

# Chapter I Introduction

## I.I Introduction

Port Orchard is a small but growing city in the Puget Sound region of Washington State. It is located in close proximity to major urban and employment centers and enjoys an outstanding natural setting. Port Orchard's residents have a strong community spirit and value the area's important maritime history. These aspects contribute to a high quality of life that influences people's choice to live and work in Port Orchard.

Port Orchard faces many challenges. Recent annexations and rapid population growth have contributed to increasing demands for services and infrastructure. These challenges are likely to be present for the foreseeable future as Port Orchard transitions away from the small town that it was for the first 125 years of its existence. Downtown Port Orchard has grown slowly in recent years though it possesses great potential due to its waterfront location and access to transit including passenger ferry service with connections to downtown Seattle. How Port Orchard manages its growth and growing pains in the years to come is highly important to the City's existing businesses and residents.

Bolstered by its rich history, strong community members, and scenic location, Port Orchard has the opportunity to build on its many assets to create a more connected and vibrant city. There are great opportunities to revitalize the downtown area, draw more attractions to the city, and encourage appreciation for the city's natural resources and friendly, close-knit community. Port Orchard will take strategic steps to strengthen its ties between the built environment, community members, and government to further the goals of a cohesive community based on a deep understanding of its context and a clear vision of its future.



### **I.I.I Statement of Purpose and Intent**

The Port Orchard Comprehensive Plan establishes a framework for taking on the challenges of today and the future. The Plan integrates the desires of the community and best practices in contemporary city planning, making the government more responsive to the needs of the

community and more connected with residents. Used properly, this document will guide decision-making and development in the City by ensuring that ordinances, regulations, programs and projects are developed in accordance with community values and goals. The goals and policies of the Plan specify measurable, achievable actions that most effectively utilize limited resources, retain the small-town character of Port Orchard, and build an even stronger community.

Developed with significant public input and city leaders' review, this document will guide Port Orchard's development and growth patterns for the next 20 years through 2036. It updates the existing Comprehensive Plan, which was last fully updated in 2008.



## **I.2 2036 Targeted Outcomes**

With continued hard work that is focused and coordinated in accordance with the goals and policies in this comprehensive plan, Port Orchard will remain one of the best small cities in Washington State. By carefully planning for the future, Port Orchard's increasing number of residents will enjoy a sustained high quality of life that is founded upon its supportive community, healthy economy, and pristine environment.

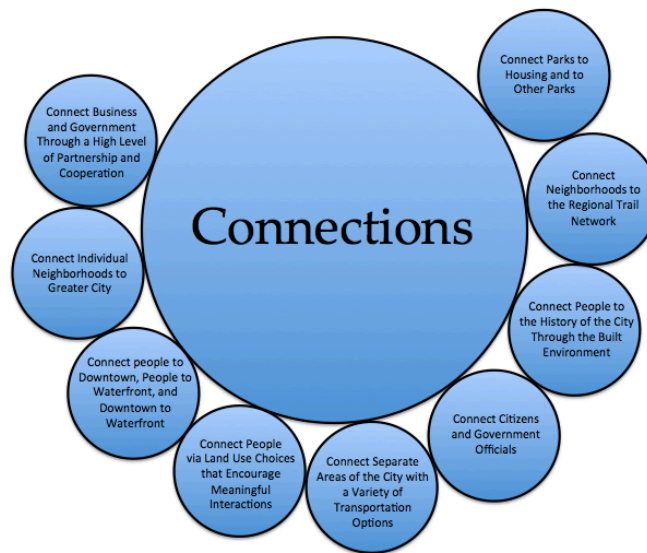
Using the community's vision for the future, by the year 2036 the City will have built upon these positive attributes and will have achieved the following:

