



**RIDGEFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA**

**Wednesday, September 2, 2026
RACC - Columbia Assembly Room
510 Pioneer Street, Ridgefield, WA 98642**

I. GENERAL SESSION CALL TO ORDER - 6:30 PM

- 1. Flag Salute**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Oath of Office: Mychal Hornbeck**
- 4. Late changes to the agenda**

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anyone requesting to speak to the Commission regarding all items not subject to a specific Public Hearing may come forward at this time. Please state your name and limit comments to three minutes. Written comments may be submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Approval of Minutes from the 08/05/2026 Meeting**

IV. BUSINESS

- 1. Envision Ridgefield 2045: Annexation, Environment, and Public Participation Elements - Claire Lust, Community Development Director**

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anyone requesting to speak to the Commission regarding all items not subject to a specific Public Hearing may come forward at this time. Please state your name and limit comments to three minutes. Written comments may be submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

VI. STAFF REPORTS

VII. FROM THE COMMISSION

VIII. ADJOURN

**CITY OF RIDGEFIELD
REQUEST FOR COMMISSION ACTION**

MEETING DATE: September 2, 2026

AGENDA ITEM NAME: Approval of Minutes from the 08/05/2026 Meeting

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

STAFF CONTACT:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 08.05.2026 Minutes



**CITY OF RIDGEFIELD, WASHINGTON
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 5, 2026**

Regular Meeting - 6:30 PM

I. GENERAL SESSION CALL TO ORDER - 6:30 PM

- 1. Flag Salute**
- 2. Roll Call**

Present:

Vice Chair Patrick Flynn
Commission Member Jeffrey Borchardt
Commission Member Steven Moylan
Commission Member Justin Raczak
Commission Member Heather Gordon

Commissioner Moylan moved to excuse Chair Tyler. Seconded by Commissioner Borchardt. Ayes all. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Late changes to the agenda

No late changes to the agenda.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anyone requesting to speak to the Commission regarding all items not subject to a specific Public Hearing may come forward at this time. Please state your name and limit comments to three minutes. Written comments may be submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

Comments received during public testimony can be heard on the City's website under [Planning Commission | Ridgefield, WA \(ridgefieldwa.us\)](https://www.ridgefieldwa.us/planning-commission)

III. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes from the 7/1/2026 Meeting

RESULT:	(UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Commission Member Borchardt
SECONDER:	Commission Member Gordon
AYES:	Vice Chair Flynn, Commission Member Borchardt, Commission Member Moylan, Commission Member Raczak, Commission Member Gordon

Commissioner Borchardt moved to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Gordon. Ayes all. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. BUSINESS

1. Presentation and Discussion: Envision Ridgefield 2045 Batch 2 Elements (Land Use, Housing, Transportation, and Climate) - Claire Lust, Community Development Director

Claire Lust, Community Development Director, presented Envision Ridgefield 2045 Batch 2 Elements.

Discussion occurred regarding what infill development is.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 2.1.4 facilitating infill development.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 2.3.6, Wild land Urban Interface code.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 2.4.2, enhancing tree canopies.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 2.5.5, supporting a vibrant waterfront district along Lake River.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 2.3.2, residential design standards.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 2.5.1, pedestrian interaction in commercial developments.

Discussion occurred regarding trails, and whether they can be funded by traffic impact fees (TIF).

Discussion occurred regarding adding boats to the transportation section.

Discussion occurred regarding bike lanes on Pioneer Street.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 3.2.2, engaging residents in traffic management and safety initiatives and specifying e-bikes.

Discussion occurred regarding golf cart facilities.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 3.2.5, constructing sidewalks to fill in missing gaps within downtown and to link downtown to existing residential neighborhoods.

Discussion occurred regarding festival streets and/or closing streets for block parties.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 3.2.7, commercial curb cuts.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 3.3.3, pursuing innovative alternative transportation options.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 3.4.3, road diets and center turn lanes.

Discussion occurred regarding signage on trails.

Discussion occurred regarding emergency shelter beds.

Discussion occurred regarding affordable housing.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 9.6, greenhouse gases and truck traffic.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 9.5.1, resilience hub.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 9.5.5, adding social media campaigns to distribute educational material.

Discussion occurred regarding green roof technology.

Discussion occurred regarding Ridgefield becoming a tree city.

