



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** City Council  
Mayor Backus

**FROM:** Jeff Dixon, Planning Services Manager  
Alexandria Teague, Planner II

**DATE:** November 20, 2017

**RE:** Presentation of the Formatted and Edited Adopted 2015 Comprehensive Plan

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### **BACKGROUND**

**City of Auburn Comprehensive Plan.** As City Council members know, the Comprehensive Plan is the leading policy document that guides the City's evolution and growth over a 20-year period. The Comprehensive Plan identifies the desired type, configuration, and intensity of land uses throughout the city, as well as the character and capacity of public facilities and services such as streets and utilities. The Comprehensive Plan also serves as the basis for the City's adoption of development standards and regulations such as City zoning, subdivision and critical area regulations.

**2015 Comprehensive Plan Update.** In accordance with the Growth Management Act (GMA), every eight (8) years the City must complete a comprehensive review, and if needed, revise the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations to ensure that the Plan and regulations comply with State, Regional, and Countywide policies and regulations. In early 2014 the City began work to update the Comprehensive Plan with the City's "Imagine Auburn" visioning initiative, a year-long public outreach and participation effort.

**Planning Commission Review Timeline.** The culmination of the public outreach effort resulted in the Planning Commission's review of the 2015 update to the Comprehensive Plan on January 6, 2015 with a discussion regarding the value statements of the Core Plan (Page C3-1). Per City of Auburn Zoning Code, the Planning Commission conducts a public hearing on all potential comprehensive plan amendments, and must make and forward a recommendation to the City Council. The Planning Commission completed their review of the Comprehensive Plan with a positive recommendation to the City Council following their final public hearing on December 8, 2015.

**City Council Review Timeline.** City Council commenced their review of the 2015 update to the Comprehensive Plan on November 2, 2015, beginning with a presentation also on the Core Plan. City Council's first reading of the Ordinance to adopt the 2015 Comprehensive Plan (*Ordinance No. 6584*) occurred on December 7, 2015. Following the Planning Commission's positive recommendation, City Council's second reading and adoption of the Ordinance occurred on December 14, 2015.

**Approval to Manage Housekeeping Items.** The Ordinance adopted by City Council (*Ordinance No. 6584*), which enacted the Planning Commission's recommendation to adopt the Comprehensive Plan, recognized staffs' intention to provide final professional formatting and editing of the Comprehensive Plan. The Ordinance also recognized that the final formatting and editing would involve technical corrections not resulting in any substantive changes.

**Notable Changes to Comprehensive Plan after Adoption by City Council**

In early 2016 staff began a search for a professional editor to review the adopted plan and make recommendations for improving the documents readability, grammar, and voice. Staff In the middle of 2016 staff selected an editor that had experience in technical and policy writing. The chose editor also had experience in document formatting. Staff intended to reformat the document after editing was complete, therefore, the selection of an editor that had both skills was ideal. The editing process took approximately six months and included numerous exchanges between staff and the consultant in order to answer questions and perfect the language. The formatting process also took approximately six months and included evaluating hundreds of options related to color choices, fonts, and layout options. The purpose of formatting and finalizing the plan was to feature an easier-to-use and more accessible format than previously adopted Plans. Because of this, the Plan now looks quite different than the copy of the Plan approved by Council. The original (unedited and unformatted) version of the Comprehensive Plan as adopted can be viewed at the following link: [www.auburnwa.gov/2015plan](http://www.auburnwa.gov/2015plan).

Staff does not believe that the editing and formatting modifications materially change policies and priorities that were adopted under Ordinance No. 6584. But because there are a variety of technical corrections it is important for both the Planning Commission and City Council to take action to approve the changes.

The changes to the document were presented and explained to the Planning Commission at their regular meeting on September 19, 2017. The Planning Commission was satisfied and had no concerns.

The most notable changes to the Plan are described below by topic.

1. **Grammatical and Punctuation Changes.** The document was reviewed for grammatical and punctuation changes and changes made to increase accuracy and readability.
2. **Comprehensive Plan Design and Layout.** The design and layout of the Comprehensive Plan was given a makeover. A consistent design theme and new color scheme was applied to all chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, including the Core Plan and the seven (7) Elements. The new color scheme of the Comprehensive Plan is reminiscent of the City's official color scheme. The cover page for each Element features a set of pictures that highlight the city history of Auburn. Each Element was also given a consistent format, title, page numbering system, and table of contents. The layout of the document was converted into a magazine-column format.

Due to the extensive size of the Transportation Element and difficulty in updating the format of the document, a brief summary of the Transportation Element was incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan in the print version. This summary provides an overview of the intent and purpose of the Transportation Element, as well as how interested parties can access the complete version of the Element. Note, the complete

version of the Transportation Element will be made accessible from the City website and at the Permit Center and City Clerk's Office.

