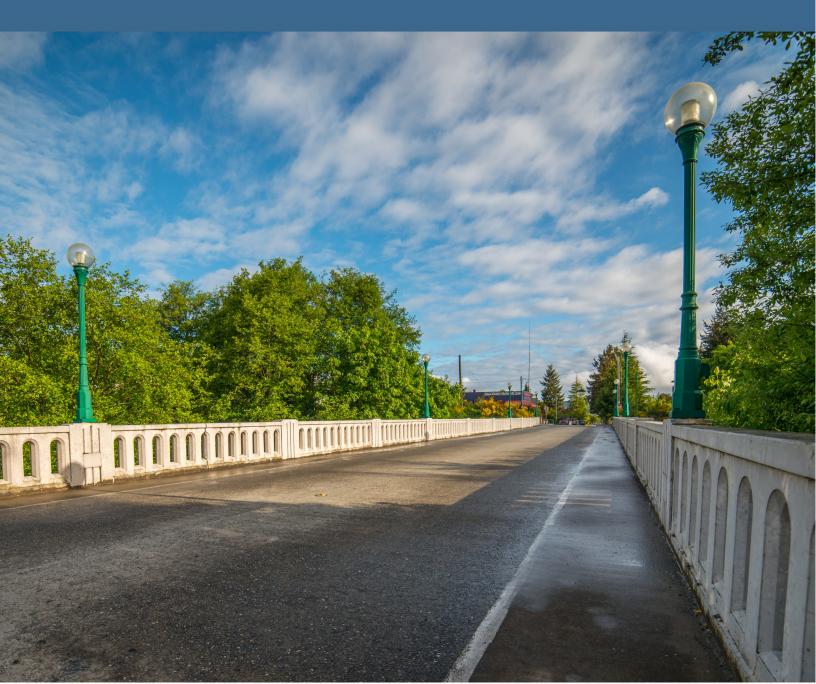
CITY OF RUSTON WASHINGTON

Chapter 1 Introduction Participation & Future Vision



RUSTON HISTORY

From its inception in 1880, Ruston has embodied an independent spirit of ambition and resilience. Nestled along the shores of Commencement Bay, the town quickly grew around what would become the largest copper smelter on the West Coast. Ruston's early development as a company town was shaped by the needs of the smelting industry, which not only provided livelihoods for its hardworking residents but also laid the foundation for a thriving community. Families moved in, housing, shops, and a schoolhouse were built, and a community was born.

Dennis Ryan of St. Paul, Minnesota, envisioned Ruston as a key player in processing ore from the Coeur d'Alene and Alaska mines. In 1889, he enlisted William Ross Rust, an experienced ore buyer from Aspen, Colorado, to manage the newly built smelter. Recognizing its potential, Rust later purchased the smelter and named it the Tacoma Smelting and Refining Company. By 1902, the smelter had transitioned from lead to copper processing, with the installation of an electrolytic converter—one of the most innovative of its kind in America. In 1905, Rust sold the smelter to Daniel Guggenheim and John P. Morgan, though he continued to manage it under the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO).

Rust remained committed to the community, and in 1906, he led Ruston's residents in a vote to incorporate, formally establishing Ruston as an independent town, separate from the rapidly expanding Tacoma. In addition to municipal independence, Ruston remained physically isolated by two miles of undeveloped land, with ASARCO

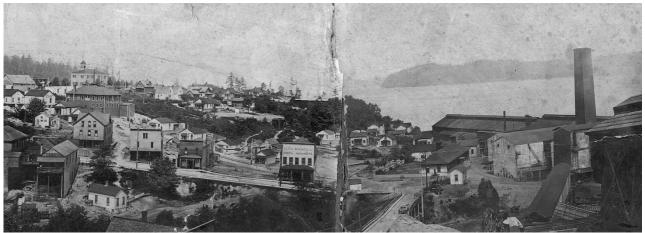


Figure 1 -Historic Ruston with homes, stores, smelter and the original schoolhouse on the hill

providing essential city services, including a company store, boarding houses, and the Smeltermen's Club House—a recreation facility for workers.

Between 1913 and 1917, ASARCO expanded its operations, building a second, taller smokestack that stood at 571 feet—the tallest of its kind worldwide until an earthquake damaged it in 1917. The expansion of the Northern Pacific Railroad's mainline along the shoreline, including the Nelson Bennett tunnel, played a crucial



Figure 2 - Historic arial photo of the ASARCO Smelter

role in connecting Ruston to Tacoma and aiding in ASARCO's growth. The isolation of Ruston diminished as Tacoma grew westward, eventually merging the boundaries of the two communities.