- The city has retained its small town character and strong community spirit.
- The historic downtown is more attractive and vibrant.
- More efficient patterns of development have reduced real per capita infrastructure costs.
- Housing has remained available to all members of the community, and the diversity of housing types has expanded.
- Walking, biking, driving, and transit infrastructure make it easy to get around the city.
- The city's waterfront and open space resources are highly enjoyed by the community.
- Community organizations are better empowered to coordinate events and activities.
- Citizens enjoy a comfortable and productive relationship with city government.
- Citizens have access to well paying jobs, have short commutes, and choose to shop locally.
- Local businesses are supported by the community and government policies that promote economic development.
- Citizens are better informed and connected to the planning process.
- The city's critical areas, shorelines and other natural resources are appropriately protected with no net loss to critical areas and their functions, and where feasible critical areas and shorelines are restored or enhanced.
- Native American cultural and historic resources (archeological sites) shall be protected with conditions on development approvals that require identification and preservation of such sites and notification to the state and the Suquamish Tribe.
- Impacts to natural systems are minimized while population and job growth targets are met.

## **I.3 Visioning: Connections**

The city is defined by its physical and social environments and the ways in which they are connected. This comprehensive plan seeks to lay out a vision for Port Orchard that is founded on connectivity and the idea that stronger connections will ultimately lead to a stronger community. In addition to meeting state laws, addressing local and regional planning goals, and serving as a record of community input, this Plan seeks to bridge the specific goals and policies of the different elements to the needs and desires of the community through this connections framework. It is important to think of Port Orchard not just as its parts, but as a cohesive whole.

Port Orchard aims to improve the connections between land uses, housing, businesses, transportation, and the natural environment and to promote a higher level of interaction between the city government and citizens. There are some key ways in which this can be achieved.



**Figure 1 - Conceptual diagram of the connections theme**

#### Primary Connections:

- Connect individual neighborhoods to the greater city
- Connect people to the waterfront
- Connect people to downtown
- Connect downtown and the waterfront
- Connect people via land use choices that encourage meaningful interactions (i.e. housing within walking distance to shops and restaurants that allows people to encounter and interact with each other on the street)
- Connect separate areas of the city with a variety of transportation options
- Connect people to the history of the city through the built environment
- Connect neighborhoods to the regional trail network
- Connect parks to housing and to other parks
- Connect citizens and government officials
- Connect business and government through a high level of partnership and cooperation
- Connect identified wildlife habitat areas and corridors with greenbelts and other open space areas.
- Connect the community to the natural environment through education and voluntary stewardship.

## Elements of Connection

Within the comprehensive planning process, physical, social, and governmental influences must be considered in how the city is connected.

- Physical element: The infrastructure, housing, transportation, parks, natural amenities, restaurants, shops, businesses, schools, and all of the built and natural aspects that make up the city.
- Social element: The citizens, the groups, and the interests that they represent.
- Government element: The professional, public services, and regulatory side of the city that must work to maintain and foster a relationship with citizens that is healthy and responsive to community needs and desires.

## 1.4 Local Centers

Building concentrations of activity in Port Orchard will help create a more vibrant city. Within local centers, a mix of land uses will lead to higher levels of local connectivity. Local centers can connect housing, businesses, and services in a more focused way, allowing for more efficient land uses and allocation of public resources for infrastructure. See Section 2 (Land Use) for more information on Local Centers.

