Natural Environment Goals and Policies

GN1 Natural resources and processes are conserved and protected by Olympia's planning, regulatory, and management activities.

PN1.1 Administer development regulations which protect environmentally sensitive areas, drainage basins, and wellhead areas.

PN1.2 Coordinate critical areas ordinances and storm water management requirements regionally based on the best scientific information available

PN1.3 Limit development in areas that are environmentally sensitive, such as steep slopes and wetlands. Direct development and redevelopment to less-sensitive areas.

PN1.4 Conserve and restore natural systems, such as wetlands and stands of mature trees, to contribute to solving environmental issues.

PN1.5 Preserve the existing topography on a portion of a new development site; integrate existing site contours into the project design and minimize the use of grading and other large-scale land disturbances.

PN1.6 Establish regulations and design standards for new developments that will minimize impacts to stormwater runoff, environmentally sensitive areas, wildlife habitat, and trees.

PN1.7 Limit hillside development to site designs that incorporate and conform to the existing topography, and minimize their effect on existing hydrology.

PN1.8 Limit the negative impacts of development on public lands and environmental resources, and require full mitigation of impacts when they are unavoidable.

PN1.9 Foster City partnerships with public, private, and non-profit agencies and groups and encourage them to help identify and evaluate new low impact development and green building approaches.

PN1.10 Increase the use of low impact and green building development methods through education, technical assistance, incentives, regulations, and grants.

PN1.11 Design, build, and retrofit public projects using sustainable design and green building methods that require minimal maintenance and fit naturally into the surrounding environment.

PN1.12 Require development to mitigate impacts and avoid future costs, by incorporating timely measures, such as the clean-up of prior contamination as new development and redevelopment occurs.

GN2 Land is preserved and sustainably managed.

PN2.1 Acquire and preserve land by a set of priorities that considers environmental benefits, such as stormwater management, wildlife habitat, or access to recreation opportunities.

PN2.2 Preserve land when there are opportunities to make connections between healthy systems; for example, land parcels in a stream corridor.

PN2.3 Identify, remove, and prevent the use and spread of invasive plants and wildlife.

PN2.4 Preserve and restore native plants by including restoration efforts and volunteer partnerships in all city land management.

PN2.5 Design improvements to public land using existing and new vegetation that is attractive, adapted to our climate, supports a variety of wildlife, and requires minimal, long-term maintenance.

PN2.6 Conserve and restore wildlife habitat in both existing corridors and high-priority separate sites.

PN2.7 Practice sustainable maintenance and operations activities that reduce the City's environmental impact.

PN2.8 Evaluate, monitor, and measure environmental conditions, and use this data to develop short- and long-term management strategies.

GN3 A healthy and diverse urban forest is protected, expanded, and valued for its contribution to the environment and community.

PN3.1 Manage the urban forest to professional standards, and establish program goals and practices based on the best scientific information available.

PN3.2 Measure the tree canopy and set a city-wide target for increasing it through tree preservation and planting.

PN3.3 Preserve existing mature, healthy, and safe trees first to meet site design requirements on new development, redevelopment and city improvement projects.

PN3.4 Evaluate the environmental, ecologic, health, social and economic benefits of the urban forest.

PN3.5 Provide new trees with the necessary soil, water, space, and nutrients to grow to maturity, and plant the right size tree where there are conflicts, such as overhead utility wires or sidewalks.

PN3.6 Protect the natural structure and growing condition of trees to minimize necessary maintenance and preserve the long-term health and safety of the urban forest.

GN4 The waters and natural processes of Budd Inlet and other marine waters are protected from degrading impacts and significantly improved through upland and shoreline preservation and restoration.

PN4.1 Plan for the health and recovery of Budd Inlet on a regional scale and in collaboration with local tribes and all potentially affected agencies and stakeholders.

PN4.2 Prioritize and implement restoration efforts based on the best scientific information available to restore natural processes and improve the health and condition of Budd Inlet and its tributaries.

PN4.3 Restore and protect the health of Puget Sound as a local food source.

PN4.4 As a party of significant interest, support the process for determining a balanced, scientifically grounded and sustainable approach to the management of the Deschutes River, state-owned Capitol Lake and Budd Inlet.

GN5 Ground and surface waters are protected from land uses and activities that harm water quality and quantity.

PN5.1 Reduce the rate of expansion of impervious surface in the community.

PN5.2 Increase the use of permeable materials and environmentally-beneficial vegetation in construction projects.

PN5.3 Retrofit existing infrastructure for stormwater treatment in areas with little or no treatment.

PN5.4 Require prevention and treatment practices for businesses and land uses that have the potential to contaminate stormwater.

PN5.5 Improve programs and management strategies designed to prevent and reduce contamination of street runoff and other sources of stormwater

PN5.6 Limit or prohibit uses that pose a risk to water supplies in Drinking Water (**Wellhead**) protection areas based on the best scientific information available and the level of risk. Require restoration of any such areas that have been degraded.