RUSTON TODAY

Situated along Commencement Bay and bordered by Tacoma on three sides, Ruston is a hidden gem. The City of Ruston exemplifies small-town America with its quaint and vibrant character. Steeped in pre-Washington State history, Ruston has deep roots, with families that have lived there for generations, including the Puyallup Indian Tribe, who historically inhabited the Commencement Bay area and used its shores for fishing.

From its origins as a camp along the bay, Ruston grew into a town centered around the smelting industry and has since evolved into a self-sustaining city. With a 2020 population of 1,055 (US Census) and estimated 2024 population of 1065(WA Office of Financial Management) Ruston is primarily a residential community, complemented by two commercial cores.



Figure 3 - New mixed-use development on the old ASARCO site



Figure 4 - Pearl District

Charming neighborhoods feature arts and crafts-style homes with porches lining traditionally scored sidewalks. Spectacular scenic views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountain Range are abundant from residential areas, commercial zones, and nearby parks such as Point Defiance and Dune Peninsula. Ruston residents enjoy ample open spaces, including parks, plazas, trails, and a community center, along with dedicated police and fire departments. The city hosts civic buildings, parkland, public gathering spaces, and community events such as celebrations, festivals, and block parties.

The land naturally slopes down to the shores of Commencement Bay, where new residential and commercial developments are taking shape. This area, once the site of ASARCO operations, has undergone cleanup as a federal Superfund site and is now being transformed into a mixed-use community with multifamily housing, commercial spaces, and recreational opportunities.

WHAT IS COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING?

Ruston's Comprehensive Plan shapes growth and guides decision-making by providing a clear vision, goals, and policies for the community. Each element of the plan serves as a roadmap for a sustainable future, encouraging residents to look 20 years ahead to protect and enhance the high quality of life that Ruston enjoys.

The Plan reflects Ruston's long-term values and aspirations, guiding both physical development and the preservation of community character. It addresses key areas such as land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, and transportation to achieve the city's vision, while regulations and other tools help ensure this vision becomes reality.

In accordance with the Growth Management Act (GMA), Ruston's Comprehensive Plan includes the required elements of land use, housing, capital facilities, economic development, transportation, and utilities. Optional or non-funded elements include parks and recreation, climate change resiliency, solar energy, conservation, historic preservation, and subarea plans.



Figure 5 - Ruston Shoreline from Dune Peninsula Park

Additionally, under the Shoreline Management Act (SMA), local governments must adopt Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs) to regulate shoreline land use, ensuring alignment with the GMA. While SMPs are separate from comprehensive plans, Ruston, like many cities, integrates shoreline policies into its Plan for consistency.

The table below summarizes Ruston's Comprehensive Plan elements:

Plan Elements	Purpose
Introduction, Participation & Future Vision	Provide a brief history of Ruston, explain comprehensive planning, why it's important, how it's implemented and who participates. Define Ruston's future vision.
Community Character	Identify Ruston's unique character and strategies to preserve and enhance it.
Land Use	Define Ruston's preferred land use pattern and population forecast for the 20-year horizon.
Housing	Plan for additional density for a variety of income levels. Ensure the vitality and character of established neighborhoods.
Economic Vitality	Develop strategies to ensure economic vitality and a high quality of life.
Transportation	Address multi-modal level of service standards, traffic forecasting, and funding.
Utilities	Identify the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and future utilities.
Capital Facilities	Provide an inventory of existing publicly owned capital facilities, a forecast of future needs and a financial plan for new or expanded facilities.
Shoreline	Protect Ruston's shorelines through the adoption of a Shoreline Master Program.

WHY PLAN?

The Growth Management Act (GMA) of 1990 was enacted in Washington State to address rapid population growth and its impact on land use, infrastructure, and the environment. It aimed to curb urban sprawl, relieve pressure on infrastructure, protect natural resources, and ensure coordinated planning across jurisdictions. By emphasizing sustainable growth practices and community involvement, the GMA sought to manage development more effectively and enhance overall regional planning. The GMA includes 15 goals to direct local governments in preparing comprehensive plans, which are summarized below. For the full descriptions, see RCW 36.70A.020.

1) Urban Growth. Encourage development in urban areas.

2)Reduce Sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land.

3)Transportation. Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems.

4)Housing. Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments.

5)Economic Development. Encourage economic development throughout the state.

6)Property Rights. Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made.

7) **Permits.** Applications should be processed in a timely and fair manner.

8)Natural Resource Industries. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries.

9)Open Space and Recreation. Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities.

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.

12)Public Facilities and Services. Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate.

13)Historic Preservation. Identify and encourage preservation.

