

# Community Sustainability Element

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## Background: Climate Change, Community Health, and Environmental Quality

**Introduction.** A relatively recent term, “sustainability” has many definitions. A commonly cited definition is one put forward by the Brundtland Commission<sup>1</sup> in a report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (December 11, 1987). The Commission defined sustainable development as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Not focused solely on environmental sustainability, the Commission’s report emphasized the inter-related nature of environmental, economic, and social factors in sustainability. One of the keys to success in sustainability is recognizing that decision-making must be based on an integration of economic with environmental and social factors.

The City of Edmonds Comprehensive Plan contains a number of different elements, some mandated by the Growth Management Act, and others included because they are important to the Edmonds community. A requirement of the Growth Management Act is that the various comprehensive plan elements be consistent with one another. This Community Sustainability Element is intended to provide a framework tying the other plan elements together, illustrating how the overall plan direction supports sustainability within the Edmonds community. A key aspect of this approach is also to provide more direct linkages between long term planning and shorter-term strategic planning and policy review which guide the use of city resources and programs, especially budgeting. For example, a new emphasis on life cycle efficiency may take precedence over simple least-cost analytical methods.

The City of Edmonds is gifted with unique environmental assets, such as the shoreline on Puget Sound, the Edmonds Marsh, urban forests, diverse streams and wetlands, Lake Ballinger and a range of parks and open spaces. In addition, the city has the benefit of an established, walkable downtown served by transit, a framework of neighborhood commercial centers providing local access to business services, and the potential to see significant economic development in the Highway 99 activity center. Recently, the City has also experienced the beginnings of new economic initiatives, such as a new fiber-optic infrastructure and locally-based businesses and organizations supporting local sustainability and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction approaches. Combined with local government initiatives, such as the Mayor’s Citizens Committee on U.S. Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement and a series of resolutions adopted by the Edmonds City Council, there is a growing recognition and harnessing of the power of citizen knowledge to encourage and support changes in City policies and operations which are making the City a leader in environmental stewardship.

Given this combination of assets and knowledge, the City of Edmonds has a compelling responsibility to utilize these capabilities to address the challenges of climate change, community health and environmental quality.

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## Sustainability Framework

This section describes the general goals and principles underlying the City’s approach to community sustainability. Three important guiding principles central to a successful approach are:

- **Flexible** – In an environment where what we understand and can predict is still developing and will be uncertain for some time to come, providing ways to monitor, assess, adapt, and to be flexible in our responses will be critical. Climate change is but one example; the uncertainties acknowledged in that subject area should be instructive in helping us understand that a flexible approach is necessary when addressing all areas of sustainability.
- **Holistic** – The components of sustainability – in terms of both its inputs and outputs –are complex and synergistic. No single action will result in a sustainable result, and sustainable initiatives taken in one area don’t necessarily lead to sustainability in another. For example, sustainable land use practices don’t necessarily result in a sustainable transportation or health system. A holistic approach is required that includes all levels of governance and encompasses planning, funding, evaluation, monitoring, and implementation.
- **Long-term** – Focusing on short-term, expedient solutions will only make actions necessary to support sustainability more difficult to take in the future. For example, in the areas of environmental issues and climate change, deferred action now will only make the cumulative effects more difficult to resolve in the future. The familiar GMA-based 20-year planning timeframe will not be sufficient – planning for sustainability must take an even longer view.

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## Sustainability Goals & Policies

Each key goal in this element (or section) is identified by an alphabet letter (for example, “D”). Goals are typically followed by associated policies and these are identified by the letter of the goal and a sequential number (for example, “D.2”)

**Sustainability Goal A.** Develop land use policies, programs, and regulations designed to support and promote sustainability. Encourage a mix and location of land uses designed to increase accessibility of Edmonds residents to services, recreation, jobs, and housing.

- A.1 Adopt a system of codes, standards and incentives to promote development that achieves growth management goals while maintaining Edmonds’ community character and charm in a sustainable way. Holistic solutions should be developed that employ such techniques as Low Impact Development (LID), transit-oriented development, “complete streets” that support multiple modes of travel, and other techniques to assure that future development and redevelopment enhances Edmonds’ character and charm for future generations to enjoy.