Discussion occurred regarding policy 9.1.2.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anyone requesting to speak to the Commission regarding all items not subject to a specific Public Hearing may come forward at this time. Please state your name and limit comments to three minutes. Written comments may be submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

Comments received during public testimony can be heard on the City's website under [Planning Commission | Ridgefield, WA \(ridgefieldwa.us\)](https://www.ridgefieldwa.us/PlanningCommission)

VI. STAFF REPORTS

Claire Lust, Community Development Director, advised that City Council appointed Mychal Hornbeck to fill the vacant Planning Commission seat. City Council will be reviewing the first batch of elements at a study session on August 6th.

VII. FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Moylan appreciated the citywide tour.

Commissioner Gordon thanked the members of the public for attending the meeting.

Commissioner Borchardt thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Commissioner Raczak thanked everyone for taking the time to participate in the discussion.

Vice Chair Flynn thanked City staff for preparing for the meeting and for staying late. Thanked everyone for showing up to the meeting. He thanked everyone involved with putting on the city wide tour.

VIII. ADJOURN

Trina Siebert, Planning Commission Clerk

Mark Tyler, Chair

**CITY OF RIDGEFIELD
REQUEST FOR COMMISSION ACTION**

MEETING DATE: September 2, 2026

AGENDA ITEM NAME: Envision Ridgefield 2045: Annexation, Environment, and Public Participation Elements

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

The 2016-2035 Ridgefield Urban Area Comprehensive Plan includes three non-mandatory chapters that staff intend to refresh and carry forward into Envision Ridgefield 2045: Annexation, Environment, and Public Participation. Each of the existing chapters is attached for review. In this meeting, Planning Commission will provide feedback on the existing goals and policies and guidance on any changes that should be considered to best serve the community over the next twenty years.

STAFF CONTACT: Claire Lust, Community Development Director

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2016 Annexation Element
2. 2016 Environment Element
3. 2016 Public Involvement Element

ANNEXATION



10. ANNEXATION

10.1 CURRENT CONDITIONS

Annexation may occur through various means under state statute and local regulations. The State of Washington's Growth Management Act of 1990 (GMA) requires counties to establish 20-year Urban Growth Area (UGA) 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, Ridgefield, and other local cities also encourages annexation of lands in the UGA. The Community Framework Plan establishes County support for such annexations.

Annexations can be initiated by property owners or cities. When an annexation is initiated by a city, local support is required through an election or petitions. The most common method of annexing unincorporated territory both in Ridgefield and in cities across the state is the 60 percent petition method, consistent with RCW 35A.14.120. Such an annexation is initiated by petition of 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. The petition then comes to City Council for review and approval.

The election method requires approval of the majority of voters in the annexation area, or 60 percent, if the proposal includes the assumption of indebtedness. Other methods for municipal annexation are available for specific circumstances but are rarely applicable.

10.2 DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE

The City of Ridgefield supports annexation to provide a full range of urban services and efficiencies to developing and developed urban areas. The City will work closely with the community, Clark County, and service providers to determine annexation issues that exist in specific areas, and to develop and implement annexation plans. Larger annexations will be generally

preferable because of service efficiencies, and to keep neighborhoods and communities intact.

Because Ridgefield has established a UGA to identify future annexation territory, the annexation issue will not be so much whether to annex as when to annex. Ultimately, the City will annex to the limits of the UGA. The timing of that expansion will depend on a number of factors, including property owners' interest to become part of the city, population growth within the UGA, and the City's ability to provide urban-level services in that area.

10.3 ANNEXATION POLICIES

The City of Ridgefield adopts the following policies to ensure orderly urban transition and efficient delivery of urban services. These policies are consistent with and implement Policy Section 11.0 of the Community Framework Plan, adopted by Clark County and local jurisdictions, and planning goals 36.70A.020(1), (2), (11) and (12) of the Washington Growth Management Act.

A-1 Coordination with Clark County

Work with Clark County to facilitate future annexation of lands within the unincorporated RUGA, to facilitate infrastructure maintenance prior to annexation, and to manage development to be compatible with future urban-level development prior to annexation.

A-2 Annexation before service extensions

To receive City-provided urban services, developing or developed unincorporated areas should annex or commit to annexation.

A-3 Responsive annexation timelines

Annexation timelines should be responsive to the interests of citizens and Ridgefield's ability to provide services.