A similar approach to that of the Transportation Element was taken for the Supplementary Reports to the Comprehensive Plan. Due to the extensive volume and size of the Supplementary Reports, 11 Supplementary Reports accompany the Comprehensive Plan, an Appendices summary was also incorporated into the print version of the Comprehensive Plan. The Supplementary Reports will be made available on the City website.

*Appendices to the Comprehensive Plan*

- Appendix A - Auburn Community Vision Report
- Appendix B - Auburn Housing Needs and Characteristics Assessment
- Appendix C - Auburn Housing Element Checklist
- Appendix D - Auburn Health Impact Assessment
- Appendix E - Auburn Public Participation Plan
- Appendix F.1 - King County Buildable Lands Analysis
- Appendix F.2 - Pierce County Buildable Lands Analysis
- Appendix G - Auburn Airport Master Plan
- Appendix H - Auburn Community Profile
- Appendix I - Auburn Greenhouse Gas Inventory
- Appendix J - Parks, Arts & Recreation Open Space Plan

**3. Comprehensive Plan Map.** The Comprehensive Plan Map (Map No. 1.1) was formatted and revised following Council adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The most notable changes to the Comprehensive Plan Map included updating the map background, and the color and symbols of the Land Use types (e.g. Heavy Industrial and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe Reservation Boundary) for ease of reading. The Comprehensive Plan Map is provided in the Land Use Element following Page LU-25. Also, the Map required conversion to a different electronic format.

**4. Special Planning Areas Maps.** The "Land Use Element" of the Comprehensive Plan adopted by Council included placeholders for a set of maps associated with the City's "Special Planning Areas". Per the Land Use Element, seven (7) different types of "Special Planning Areas" exist; these include Districts, subareas (Identified areas, Designated Areas, Adopted Areas, and Areas of Concern), Impression Corridors, and Gateways. The purpose and function of these areas are described in detail on Pages LU-18 through LU-25 of the Land Use Element. As part of the final formatting and editing of the Comprehensive, specifically the Land Use Element, the Special Planning Areas maps were created. These maps feature consistent design, use of colors, and map background as the Comprehensive Plan Map. The Special Planning Areas Maps are as follows:

- Map 1.2 – Districts Map
- Map 1.3 – Designated Areas Map
- Map 1.4 – Adopted Areas Map
- Map 1.5 – Impression Corridors Map
- Map 1.6 – Gateways Map

The five (5) maps listed above are provided in the Land Use Element following page LU-25. Similar to the Comprehensive Plan Map, the Special Planning Area maps should be consulted together with the written policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

**5. Land Use Element Special Planning Area Text.**

- A. *Areas of Concern.* “Areas of Concern” are one of the seven (7) types of “Special Planning Areas” found within the “Land Use Element” (Page LU-20). This type of subarea was added to the Land Use Element following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan to specify that a few areas of the City warrant a close assessment of and an emphasis on infrastructure development and planning. The Areas of Concern represent an area that features a lack in the infrastructure and services (e.g. water, urban roads, etc.) to support an increase in density or other development. The specific areas included in the category include AWS/Auburn Black Diamond Road, Pike St NE, and 8th St NE. It should be noted that these areas were formerly included as a “Designated Area” in the subarea section of the Land Use Element, and these areas are still and will continue to be depicted on the Designated Areas Map (Map 1.3).
- B. *Subarea Plan Policies.* The Subarea Plan Policies section of the Land Use Element contains policy language regarding the City’s subarea plans (Page LU-21). This section was re-organized to incorporate the policy language of Appendix A of the Land Use Element. Appendix a previously contained policy language related to one of the seven types of “Special Planning Areas” – in particular the “Adopted Areas”. Information pertaining to the Adopted Areas can be found on Pages LU-20 through LU-23 of the Land Use Element. The policy language of the Adopted Areas was then consolidated to include only the introductory policy statements and the corresponding Ordinance or Resolution related to the adoption of the Adopted Area. It should be noted that each Adopted Area has its own adopted subarea plan incorporated by reference into the Comprehensive Plan. Each adopted subarea plan establishes the purpose of its separate designation, goals, policies, and implementation strategies. By re-organizing and consolidating the Subarea Plan Policies section of the Land Use Element, potential confusion of having subarea plan policies in multiple areas is minimized.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**Resolution No. 5341 - Acknowledging the clarified and formatted version on the Comprehensive Plan and reaffirming prior adoption.**

**Exhibit A - Formatted and Edited Adopted 2015 Comprehensive Plan**