## 1.5 Port Orchard History

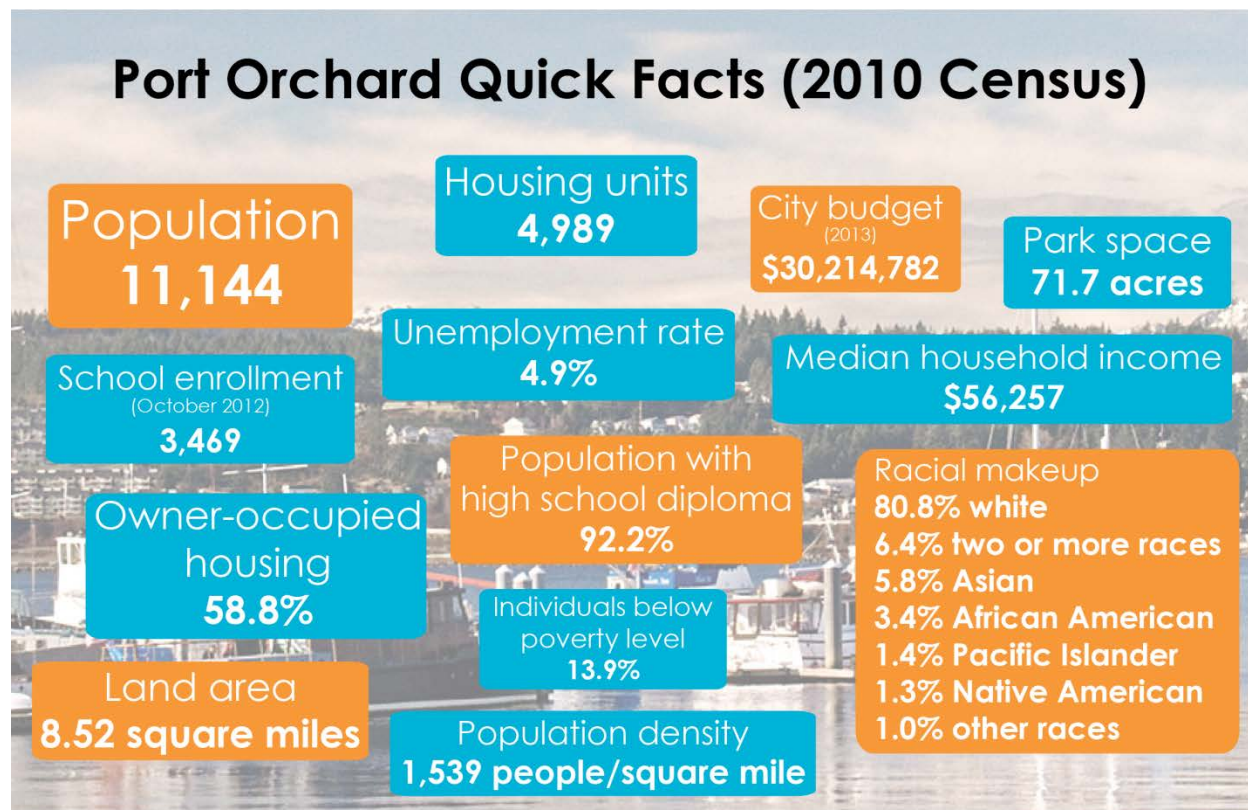
The Port Orchard area was historically occupied by the Suquamish people, whose ancestors have lived in the Central Puget Sound area for approximately 10,000 years. Ethnographic and archeological evidence shows that the Suquamish people have lived, gathered food stuffs, produced ceremonial and spiritual items, and hunted and fished for thousands of years in the area now known as Port Orchard.

Inventor Sidney M. Stevens first purchased 88.5 acres of land in 1885 with the intention of starting the town that would become Port Orchard. His son, Frederick Stevens, platted the land in 1886 and named the new location Sidney, after his father. Early businesses focused on lumber and a handful of saloons. Other industry included sawmills, shingle mills, and a pottery and terra cotta plant.

The town was incorporated on September 15, 1890, and became the first town in Kitsap County to be both platted and incorporated. Sidney became the county seat in the general election of 1892. Shortly after, the U.S. Navy sought a suitable location for another west coast base and found it in the Sinclair Inlet with the assistance of Sidney's residents. This location would later become the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. The original industries began to fade with the addition of the naval shipyard, and subsequently many of the employees of the timber industry moved to the shipyard for work.

In December of 1892, the residents of Sidney petitioned both the state legislature and the Post Office Department to rename the city to "Port Orchard." After much confusion with the local post office Sidney was finally renamed "Port Orchard" in 1903. The first school in Sidney opened in 1889 and later the South Kitsap Union High School opened in 1922.

