

*Consistency with GMA*

*The Environment goal in the Growth Management Act (GMA) pertains specifically to this amendment request (RCW 36.70A.020 (10)). The Environment goal in GMA is intended “to protect the environment and enhance the state’s high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.” This amendment would both protect water quality and potentially water availability. LID techniques focus on infiltration of water back into the groundwater thereby indirectly promoting water availability, while the techniques are also intended to preserve and increase water quality.*

*Overall, the proposal is consistent with the Growth Management Act.*

*Consistency with CPPs*

*The County-wide planning policies, which pertain to the proposed amendment, are found in the Natural Resources, Open Space, and Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Lands element.*

*Policy 20 speaks to protection of habitat for Endangered Species especially salmonid species through protection of water quality (page 35). Furthermore, Policy 25 focuses specifically on each city maintaining or enhancing “water quality through control of runoff and best management practices to maintain natural aquatic communities and beneficial uses.” While not specifically mentioned as LID, “best management practices” are becoming more LID focused with the ultimate goal being the same, increased water quality and protection of natural systems and habitats. Overall, the LID policies are consistent with improving water quality and natural habitat and are consistent with the County-wide planning policies.*

*Consistency with VISION 2040*

*The multi-county planning policies (VISION 2040) that pertain to this proposal are found in the Environment Element. The goal related to water quality stating that “The region will meet or do better than standards established for water quality. The quality of the water*

*flowing out of the region—including Puget Sound—should be as good or better than the quality of water entering the region,”(page 39). Furthermore, the specific policies speak to “hydrological functions” being “restored to a more natural state,” (page 39, Policy MPP-En-13). And “Restore—where appropriate and possible—the region’s freshwater and marine shorelines, watersheds...to a natural condition for ecological function and value.” (page 39, Policy MPP-En-14). The inclusion of more specific policies related to LID in the Comprehensive Plan only strengthens these regional goals as LID is a more natural way to deal with stormwater run-off therefore benefitting water quality and hydrologic functions.*

*Overall, the proposal would be consistent with the VISION 2040 multi-county planning policies.*

- 5. Where an amendment to the comprehensive plan map is proposed, the proposed designation is adjacent to property having a similar and compatible designation, or the subject property is of sufficient size, or other conditions are present.**

*A Comprehensive Plan Map amendment is not proposed.*

- 6. Environmental impacts have been disclosed, and measures have been included to reduce possible adverse impacts.**

*An Addendum to the Final Environmental Impact Statement Comprehensive Plan Update, October 2004 has been completed under a separate cover to analyze impacts, however, given that the LID methods and techniques would actually reduce impacts from development, this would be a potential mitigation measure that could reduce adverse impacts from development overall.*

- 7. Potential ramifications of the proposed amendment to other comprehensive plan elements and supporting plans have been considered and satisfactorily addressed.**

*Depending on the amount of land and expense required to implement LID techniques on the ground, there may be a potential impact to housing affordability and development potential. However, in light of the conventional techniques, LID has benefits related to aesthetics, and less land consumption. As these techniques become more common and technology advances, there will continue to be added efficiencies in implementation.*

#### **IV. PUBLIC/AGENCY COMMENTS**

PUBLIC: None at this time.

AGENCY: None at this time.

**V. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends APPROVAL.

**VI. PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Planning Commission recommends APPROVAL.

**VII. IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

**Development Regulations:**

None proposed.

**VIII. EXHIBITS:**

None

**IX. TEXT AMENDMENTS**

Text amendments as follows would be necessary to implement the Low Impact Development policies.

**Amendments to:**

**ENVIRONMENT ELEMENT**

- 1.4 Protect surface water quality and quantity from significant degradation.
  - 1.4.1 Implement development regulations and a water quality management plan to protect water quality.
  - 1.4.2 Monitor surface water quality discharges to provide a sufficient data base for determining if water quality is being degraded.
  - 1.4.3 Work with other agencies to educate the general public and developers on the potential water quality issues resulting from development and human activity.
  - 1.4.4 Maintain consistency with local, regional and federal water quality protection plans.
  - 1.4.5 Continue to implement wetland protection regulations as an essential part of water quality protection.

- ~~1.4.6 Seek opportunity to implement “low impact development” technology such as porous asphalt, bio retention, green roofs and other innovative methods for infiltrating, metering, and treating stormwater run-off.~~
- 1.4.6 The City of Sumner will continue to be a leader in developing and implementing state-of-the-art stormwater management techniques including low impact development (LID).
- 1.4.7 Low impact development techniques will be encouraged for both private and public developments including retention of native vegetation, soil amendment, rainwater harvesting, pervious pavement and bio-retention.
- 1.4.8 Incorporate low impact development principles and practices into the design, construction and operation of all city facilities and city-funded projects only when economically feasible.
- 1.4.9 Work with residential and commercial developers to incorporate low impact development that preserves a site’s natural hydrologic functions and practices that protect native vegetation and soils, facilitate reuse of resources, such as reclaimed water, and reduce impervious surface.
- 1.4.10 Identify and evaluate potential changes to land use development regulations and building codes to support and promote low impact development.

### ***3. Protect and enhance unique, valuable, and critical plant and wildlife habitat.***

- 3.1 Implement regulations and programs to protect unique, valuable and critical plant and wildlife areas, including flexible design standards.
- 3.2 Protect shorelines and wetlands through appropriate regulations, acquisition, and non-regulatory policies related to education, stewardship, density credits, restoration, etc.
- 3.3 Maintain an urban forestry strategy to encourage the planting of trees on public and private property.
- 3.3.1 Within the urban forestry strategy develop specific standards for planting of public trees such as minimum size, type, minimum soil conditions, and maintenance requirements.
- 3.4 Take measures to protect hillside areas from the impacts of development.
- 3.5 Work with other agencies and the Sumner School District to promote environmental education.

- 3.6 Through the Parks Board, new development, community organizations, other agencies and other resources, promote public access to unique and valuable environmental areas.
- 3.7 Work with other agencies and the public to develop a Salmon Creek Restoration Plan.
- 3.8 Give special consideration to conservation and protection measures necessary to preserve and enhance of anadromous fisheries.
- 3.9 Encourage through incentives and technical support the application of “green” development practices in all major private development including large commercial and industrial projects and residential subdivisions within the City
- 3.10 Identify and evaluate potential changes to land use development regulations and building codes to support and promote green building development.

## **CAPITAL FACILITIES ELEMENT**

### **2. Consider the use of green development practices in all buildings the city constructs, remodels and renovates.**

- 2.1 The City should meet a LEED® Silver certification for new construction or additions or major renovations of City facilities over 5,000 gross square feet in area only when economic benefits may be realized, including the reduction of operating costs, enhanced asset value, optimize building performance and a healthier workplace for its employees.
- 2.2 Leverage the City’s purchasing power related to capital improvement projects to help expand the markets for green building products, including recycled-content materials and clean, renewable energy technologies.