PN5.7 Encourage more active inspection and maintenance programs for septic systems.

PN5.8 Encourage existing septic systems to connect to sewer, and limit the number of new septic systems.

GN6 Healthy aquatic habitat is protected and restored.

PN6.1 Restore and manage vegetation next to streams, with an emphasis on native vegetation, to greatly improve or provide new fish and wildlife habitat.

PN6.2 Maintain or improve healthy stream flows that support a diverse population of aquatic life.

PN6.3 Establish and monitor water quality and aquatic habitat health indicators based on the best scientific information available.

PN6.4 Use regulations and other means to prevent a net loss in the function and value of existing wetlands, while striving to increase and restore wetlands over the long-term.

PN6.5 Retain and restore floodways in a natural condition.

PN6.6 Preserve and restore the aquatic habitat of Budd Inlet and other local marine waters.

PN6.7 Partner with other regional agencies and community groups to restore aquatic habitat through coordinated planning, funding, and implementation.

PN6.8 Evaluate expanding low impact development approaches citywide, such as those used in the Green Cove Basin.

GN7 Local air quality is better than state and federal minimum standards.

PN7.1 Partner with other state and local agencies to monitor, reduce and eliminate sources of air pollution that can be replaced with more efficient or clean methods and technologies.

PN7.2 Partner with other state and local agencies to offset anticipated negative impacts on air quality by taking further steps to reduce air pollution, such as commute reduction programming and tree planting.

GN8 Community sources of emissions of carbon dioxide and other climate-changing greenhouse gases are identified, monitored and reduced.

PN8.1 Participate with local and state partners in the development of a regional climate action plan aimed at reducing greenhouse gases by 45 percent below 2015 levels by 2030 and by 85 percent below 2015 levels by 2050.

PN8.2 Monitor the greenhouse gas emissions from City operations, and implement new conservation measures, technologies and alternative energy sources to reach established reduction goals.

PN8.3 Reduce the use of fossil fuels and creation of greenhouse gases through planning, education, conservation, and development and implementation of renewable sources of energy (see also GL2).

PN8.4 Encourage the conservation and reuse of existing natural resources and building materials.

PN8.5 Reduce the pollution and energy consumption of transportation by promoting the use of electric vehicles and expanding accessible and inviting alternatives that reduce vehicle miles traveled, including transit, walking and cycling (see also GT25).

PN8.6 Plan to adapt, mitigate, and maintain resiliency for changing environmental conditions due to climate change, such as longer periods of drought and increased flooding related to changing weather patterns and sea level rise (see also GU11).

PN8.7 Reduce energy use and the environmental impact of our food system by encouraging local food production (see also GL25).
For sea level rise, see the Utilities chapter GU11.

GN9 Artificial sources of nighttime light are minimized to protect wildlife, vegetation and the health of the public, and preserve views of the night sky.

PN9.1 Design nighttime lighting that is safe and efficient by directing it only to the areas where it is needed. Allow and encourage reduction or elimination of nighttime light sources where safety is not impacted.

PN9.2 Eliminate or reduce lighting near streams, lakes, wetlands, and shorelines to avoid disrupting the natural development and life processes of wildlife.

GN10 Risk to human health and damage to wildlife and wildlife habitat due to harmful toxins, pollution, or other emerging threats is tracked by appropriate agencies and significantly reduced or eliminated.

PN10.1 Minimize the City's purchase and use of products that contribute to toxic chemical pollution when they are manufactured, used, or disposed.

PN10.2 Identify products that should be phased out by the community, and provide education on their negative impacts and the best available alternatives.

PN10.3 Maintain City land and properties using non-chemical methods whenever possible; use standard *Integrated Pest Management* practices and other accepted, natural approaches to managing vegetation and pests.

GN11 All members of the community can experience the natural environment through meaningful volunteer experiences, active recreation, and interactive learning opportunities.

PN11.1 Ensure that all members of the community have access to a nearby natural space that gives them opportunities to see, touch, and connect with the natural environment.

PN11.2 Give all members of our community opportunities to experience, appreciate, and participate in volunteer stewardship of the natural environment.

PN11.3 Provide environmental education programs, classes, and tours that teach outdoor recreation skills and foster an understanding and appreciation for the natural environment.

PN11.4 Provide education and support to local community groups and neighborhoods who want to monitor and care for their local park or natural area.

PN11.5 Foster a sense of place and community pride by carefully stewarding the trees, plants, and wildlife unique to Puget Sound.

Shoreline Master Program*
The SMP goals and policies are incorporated into this chapter. The SMP was recently updated via a separate process and not anticipated to change during the Comprehensive plan update process. (Effective date June 29, 2021)

See link below.
https://www.olympiawa.gov/Document_center/Government/Codes,%20Plans%20&%20Standards/SMP-2021.pdf