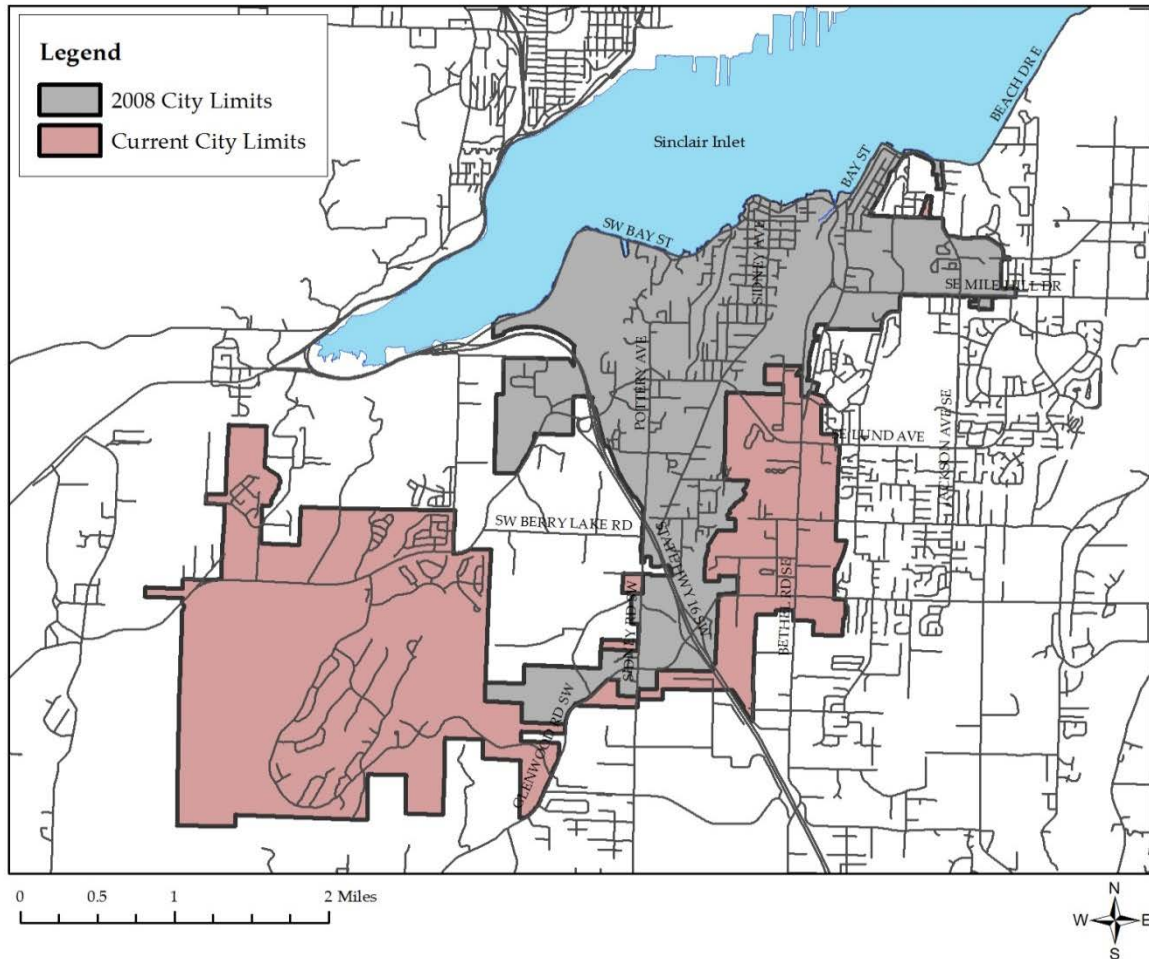




**Figure 2 - Basic information about Port Orchard**

Port Orchard has changed greatly in recent years, particularly in its size due to annexations. In 2000 the city's land area was 3.96 square miles, but after extensive annexations, increased to 9.63 square miles as of 2012. These annexations have also increased the population of Port Orchard, growing from 7,693 to 11,144 people between 2000 and 2010. The Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) estimates that the City's population as of April 1, 2015 had risen to 13,510 people.

The following map shows the change in city boundaries between the last comprehensive plan update, 2008, and 2016. Meanwhile, demographic data is gathered from the US Census, which occurred in 2000 and 2010.