A-4 Large annexations encouraged

Annexation of large areas, preferably master-planned, are encouraged, although individual property owners should not be prevented from pursuing annexation. Annexations should include both sides of streets and roads, including rights-of-way.

A-5 Service transition

Explore creative ways to facilitate the transition of government services, particularly public safety, transportation, parks, utilities, and land use review.

A-6 Coordination with schools

The City will coordinate with the Ridgefield School District on annexation requests so that the School District can continue to meet its service standards.

ENVIRONMENT



6. ENVIRONMENT

People have long been attracted to the Ridgefield area because of its high quality natural environment. The City of Ridgefield recognizes the importance of the natural environment in contributing to economic development, community livability, and quality of life. This element describes many of the functions and values of Ridgefield's natural environment. Most importantly, it establishes policies that protect and enhance the environment for present and future generations while supporting economic development.

The natural environment consists of many interrelated components:

- geological resources (earth, soil, minerals, etc.)
- biological (living things, plants, animals, microorganisms, people, etc)
- hydrological resources (groundwater, surface water, streams, etc.)
- atmospheric resources (air)

The quality of the environment is determined by the individual integrity of these components and how well they interact with each other. In turn, the quality of life that Ridgefield offers is affected greatly by the health of its natural environment. Human activities are the primary cause of environmental degradation to environmental resources, which contributes to serious long-term economic and social problems. The City of Ridgefield is committed to avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating harmful environmental impacts to the greatest practicable extent while supporting the City's land use and economic development policies.

6.1 CURRENT CONDITIONS

6.1.1 The Land

Ridgefield enjoys gently rolling topography, shaped by water erosion associated with numerous creeks in the area that created a series of canyons and ridges. The Columbia River has sculpted much of Ridgefield's western topography by depositing clay, silt, sand, and gravel onto its banks over tens of thousands of years, creating a series of rolling alluvial terraces rising step-like from the banks of the river. The Columbia has also sculpted the lakes, sloughs, and islands that currently make up the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge,

including Lake River along the City's western border. Some steep slopes are found along the banks of Lake River and along the creek canyons.

6.1.2 Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Although it is a thriving small city, Ridgefield has a variety of riparian and terrestrial habitats providing protection for native species. The city is located along the Pacific Flyway and attracts hundreds of thousands of migrating birds including geese, swans, and sandhill cranes. The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, created in 1965, encompasses over 5,000 acres of habitat area on the city's western boundary originally designated for wintering habitat for migratory birds.

The city celebrates its wildlife connection at the annual Bird Fest, which draws visitors from many states and foreign countries during the height of fall bird migration.

The Columbia River, Lake River, and smaller creeks are home to salmon and trout. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has classified certain important fish and wildlife habitats and species as "priority habitats" and "priority species" to ensure they are considered in land use planning and management. Many of the priority habitats in the Ridgefield area are wetlands and riparian areas, those areas adjacent to streams, rivers and lakes. There are many threatened and endangered plant and animal species in Clark County. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife maintains an updated list of these species. See Table 6-1 for a list of selected species.

The federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) prohibits harming threatened and endangered species or their habitats. The threatened and endangered salmon species that occur in the Columbia Basin migrate along Ridgefield's shore, travelling down the Columbia River as juveniles, and up the river as adults.

Trees contribute to air and water quality, conserve energy by providing shade, contribute to the aesthetic environment, and provide habitat for many species. Ridgefield's landscape is a reflection of the City's effort to preserve existing trees and other vegetation and to add new vegetation.

The UGA contains oak woodlands which are designated as priority habitats by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, which contain stands

of Oregon White Oak, the only oak native to the area. There is also bountiful Douglas Fir forestland, which is not designated as priority habitat but does support sensitive native species. Protection of these native landscapes is important.

6.1.3 Water Quality

Portions of the urban growth area fall within two watersheds, West Slope and the East Fork Lewis River watersheds. Subwatersheds from west to east include Flume Creek, Gee Creek, Allen Canyon Creek, and McCormick Creek. The Gee Creek subwatershed is the largest within the city, encompassing over 3,000 acres within the RUGA and a total of 12,000 acres. Gee Creek is a 4th-order tributary of the Columbia River over 11.5 miles long, flowing roughly southeast to northwest across the RUGA.