14)Climate Change and Resiliency. Ensure that comprehensive plans, development regulations, and regional policies, plans, and strategies to adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate.

15)Shoreline Management. Protecting Washington's shorelines while allowing for sustainable development.

The GMA provides local governments with significant decision-making authority. For the City of Ruston, this means identifying community concerns and aspirations and developing strategies to address them. While the GMA outlines specific planning requirements, the final outcomes are shaped by Ruston's efforts. Consequently, the city is focused on creating a comprehensive plan that establishes a clear policy framework to guide the development and interpretation of regulations in line with Section 36.70A.070 of the Growth Management Act.

REGIONAL PLANNING

Under the GMA, Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) establish a framework for developing and adopting comprehensive plans for both the county and its cities. Their role is to coordinate the comprehensive plans of jurisdictions within the same county, addressing regional issues and matters affecting common borders. These policies guide growth, land use, and development decisions, ensuring consistency across local planning efforts. While the CPPs guide growth and development, cities and counties create their own comprehensive plans. For example, both Pierce County and the City of Ruston develop their own comprehensive plans within the framework of the CPPs. One long-term objective of the CPPs is for cities to become the primary providers of urban governmental services, while counties provide regional and rural services, facilitating growth at urban densities within city boundaries.

The CPPs at a minimum, address the following:

- Implementation of urban growth areas.
- Promotion of contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services to such development.
- Siting public capital facilities of a countywide or statewide nature.
- Countywide transportation facilities and strategies.
- The need for affordable housing, such as housing for all economic segments of the population and parameters for its distribution.

- Joint county and city planning within urban growth areas.
- Policies for countywide economic development and employment.
- Analysis of fiscal impact.

Pierce County's CPPs must be consistent with the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs). The most recent set of these policies is included in PSRC's VISION 2050—the long-range growth management, environmental, economic, and transportation strategy for the Central Puget Sound region. VISION 2050 outlines a growth strategy for the next 30 years. The vision aims to provide exceptional quality of life, opportunity for all, connected communities, a spectacular natural environment, and an innovative, thriving economy. Key goals include increasing housing choices and affordability, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, sustaining a strong economy, restoring the health of the Puget Sound, protecting open spaces, encouraging growth in centers and near transit, and encouraging collaboration.



Figure 6 - Ruston Neighborhoods with Point Defiance Park and Vashon Ferry Terminal in the distance

CONSISTENCY, SUSTAINABILTY, & CONCURRENCY

Consistency, sustainability, and concurrency are three principles that weave throughout Ruston's Comprehensive Plan. Consistency means that Ruston's Plan must align with the GMA, the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2050, and relevant Pierce County-wide planning policies, while also coordinating with the plans of neighboring jurisdictions and ensuring internal consistency among its elements.

Sustainability can be defined as creating and managing urban spaces in ways that meet current needs while preserving resources and opportunities for the future. Sustainable city planning emphasizes efficient use of resources, minimizing environmental impacts, promoting social equity, and ensuring long-term economic viability, all while preserving the natural environment and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Concurrency is the concept that ensures public facilities and services needed for new development meet established levels of service standards without reducing current standards. An example of concurrency is expressed in The Transportation Element, where new development may be required to accommodate its impacts through improvements or strategies.

Consistency, sustainability, and concurrency principles work together to balance growth, the provision and financing of public facilities, and the vision of a sustainable future for generations to come.

LOCAL PLANNING IN RUSTON

Due to Ruston's small size and unique location, some elements mandated by the GMA, MPPs and CPPs are addressed at a high level of detail or not applicable at this time. For example:

 The City of Ruston's boundaries are set, and new growth is anticipated to be accommodated within current borders. Therefore, the Urban Growth Area (UGA) is contiguous with existing city limits.

- The Plan's Transportation Element presents summaries of traffic studies from the Point Ruston Final EIS, as amended. The scope of the traffic study, future traffic counts, and impacts on city transportation facilities is citywide. See the Appendix - Point Ruston Final EIS for the full transportation study and land use assumptions. The most current version of the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (6-year TIP), which identifies and prioritizes future improvements is discussed in the Transportation Element and attached in the appendix.
- The Plan's Housing Element provides estimates of future housing needs based on projected 2044 population and the 2022 Pierce County Buildable Lands Report.

The City of Ruston has prepared the Comprehensive Plan in a fashion that is consistent with the purpose and intent of the GMA, MPPs and CPPs. The goals, issues, and policies contained in the plan directly pertain to the future needs of the City of Ruston.

AMENDMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Like business plans, Ruston's Comprehensive Plan provides the framework for how our community will grow. And, like business plans, it must be updated over time to remain effective. Many communities amend their comprehensive plans annually and regularly adopt changes to the development regulations that implement them. In addition to these regular amendments, the state requires counties and cities to periodically conduct a thorough review of their plans and regulations to ensure they align with any relevant changes in the GMA and respond to shifts in land use and population growth. This mandatory "periodic update" occurs every ten years for most communities.

The process for amending Ruston's Comprehensive Plan shall be consistent with WAC 365-196-610, WAC 365-196-640, 365-196-650 and RCW 36.70A.130.

The Plan should be reviewed annually for amendments that ensure:

• Internal Plan consistency.

- Consistency with city development regulations.
- Consistency with other jurisdictions, state, and federal laws; and
- Updates to GMA laws and interpretations are addressed.

Evaluation of The Plan will be an integral part of the amendment process. The Plan review process should be well-publicized, address annual amendments, and emergency amendments, and may include a specialized periodic update process.

To ensure public participation, amendments shall be considered by the Planning Commission in an open public hearing before being forwarded to the City Council. Notice of the City's annual review process for Comprehensive Plan amendments shall be published as required for public hearings. Specific procedures for Plan amendment applications shall be included in the Ruston Municipal Code under Title 29.

WHO PARTICIPATES?

The City of Ruston is committed to thorough public engagement as an essential part of a successful Comprehensive Plan update. All community stakeholders—including residents, property owners, businesses, nearby jurisdictions, affected agencies, Indian Tribes, and special interest groups—are invited and encouraged to participate in the update process. Public outreach methods, such as open houses, public hearings, mailings, and Ruston's website, may be used to gather input.

The Planning Commission, appointed by the City Council, plays a critical role in Ruston's land-use matters. For Comprehensive Plan updates, the Commission is responsible for holding public hearings, gathering public comments, discussing potential changes, and ultimately making a draft plan recommendation to the City Council for adoption. Once adopted by the City Council, the final document collectively outlines Ruston's future vision for the next planning horizon. Updates to Ruston's Comprehensive Plan begin with public engagement to identify key issues and the overall desired vision of its stakeholders.

FUTURE VISION

Ruston's future vision is one of a thriving, environmentally healthy, and sustainable city with a rich history and unique character. An excellent steward of its resources, the city offers high-quality services and amenities while maintaining its welcoming small-town charm. Residents and visitors enjoy sweeping views of Puget Sound, the Olympic Mountains, and Mount Rainier from parks and protected view corridors throughout the neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Pedestrians and bicyclists benefit from a comprehensive multimodal transportation system that extends throughout the city, along the shores of Commencement Bay, and connects to nearby Point Defiance Park and regional trail networks. Key gateways to Ruston include Pearl Street, 51st Street, and Ruston Way, and offer a mix of commercial and residential uses. The community places a high value on pedestrianfriendly thoroughfares, reflected in the thoughtful design and placement of automobile parking. The city is also served by mass transit and light rail, supporting transit-oriented development.

Ruston has successfully completed its Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, guiding the maintenance, creation, enhancement, and conservation of community parks, programs, trails, and open spaces. The cleanup and renovation of Rust Park, along with the completion of Promontory Hill Park, are highly valued and enjoyed by the community. The city continues to cooperate with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington Department of Ecology to clean up the former ASARCO site and address the pollution left throughout the community by the smelting industry.

Ruston remains primarily a residential community with a vibrant commercial core. Urban centers host most of the city's businesses, offering a variety of options for shopping and services. Businesses are well integrated architecturally and functionally with existing structures, well supported by city services and a vital part of Ruston's charm and sense of community. The character of residential neighborhoods has remained consistent, with many traditional Arts and Crafts-style homes featuring porches and garages accessed from alleys. New developments are primarily infill projects, such as subdivisions, live-work units, and middle housing, all designed to complement the existing neighborhood character.

Civic buildings, facilities, and public gathering spaces in Ruston are well maintained and effectively serve the community. The city has leveraged opportunities for civic development, securing funding for various public projects and amenities. Ruston collaborates with Pierce County and Tacoma in joint planning efforts to efficiently achieve strong regional connections, services, and amenities. Community members are encouraged to engage in Ruston's planning and government processes, all with the goal of creating a sustainable city for future generations.

VISION STATEMENT

Ruston envisions a thriving, sustainable future where small-town charm meets a healthy, active, and highly engaged community. With breathtaking views, quality open spaces, and a comprehensive multimodal transportation system that prioritizes pedestrian-friendly streets, we are committed to environmental stewardship and providing a variety of housing options, highquality services, and amenities. Our goal is to foster a safe, vibrant urban environment that remains resilient and desirable for generations to come.