**Figure 3 - City boundary changes due to annexation**

## **I.6 The Context of Planning in Port Orchard**

### **I.6.1 What is a Comprehensive Plan?**

A comprehensive plan is a tool that allows a city to anticipate and guide changes in a manner that is consistent with the desires of the community. Based on extensive public input, the document serves as the record of the city's long-range vision, priorities, and concerns. It translates the community's vision into goals and policies for the city to use in evaluating and making future physical, economic, and community development decisions. When implemented, the comprehensive plan acts as a tool for managing and directing growth, guiding and coordinating programs and regulations, and protecting the community's quality of life and critical resources. In the face of constant and inevitable change, it ensures that community goals are predictably, consistently, and effectively promoted and implemented.

## Population and Employment Allocations and Capacities

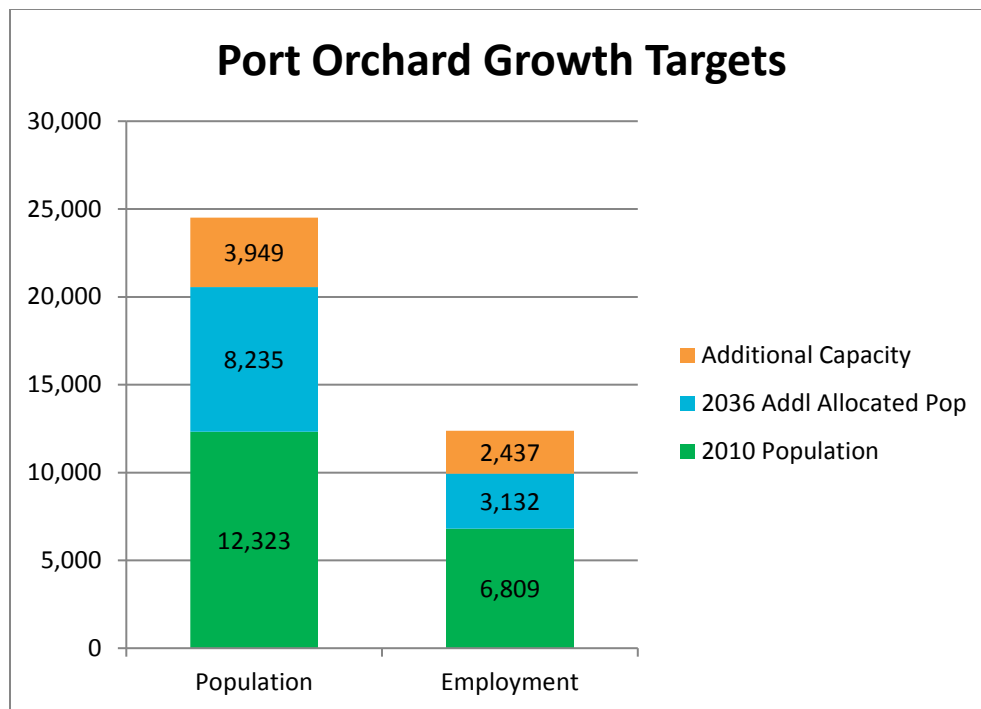
Port Orchard has been steadily growing ever since its incorporation in 1890. As of 2015, Port Orchard's population is 13,510.

Year	City Population	
Decennial Census		Average Annual Change
1900	254	—
1910	682	16.9%
1920	1,393	10.4%
1930	1,145	-1.8%
1940	1,566	3.7%
1950	2,320	4.8%
1960	2,778	2.0%
1970	3,904	4.1%
1980	4,787	2.3%
1990	4,984	0.4%
2000	7,693	5.4%
2010	11,157	4.5%
Yearly Estimates		Annual Change
2011	11,440	2.5%
2012	11,780	3.0%
2013	12,870	9.3%
2014	13,150	2.2%
2015	13,510	2.7%

**Figure 4 – Port Orchard population**

The basic changes that Port Orchard must plan for are changes in population and employment. In both cases they are expected to continue to increase over the next 20 years. As such, Port Orchard has been allocated a certain amount of the region's growth and must plan to accommodate that growth through its zoning and infrastructure capacity. In conjunction, Kitsap County has calculated how much zoned land capacity Port Orchard has. These numbers, compared to current population and employment, are summarized in Figure 7.