- A.2 Include urban form and design as critical components of sustainable land use planning. New tools, such as form-based zoning and context-sensitive design standards should be used to support a flexible land use system which seeks to provide accessible, compatible and synergistic land use patterns which encourage economic and social interaction while retaining privacy and a unique community character.
- A.3 Integrate land use plans and implementation tools with transportation, housing, cultural and recreational, and economic development planning so as to form a cohesive and mutually-supporting whole.
- A.4 Use both long-term and strategic planning tools to tie short term actions and land use decisions to long-term sustainability goals. City land use policies and decision criteria should reflect and support sustainability goals and priorities.

**Sustainability Goal B.** Develop transportation policies, programs, and regulations designed to support and promote sustainability and resiliency. Take actions to reduce the use of fuel and energy in transportation, and encourage various modes of transportation that reduce reliance on automobiles and are supported by transportation facilities and accessibility throughout the community.

- B.1 Undertake a multi-modal approach to transportation planning that promotes an integrated system of auto, transit, biking, walking and other forms of transportation designed to effectively support mobility and access.
- B.2 Actively work with transit providers to maximize and promote transit opportunities within the Edmonds community while providing links to other communities both within and outside the region.
- B.3 Explore and support the use of alternative fuels and transportation operations that reduce GHG emissions.
- B.4 When undertaking transportation planning and service decisions, evaluate and encourage land use patterns and policies that support a sustainable transportation system.
- B.5 Strategically plan and budget for transportation priorities that balances ongoing facility and service needs with long-term improvements that support a sustainable, multi-modal transportation system.
- B.6 Strategically design transportation options – including bike routes, pedestrian trails and other non-motorized solutions – to support and anticipate land use and economic development priorities.

**Sustainability Goal C.** Promote seamless transportation linkages between the Edmonds community and the rest of the Puget Sound region.

- C.1 Take an active role in supporting and advocating regional solutions to transportation and land use challenges.

- C.2 Local transportation options should be designed to be coordinated with and support inter-city and regional transportation programs and solutions.
- C.3 Advocate for local priorities and connections and the promotion of system-wide flexibility and ease of use in regional transportation decisions.

**Sustainability Goal D.** Develop utility policies, programs, and maintenance measures designed to support and promote sustainability, resilience, and energy efficiency. Maintain existing utility systems while seeking to expand the use of alternative energy and sustainable maintenance and building practices in city facilities.

- D.1 Balance and prioritize strategic and short-term priorities for maintenance and ongoing infrastructure needs with long-term economic development and sustainability goals.
- D.2 Strategically program utility and infrastructure improvements to support and anticipate land use and economic development priorities.
- D.3 Explore and employ alternative systems and techniques, such as life-cycle cost analysis, designed to maximize investments, minimize waste, and/or reduce ongoing maintenance and facilities costs.
- D.4 Include sustainability considerations, such as environmental impact, green infrastructure (emphasizing natural systems and processes), and GHG reduction in the design and maintenance of facilities and infrastructure.

**Sustainability Goal E.** Develop economic development policies and programs designed to support and promote sustainability and energy efficiency. Encourage the co-location of jobs with housing in the community, seeking to expand residents' ability to work in close proximity to their homes. Encourage and support infrastructure initiatives and land use policies that encourage and support home-based work and business activities that supplement traditional business and employment concentrations.

- E.1 Economic development should support and encourage the expansion of locally-based business and employment opportunities.
- E.2 Land use policies and implementation tools should be designed to provide for mixed use development and local access to jobs, housing, and services.
- E.3 Regulatory and economic initiatives should emphasize flexibility and the ability to anticipate and meet evolving employment, technological, and economic patterns.
- E.4 Land use and regulatory schemes should be designed to encourage and support the ability of local residents to work, shop, and obtain services locally.
- E.5 Land use and economic development programs should provide for appropriate scale and design integration of economic activities with neighborhoods while promoting patterns that provide accessibility and efficient transportation options.

**Sustainability Goal F.** Develop cultural and recreational programs designed to support and promote sustainability. Networks of parks, walkways, public art and cultural facilities and events should be woven into the community’s fabric to encourage sense of place and the overall health and well being of the community.