An inevitable part of urbanization is the replacement of some portions of the forests, grasslands and wetlands with impervious surfaces, such as roads, sidewalks, parking lots, and roofs. Increasing the amount of impervious surface increases potential flooding and impacts groundwater recharge. Urban stormwater also carries toxic substances and bacteria, which can damage groundwater, lakes, rivers, and streams if not properly managed. Soil from erosion and fertilizers contribute phosphorus and nitrogen, both of which cause excess growth of plants and microscopic animals. The organisms use oxygen from the water, reducing the amount available for salmon and other native animals. Toxic metals from street runoff cling to soil particles that can be carried into the

water bodies. Other pollutants, such as motor oil, are undoubtedly transported by stormwater.

Stream health in Ridgefield's watersheds has been poor in recent years. The *2010 Clark County Stream Health Report* rated the Gee Creek and McCormick Creek subwatersheds as poor based on water quality, biological health, and flow metrics. Ongoing efforts to improve water quality across the County include the Watersheds Steward program administered by Washington State University Vancouver, which sponsors group projects such as habitat restoration plantings, and individual efforts like rain gardens.

The City of Ridgefield works to limit adverse impacts caused by urban stormwater runoff. The City has adopted engineering standards that are consistent with the *1992 Puget Sound Water Quality Manual* and implements engineering best management practices.

6.1.4 Air Quality

An airshed is defined as "a body of air bounded by topographical and/or meteorological features in which a contaminant, once emitted, is contained." Ridgefield is within the airshed bounded on the south by Eugene, Oregon, on the north by Chehalis, Washington, on the west by the Coast Range, and on the east by the Cascade Mountains.

Air quality in the airshed is generally good and has improved since the late 1990s when the area was under heightened federal management to reduce ozone and carbon monoxide. Today air pollution related to carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, ozone, sulfur oxides and particulate matter that generally contribute to "smog" have generally declined under state and federal regulations. However, air toxics have been less monitored and less regulated, according to a 2013 City Club of Portland report, and are present in greater concentrations that are linked to health impacts.

Motor vehicles are the largest producer of air pollution, but other combustion engines, such as lawn mowers and those associated with industry, all contribute. Additional sources include residential wood stoves and outdoor burning. The *Regional Transportation Plan* (2014) for Clark County includes a variety of strategies to reduce mobile source emissions associated with

Table 6-1. Selected Federal and State Species of Concern

Water howellia	Federal threatened species
Columbian white-tailed deer	Federal endangered species
Sandhill crane	State endangered species
Purple martin	State candidate species
Western pond turtle	State endangered species
Coastal cutthroat trout	Federal species of concern
Rainbow trout	Federal threatened species
Coho salmon	Federal threatened species
Steelhead salmon	Federal threatened species
Chinook salmon	Federal threatened species
Chum salmon	Federal threatened species

motor vehicles, including increasing alternative transportation modes, travel demand management, and transportation systems management programs. The Southwest Washington Clean Air Agency (SWCAA) monitors air quality for ozone, carbon monoxide and fine particulates that contribute to smog and enforces regulations requiring industries to reduce emissions. The region has an excellent record of compliance with SWCAA for air pollution, but little monitoring has been done on air toxics.

6.1.5 Hazard Areas

Hazard areas in Ridgefield that have the potential to threaten public health and safety are floodplains, steep and unstable slopes, and unconsolidated soils (topsoil and other loose material). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has mapped the floodplains for the Columbia River, and provides guidelines to ensure that development in or near these areas does not pose a risk to upstream or downstream neighbors or to important natural functions. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has mapped areas with steep and unstable slopes, which pose potential landslide hazards, and areas with potential for earthquakes. Steep slopes occur along parts of the Columbia River, Gee Creek, Lake River, and other creek basins. Areas with unconsolidated soils, the most likely to be damaged by earthquakes, are found in the floodplains and in lowlands.

6.1.6 Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is comprised of five management units that total 5,148 acres of pristine marshes, grasslands and wildlife habitat. Preservation of the natural Columbia River floodplain is a management objective of the Carty, Roth and Ridgeport Dairy units. The River "S" and Bachelor Island units are managed to maximize habitat for waterfowl and other wetland wildlife. Dusky Canada geese, sandhill cranes, shorebirds and a wide variety of songbirds stop on the refuge during spring and fall migrations. Visitors to this area have numerous opportunities for wildlife observation.