**Figure 5 - Growth allocation and capacity in Port Orchard**

Port Orchard must plan for an additional 8,235 residents above the 2010 population by 2036. Kitsap County calculated the city has an additional population capacity of 12,184, resulting in a net 2036 population surplus of 3,949. Technically, this surplus means the City is not bound to implement any significant changes to its land use and zoning regulations to accommodate its allocated growth. But if growth continues at the same rate without changes in capacity, the City may have a shortage of residential land during the next planning period. It is prudent to begin planning now so that the City grows responsibly and uses its developable land efficiently.

Similarly, Port Orchard must plan for an additional 3,132 jobs by 2036. Kitsap County has calculated Port Orchard has an additional employment capacity of 5,569, resulting in a net employment surplus of 2,437.

These numbers are used throughout the Comprehensive Plan for internal consistency. However, the allocations are not projections. Whether Port Orchard actually adds over 8,200 residents and 3,100 jobs by 2036 depends on a number of factors. The largest is annexation: these numbers are only based on the current (2016) city boundaries. If Port Orchard annexes additional land from its urban growth area, the city's population will increase but so will its capacity. Other factors like the health of the local economy and the quality of public services such as schools and roads will affect how many people move to Port Orchard and how many jobs are created here.

Another consideration is the population of the Urban Growth Area (UGA), the land around the City that has been designated for eventual annexation into Port Orchard. The Kitsap Countywide Planning Policies show the UGA population in 2010 was 15,044, and the County has allocated it an

increase of 6,235 people by 2036. The Buildable Lands Report shows the UGA has a capacity of 6,297 people through the planning period, only slightly more than the UGA's allocation.

If the City were to annex all of its UGA by 2036, it would need to provide infrastructure and services for over 40,000 residents, triple the size of Port Orchard's current population. This has significant implications for Port Orchard's Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and its provision of public services. Even if the city doesn't annex these areas, many of the residents living in the UGA work, shop, recreate, and travel in Port Orchard. As such, the city must consider the proximity of these areas and impacts to the city from this population when making decisions.

### **I.6.2 Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA)**

The Washington State GMA was passed by the state legislature in 1990 to protect Washington's quality of life, economy, and environment from the threat of uncoordinated and unplanned growth. It requires state and local governments to identify and protect critical areas and natural resource lands, designate urban growth areas, adopt and regularly update comprehensive plans, and implement them through capital investments and development regulations. Cities and counties planning under the GMA are required to adopt development regulations that are consistent with, and implement, their comprehensive plans.

The GMA also promotes coordination and consistency between cities, counties, and the state, in part by requiring that all comprehensive plans address certain goals. The 13 goals of the GMA are:

1. Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
2. Reduce sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
3. Transportation. Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
4. Housing. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.
5. Economic development. Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.
6. Property rights. Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.

7. Permits. Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
8. Natural resource industries. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.
9. Open space and recreation. Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.
10. Environment. Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
11. Citizen participation and coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
12. Public facilities and services. Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.
13. Historic preservation. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.

The GMA is codified as Revised Code of Washington (RCW) chapter 36.70A. It can be accessed online at the following link: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=36.70A>

### **I.6.3 Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2040**

VISION 2040 is a regional strategy for accommodating the 5 million people expected to live in the central Puget Sound region by 2040. It is administered by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), a regional planning agency with a mission to enhance the quality of life in the region. The region is defined as Kitsap, King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The PSRC develops policies and coordinates decisions about regional growth, transportation, and economic development planning. It is also responsible for selecting local projects to receive federal transportation funding.

VISION 2040 is an integrated, long-range vision for maintaining a healthy region. It promotes the well-being of people and communities, economic vitality, and a healthy environment. It contains an environmental framework, a numeric regional growth strategy, six policy sections guided by overarching goals. It also has implementation actions and measures to monitor progress.

The concept of people, prosperity, and planet provides a central theme for VISION 2040. This concept signals that our regional leaders use an approach that takes into account social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits when making decisions.

