

THURSTON COUNTY HEALTHY FORESTS PROJECT

SUMMARY OF EXISTING TREE PROTECTION POLICIES, GUIDES AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

THURSTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The following Comprehensive Plan Policies provide a framework for maintaining healthy forests in our urban and rural areas:

Code Sections	Goals & Objectives	Policies
Chapter 2, Land Use	Goal 1, Objective A: Rural Land Use and Activities	Policy 12. Buildings and roads should be located on sites in ways that minimize the need for cutting, grading or the removal of native plant material. a. Clearing, grading, and development activities should respect natural features, processes and wildlife habitat. b. Neighboring properties, stormwater drainage facilities and surface water bodies should be protected from sedimentation and increased runoff during and after construction. c. As much natural vegetation as possible, especially large trees, should be preserved as development occurs.
Chapter 9, Environment, Recreation and Open Space	Natural Hazards, Goal 6, Objective 2: The County should improve community resilience to climate change	Policy 1. The County should plan and prepare for climate change impacts so as to reduce damage from such events as droughts, flooding, tree disease, wildfires and other hazards which have immediate and long-term health implications and are expected to increase as the climate of our region changes.
Chapter 9, Environment, Recreation and Open Space	Greenspaces, Goal 7, Objective 2: Protection Options - Use a variety of protection options in order to protect the greatest number of priority greenspaces.	Policy 1. The county should establish a system for identifying and prioritizing greenspaces for acquisition or other form of protection in order to maximize public benefits. (See Plan for detail on prioritized list) Policy 2. The county should identify and evaluate the protection options for each important greenspace. Preservation options should include, but not be limited to: critical area designation (where appropriate), clustered development, enrollment in the open space tax program, conservation easements, purchase or transfer of development rights, and public acquisition. Policy 4. The county should encourage private property owners to protect important greenspaces through the clustering of development on the least sensitive portion of the property.

Code Sections	Goals & Objectives	Policies
Chapter 11, Health	Goal 2, Objective A: The County should attain a high level of air quality to ensure a reduction in adverse health impacts.	Policy 6. The County should protect and enhance tree canopy across urban and natural forests to improve air quality

THURSTON COUNTY GUIDING DOCUMENTS

SUSTAINABLE THURSTON PLANNING EFFORT

In 2014 the Thurston Region completed a community visioning process that culminated in the development of a plan titled, *‘Creating Places -- Preserving Spaces: A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region’*, which aims to integrate sustainability into all regional decision-making to achieve a healthy economy, society, and environment. This plan contains a target of ‘no net loss’ in forest land. And to better understand rural land uses, the plan includes an action item to create and prioritize an inventory of farmlands, forestlands, prairies, and other critical habitats that may be at risk due to development pressure.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN & CLIMATE MITIGATION PLAN

These two regional planning documents serve as guides for the County in their efforts to improve community resiliency to climate change. The *Climate Mitigation Plan* contains more than 20 action items related to forest conversion and tree protection. It also includes targets to ‘manage forestland and prairies sufficient to sequester 375,000 tons of CO2 annually by 2050,’ with performance indicators for numbers of trees planted and acres of forest canopy preserved.

THURSTON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT CODE

The Forest Conversion Ordinance (TCC Chapter 17.25) contains provisions for:

- Type I and Type IV General Forestry permits – converting working forestlands to a non-forestry use
- Conversion Option Harvest Plans with different standards for rural areas and North County UGA’s
- Release / Waiver of 6-year development moratorium on properties under a DNR Forestry Permit

The development standards for Subdivisions and Rural Areas (Titles 18 and 20) contain provisions for:

- Open space - size and use
- Low impact development
- Landscaping and tree planting requirements

Development Standards for Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater Urban Growth Areas (Titles 21, 22 and 23)

- Open space - size and use
- Low impact development
- Landscaping and tree planting requirements

The Shoreline Master Program and Critical Areas Ordinance (Titles 19 and 24) contain provisions for:

- Protection of oak woodlands
- Retaining trees and native vegetation along shorelines and in critical area buffers
- Mitigating degraded and / or disturbed critical area buffers

2016 DRAINAGE DESIGN AND EROSION CONTROL MANUAL (UPDATE UNDERWAY)

The Thurston County Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual (Title 15) establishes requirements and provides guidance on measures necessary to control the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff produced by development and redevelopment such that they comply with water quality standards and contribute to the protection of beneficial uses of receiving waters in Thurston County.

The ultimate goal of stormwater management for new development and redevelopment is to mimic natural pre-development hydrologic conditions of the site as closely as possible with respect to infiltration, evapotranspiration, water quality, and quantity of surface water and groundwater release from the site. To this end, there a number of provisions around minimizing disturbed areas, maximizing open space, and retaining native vegetation (trees). Specific examples include:

- Requirements to show existing trees and vegetation on all drainage and erosion control plans
- Use of design processes that prioritize retaining native vegetation and significant trees
- Inclusion of best management practices for low impact development
- Standards for tree (critical root zone) protection during construction
- Specific provisions for logging activities
- Guidelines for converting developed surfaces to native vegetation