6.1.7 State and Federal Environmental Regulations

Many of Ridgefield's environmental decisions are influenced by state and federal regulations, including the State of Washington's Growth Management Act of 1990 (GMA), the state Shoreline Management Act (SMA) in 1971, the federal Clean Water Act of 1972 (CWA), the state Water Pollution Control Act (WPCA) in 1973, the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), and the federal (1990) and state (1991) Clean Air Acts (CAA). The City has adopted State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) rules that are implemented through the City's Development code. ESA prohibits harm, including habitat degradation, to threatened and endangered species. The Clean Air Acts (CAA) regulate air quality at the regional level.

The GMA requires the City to designate and protect critical areas such as wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, aquifers (groundwater), and geologically hazardous areas such as steep slopes and areas that flood frequently. The GMA also requires the City to protect the functions of these areas that are beneficial to the environment and to public health and safety. The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) requires local governments to protect shoreline functions, including



environmental functions such as fish and wildlife habitat, by adoption of a Shoreline Management Program. The City adopted the *2012 Ridgefield Shoreline Master Program* designating shorelands, regulating uses within shorelands, and establishing procedures for reviewing shorelines proposals. The CWA requires that pollution of lakes, streams and rivers be controlled so these bodies of water are safe for swimming and fishing.

6.1.8 Local Environmental Regulations

In addition to the protection provided by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), the City adopted a Critical Areas Ordinance, consistent with Best Available Science, to protect wetlands and shorelines, water bodies, groundwater and surface water, fish and wildlife habitats, and trees and other vegetation. The regulations include a requirement that floodplains and steep terrain be evaluated for potential hazards. Implementation of the regulations includes development review, inspection, enforcement and education. Critical area regulations require that development avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to sensitive environmental areas, in that order, and at times prohibits development unless projects can be designed to result in “no net loss” of critical area functions and values. Regulations are balanced to allow reasonable use of properties to prevent complete loss of development potential.

6.2 DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE

By integrating the natural and built environments, Ridgefield will create a sustainable urban environment with clean air and water, habitat for fish and wildlife, and comfortable and secure places for people to live and work. Ridgefield is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment as the City meets its other community, economic development, and housing and infrastructure goals.

Ridgefield will seek to balance various goals, not just make tradeoffs, and identify ways to meet multiple objectives. The goals are to preserve healthy ecological communities with rich biodiversity and to protect public health and safety. The following discussion sets the framework for the policies at the end of the element.



Wildlife Habitats

Ridgefield will protect priority habitats, locally important habitats, and priority species. Ridgefield will work with others in the region to develop and implement recovery plans for threatened salmon species.

Endangered Species

Ridgefield will avoid harming ESA-listed species and their habitats. The City will work with local, county, state and federal jurisdictions to plan and implement region-wide actions.

Stream Health

Ridgefield will work to monitor, manage and improve the health of streams in its watersheds to improve water quality, biological health, and stream flow. The City will work with partners at Clark County Environmental Services and the local Watershed Stewards program.

Shoreline Management

Ridgefield will continue to implement and periodically update its Shoreline Management Program to protect shoreline resources, the environment, water-dependent and water-related economic development, and public access and recreation.

Public Health and Safety

Ridgefield will help protect public health and safety from flooding, landslides, and earthquakes. Maintaining clean groundwater and improving the quality of surface water will also protect public health and safety. Managing development in geologically hazardous areas and floodplains will protect public health and safety. Ridgefield will work with state and federal regulatory agencies to achieve compliance in a way that is resource-wise, both in terms of financial and environmental resources.

Sustainability

Ridgefield will provide for the needs of its residents without sacrificing the needs of future generations. The City will consider economics and the environment as it manages water, energy, land and natural resources. Ridgefield will promote sustainable public and private development practices and patterns, building design, water-use reduction, and waste reduction. The City will incorporate environmentally friendly, green building principles and practices into the design, construction, and operation of City facilities, City-funded projects, and infrastructure to the fullest extent possible, consistent with wise management of scarce public financial resources.

Coordination

Other agencies, the private sector, citizens, and each City department will coordinate with one another and with others to be efficient and consistent.