Port Orchard's Comprehensive Plan proposes a sustainable approach to growth and future development. The Plan commits to maintaining and restoring ecosystems, through steps to conserve key fish and wildlife habitats and other critical areas, to promote restoration of degraded shorelines, to improve water quality, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Plan has been updated based on residential and employment targets that align with VISION 2040. Through the targeting process we have identified the number of housing units in the City that currently exist and that are anticipated to be developed within the planning period, and have identified needs for affordable housing. Residential and employment targets for the City's designated local centers of importance will be identified and expanded in future subarea planning for these centers.

The Plan addresses each of the policy areas in VISION 2040. The elements of the Plan include goals and policies that address habitat protection, water conservation, air quality, and climate change. Environmentally friendly development techniques, such as low-impact landscaping and stormwater runoff management, are encouraged. The Plan calls for more compact urban development and addresses mixed-use and transit-oriented development. There are directives to prioritize funding and infrastructure investments to our centers of local importance. The Housing element commits to expanding housing production at all income levels to meet the diverse needs of both current and future residents. The Economic Development element supports creating jobs, creating sustainable and liveable communities, and improving connections between housing, employment and transportation. The Transportation element advances cleaner and more sustainable mobility, with provisions for complete streets, context-sensitive design, and alternatives to driving alone. The City's transportation planning is coordinated with Kitsap County, including level of service standards and concurrency provisions. The City also commits to conservation methods in the provision of public services.

The Implementation section of the Plan plan addresses local implementation actions addressed in VISION 2040, including identification of underused lands and housing targets.

VISION 2040 can be accessed online at the following link: <http://www.psrc.org/growth/vision2040>

#### **1.6.4 Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council and Kitsap Countywide Planning Policies**

The Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council (KRCC) is an inter-local forum for local jurisdictions and the voice on countywide transportation planning and policy issues. Its members are: Kitsap County, Port Orchard, , Bainbridge Island, Poulsbo, and the Port of Bremerton. Kitsap Transit and the Suquamish & Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribes are Associate Members, and Naval Base Kitsap is an Ex Officio member.

The Council coordinates the review and monitoring of the Kitsap Countywide Planning Policies and related population forecasting and distribution. The Council's Executive Board is responsible for the distribution of federal grant funds for federal transportation funding via the PSRC.

The Kitsap Countywide Planning Policies tailor the PSRC's regional growth management guidelines to Kitsap County and is the policy framework for the County's and the Cities' comprehensive plans.

The Countywide Planning Policies address 15 separate elements, ranging from urban growth areas to affordable housing. The Countywide Planning Policies are required by the GMA and were originally established in 1992.

The Kitsap County Planning Policies can be accessed online at the following link: [http://kitsapregionalcouncil.org/countywide\\_planning.php](http://kitsapregionalcouncil.org/countywide_planning.php)

## **1.7 Community Involvement in the 2016 Update**

The Plan is ultimately written for the citizens of Port Orchard and to implement their visions of the community's future. The GMA requires actively involving the public during the development and update of the Plan. This process began with the creation of a Public Participation Program that outlines opportunities for community involvement, how the public can submit comments, and how the public is notified of open meetings. The University of Washington's (UW) Department of Urban Design and Planning was contracted to initiate the public input process and began preliminary work on the Plan update.

The City began soliciting public input in early 2014 at a public meeting held in March. At this meeting, participants discussed the challenges and opportunities they believe Port Orchard will face in the near future. After



synthesizing this information, several themes and focus topics emerged for furthering the process. A second public event in May presented options for Port Orchard's future with regards to housing, transportation, community involvement, town centers, and the waterfront. These two meetings, several focus group presentations and interviews, two surveys conducted through May, and informal public outreach efforts provided the information needed to begin preparation of the 2016 update to the comprehensive plan.

The UW team ended their involvement in June 2014, when they presented their work on the Introduction, Land Use, and Housing elements to the City Council and Planning Commission. Between the summer of 2014 and early 2015, staff in the Department of Community Development shepherded the Vision, Land Use, and Housing Elements through a preliminary series of public hearings before the Planning Commission seeking public and planning commissioner input. During this time, City staff also updated the Economic Development Element after seeking public input and brought it to the Planning Commission for a preliminary public hearing and review. In early 2015, the City hired consultants to assist in the preparation of other elements including Transportation and Utilities. In the spring of 2015, City Staff in the Department of Community Development



initiated an update of the Parks Element. The Natural Systems and Capital Facilities elements were updated in the spring of 2015.