Implementation

Environmental protection and enhancement, based on the “Best Available Science,” as defined in the GMA, will be important factors in Ridgefield’s land use planning, zoning and development regulations. Development that cannot reasonably avoid critical areas will include mitigation of potential impacts to prevent material loss of environmental function. The GMA requires critical area regulations to be updated as necessary

to maintain consistency with state law. As part of that review, the City will strive to make environmental regulations clear and understandable to provide consistent environmental protection and to streamline the development review process.

Incentives, education, acquisition, and restoration are also important tools in achieving environmental quality. Ridgefield will seek ways to provide incentives for protecting and enhancing the environment. The City will continue to protect and restore sensitive areas. The City’s own operations will reflect environmental stewardship.

Protecting air and water quality and vegetation will help protect habitats for fish, wildlife, and people. Transportation choices will help protect air quality. Source control to keep pollutants out of the environment and water treatment to remove pollutants from the water will protect groundwater and surface water quality. Water conservation and innovative substitutions for impervious surfaces will protect the quantity of groundwater. Surface water management will help reduce the impacts of development on surface water quality and quantity. Preserving and planting native plants and removing invasive plant species will help protect and enhance vegetation.

6.3 POLICIES

EN-1 Environmental protection

Protect, sustain, and provide for healthy and diverse ecosystems.

EN-2 Stewardship

Demonstrate and promote environmental stewardship and education.

EN-3 Restoration and enhancement

Promote and facilitate ecosystem restoration and enhancement.

EN-4 Environmental coordination

Coordinate environmental policies and programs. Explore opportunities to consolidate environmental regulations. Partner with other environmental agencies include Clark County Department of Environmental Services, Washington State Department

of Ecology, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to address issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

EN-5 Habitat

Protect riparian areas, wetlands, and other fish and wildlife habitat. Link fish and wildlife habitat areas to form contiguous networks. Support sustainable fish and wildlife populations.

EN-6 Endangered species

Protect habitat for listed species and facilitate recovery. Encourage and support actions that protect other species from becoming listed.

EN-7 Water quality and quantity

Protect and enhance surface, stormwater, and groundwater quality. Ensure adequate water supplies and promote wise use and conservation of water resources.

EN-8 Flooding

Maintain consistency with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidelines when adopting or implementing policies or regulations that relate to flooding, groundwater recharge, wetlands, waters of the state or waters of the US.

EN-9 Shorelines

Protect shorelines of the state by implementing the City's adopted Shoreline Master Program and the Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58).

EN-10 Trees and other vegetation

Conserve tree and plant cover, particularly native species, throughout Ridgefield. Require street tree plantings and minimum landscaping standards for new development. Promote planting using native vegetation.

EN-11 Air quality

Protect and enhance air quality, in coordination with local and regional agencies and organizations.

EN-12 Hazard areas

Manage development in geologically hazardous areas and floodplains to protect public health and safety.

EN-13 Density transfers

Encourage the use of density transfers in residential zones from protected critical areas and designated open space to buildable areas. Ensure properties receiving density are developed at an appropriate scale and maintain compatibility with surrounding development.

EN-14 Sustainability

Facilitate use of water, energy, land, and natural resources to provide for current needs without sacrificing the needs of future generations. Incorporate green building principles and practices into the design construction, and operation of all City facilities, City-funded projects, and infrastructure to the fullest extent possible, consistent with wise management of scarce public financial resources, using a building life-cycle cost approach. Consider implementation of a sustainability initiative to review City's operations with a focus on purchasing, energy efficiency, recycling, and other practices.

EN-15 Building Practices

Encourage the use of green building principles and practices for private development. Promote sustainable public and private development practices and patterns, building design, water-use reduction, and waste reduction. Develop a system of regulatory approaches and incentives to encourage green building, including reduced fees, streamlined permitting, and more. Engage green building experts, builders, and members of the development community in program development. Provide educational and informational materials for the public on the green building program. Provide additional staff training and resources as needed to implement the program.

EN-16 Environmental-focused economic development

Emphasize environmental assets as part of economic development initiatives, including developing businesses, services and events that cater to visitors accessing the National Wildlife Refuge and Lake River. Work with developers to protect and create environmental amenities in residential developments that increase desirability of neighborhoods.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



11. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

11.1 CURRENT CONDITIONS

Public participation was vital to shape this plan, but will be even more important to implement the plan. That is why the plan concludes with this chapter outlining strategies to continue engaging the community as the city grows, develops, and manages growth.

Successful communities face their challenges collectively and harness the energy of different stakeholders. Without diverse participation in community decision-making, it is all too easy to descend into political gridlock over difficult problems.

The voices of citizens, local business owners and organizations provide the perspective and information that are absolutely essential to effective planning and decision-making regarding issues that will shape our community for generations to come. For this reason, the City has a strong, ongoing program to reach out and partner with all sectors of the community.

The City has found cooperative relationships between members of the community and policy-makers that will continue to be essential if we are to achieve the collective vision and goals described in this Plan. It understands and makes use of effective and tested methods for encouraging citizens to engage at multiple levels as we continue to look for creative solutions to the challenges we all share.

Active participation in civic affairs is an important part of life in Ridgefield, and the City has a long history of providing a forum for citizens to get involved. Our open government policies are essential to ensure residents, business owners, employees and other community members are able to effectively participate in any number of issues.

There are several ways to participate in local government planning and decision-making in Ridgefield:

- Run for City Council or vote in the election.
- Serve on an advisory board such as Planning Commission or Parks Board. These volunteer citizen advisory boards study critical issues and provide careful advice to the City Council.

- Attend Council or advisory board meetings, testify at a public hearing, share your opinion in a letter, or participate in a community workshop or meeting. The City keeps a calendar on their website of such events.
- Partner with the City to help implement the Comprehensive Plan. The City looks for partners from all sectors of the community to be involved in implementation.
- Review and comment on pending land-use development projects that may affect you or your neighborhood.
- Volunteer in one of many City programs aimed at improving the community.

Public outreach is essential, but also challenging. Some key challenges include:

- Our population is more diverse than ever, but our outreach resources are limited.
- Our desire to be responsive to citizen concerns must be balanced with very real legal and fiscal constraints, finite resources, and with our responsibility to make decisions for the overall public good, rather than for the benefit of individuals.
- Citizens, business owners, and local organizations need to understand the land-use development process so they can be involved in a meaningful way.

11.2 DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE

To address these challenges, the City is always looking for new and creative ways to engage the community, including using new technologies, such as social media, online discussion portals and high-quality visual maps. The City strives to create clear, concise and jargon-free information so that people from all walks of life can easily and quickly understand the issues and provide input.

The City aims to engage citizens in the planning process early. Many individuals and neighborhood groups first get involved in response to a development proposal such as a new subdivision or commercial building. The experience can be frustrating because citizen influence over decisions at this stage is

somewhat limited. By participating in comprehensive planning, subarea planning, and development code updates, citizens can help shape the plans and regulations that will apply to future development projects. Participating “upstream” of individual development projects allows for much greater input into the community character and vision.

The City will seek to engage the community in various planning initiatives throughout the 2016-2035 planning horizon. Projects include periodic updates to the comprehensive plan, subarea planning for specific neighborhoods, updates to the development code to create new zones and regulations, specialty regulations such as green building standards, and specialty plans such as parks plans.

11.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICIES

PI-1 Early and continuous public involvement

Ensure early and continuous public involvement in the development and amendments of the Ridgefield Urban Area Comprehensive Plan, including plans adopted by reference such as subarea plans, and development regulations in the Ridgefield Development Code to implement the Plan.

PI-2 Public participation plans

Develop public participation plans for major projects or decision processes. In addition to public hearings and other formal opportunities for oral and written public comment, use various outreach techniques such as opinion surveys, speakers programs, forums, workshops, open houses, hands-on events, and task forces.

PI-3 Communication

Use City publications, mailings, broadcast and print media, social media, City webpage, and other opportunities to inform affected parties about current or proposed City programs or decisions that may

affect them; and opportunities for them to participate in the City decision process. Keep pace with evolving technologies and nontraditional means of communication to expand the reach of notifications.

PI-4 Facilitate participation

City shall design public involvement processes and events to ensure maximum participation by widest range of community members by minimizing obstacles to participation. The City shall:

- Provide multiple avenues for community members to participate in planning initiatives.
- Create a welcoming environment at public events to ensure all members of the community feel comfortable to participate.
- Make materials and events accessible to anyone with disabilities or other reasonable requests.

PI-5 Community organizations

Encourage and support the creation of neighborhood organizations, business groups, and other groups throughout the Ridgefield Urban Growth Area in order to help citizens effectively participate in City decision-making processes, and to improve communication between the City and affected groups.