As the Parks, Utilities, Capital Facilities, and Natural Systems elements were drafted, city staff took these elements to the Planning Commission for public hearing. In addition, joint meetings of the City Council and Planning Commission were held to present draft elements and progress on the plan update and to provide the two bodies the opportunity to communicate their concerns and preferences to each other based on feedback received from the community and their local knowledge. After a final set of revisions, the final draft plan was assembled and brought to the Planning Commission for final review and a public hearing. The Planning Commission provided their recommendation to approve the 2016 Update to the Port Orchard Comprehensive Plan to the City Council on May 3, 2016. The City Council voted to approve and adopt the Comprehensive Plan with amendments on June 14, 2016.

## **I.8 Organization of This Document**

The Port Orchard Comprehensive Plan is formed by the vision statement and the concept of "connections" that are defined in the Introduction. This leads into the centers strategy, which is integrated into the Land Use element. Land Use goals then influence all of the other Plan elements. Everything connects back to the community's vision and overall strategies.

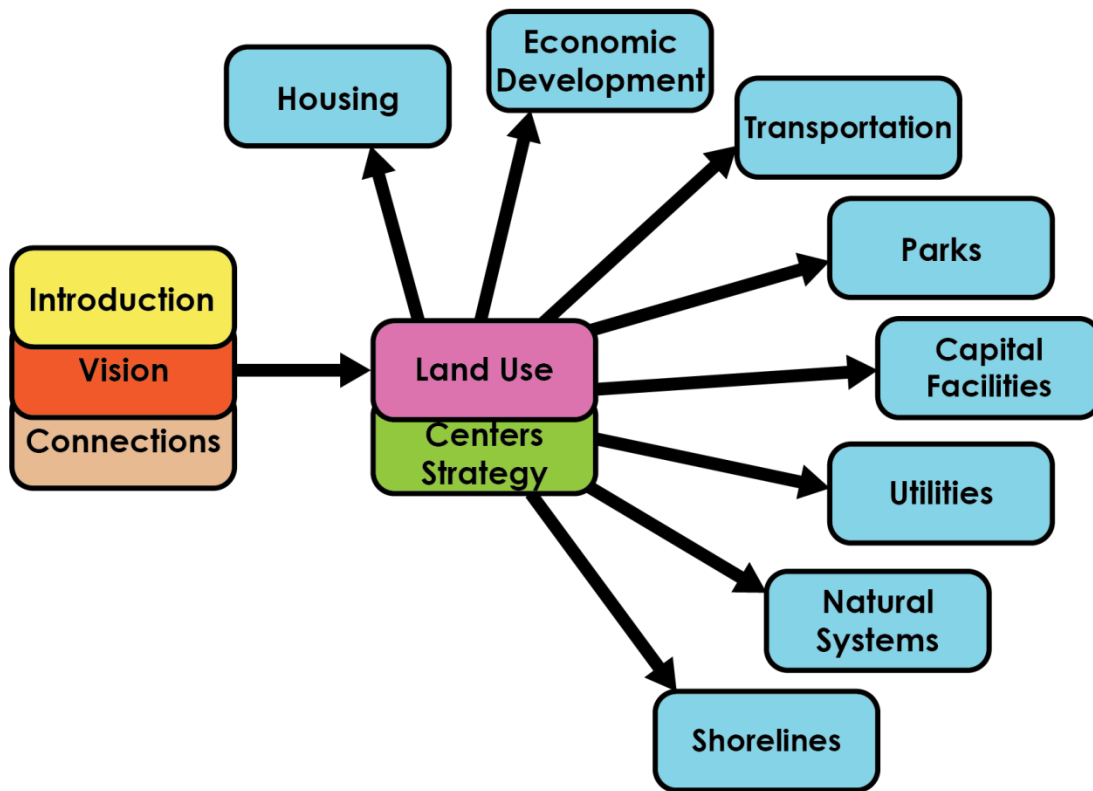


Figure 6 - Organization of the Comprehensive Plan