- F.1 Cultural and arts programs should be supported and nourished as an essential part of the City’s social, economic, and health infrastructure.
- F.2 Recreational opportunities and programming should be integrated holistically into the City’s infrastructure and planning process.
- F.3 Cultural, arts, and recreational programming should be an integral part of City design and facilities standards, and should be integrated into all planning, promotion, and economic development initiatives.

**Sustainability Goal G.** Develop housing policies, programs, and regulations designed to support and promote sustainability. Support and encourage a mix of housing types and styles which provide people with affordable housing choices geared to changes in life style. Seek to form public and private partnerships to retain and promote affordable housing options.

- G.1 Land use and housing programs should be designed to provide for existing housing needs while providing flexibility to adapt to evolving housing needs and choices.
- G.2 Housing should be viewed as a community resource, providing opportunities for residents to choose to stay in the community as their needs and resources evolve and change over time.
- G.3 Support the development of housing tools, such as inclusionary zoning incentives and affordable housing programs, that promote a variety of housing types and affordability levels into all developments.

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*, U.N. General Assembly Plenary Meeting, December 11, 1987.

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## Climate Change

**Introduction.** The quality of the environment we live in is a critical part of what people often describe as the “character” of Edmonds. Even if it is not something we overtly think about, it is an intrinsic part of our everyday experience, whether at work, at rest or at play. Until relatively recently, environmental quality has often been thought of in terms of obvious, easily observable characteristics – such as the visible landscape, the quality of the air, the presence and variety of wildlife, or the availability and character of water in its various forms. However, recent evidence on climate change<sup>2</sup> points to the potential fragility of our assumptions about the environment and the need to integrate and heighten the awareness of environmental issues as they are inter-related with all community policies and activities.

Recognizing the importance of addressing the issues surrounding the environment and climate change, in September 2006, the City of Edmonds formally expressed support for the Kyoto Protocol<sup>3</sup> and adopted the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement<sup>4</sup> by Resolution No. 1129, and joined the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)<sup>5</sup> by Resolution No. 1130.

Scientific evidence and consensus continues to strengthen the idea that climate change is an urgent threat to the environmental and economic health of our communities. Many cities, in this country and abroad, already have strong local policies and programs in place to reduce global warming pollution, but more action is needed at the local, state, and federal levels to meet the challenge. On February 16, 2005 the Kyoto Protocol, the international agreement to address climate change, became law for the 141 countries that have ratified it to date. On that day, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels launched an initiative to advance the goals of the Kyoto Protocol through leadership and action by at least 141 American cities.

The State of Washington has also been taking steps to address the issues surrounding climate change. For example, in March, 2008, the state legislature passed ESSHB 2815, which included monitoring and reporting mandates for state agencies along with the following emission reduction targets:

*Sec. 3. (1)(a) The state shall limit emissions of greenhouse gases to achieve the following emission reductions for Washington state:*

*(i) By 2020, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to 1990 levels;*

*(ii) By 2035, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases in the state to twenty-five percent below 1990 levels;*

*(iii) By 2050, the state will do its part to reach global climate stabilization levels by reducing overall emissions to fifty percent below 1990 levels, or seventy percent below the state's expected emissions that year.*

The City of Edmonds has formally approved the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement which was endorsed by the 73rd Annual U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting, Chicago, 2005. Under the Agreement, participating cities committed to take three sets of actions:

1. Urge the federal government and state governments to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the target of reducing global warming pollution levels to 7 percent below

1990 levels by 2012, including efforts to: reduce the United States' dependence on fossil fuels and accelerate the development of clean, economical energy resources and fuel-efficient technologies such as conservation, methane recovery for energy generation, waste to energy, wind and solar energy, fuel cells, efficient motor vehicles, and biofuels.

2. Urge the U.S. Congress to pass bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation that 1) includes clear timetables and emissions limits and 2) a flexible, market-based system of tradable allowances among emitting industries
3. Strive to meet or exceed Kyoto Protocol targets for reducing global warming pollution by taking actions in our own operations and community.

Given this background, the City of Edmonds recognizes that global climate change brings significant risks to our community as a shoreline city. At the same time, the City understands that we have a responsibility to play a leadership role both within our own community as well as the larger Puget Sound region. To that end, the City establishes the following goals and policies addressing climate change.

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## Climate Change Goals & Policies

Each key goal in this element (or section) is identified by an alphabet letter (for example, "D"). Goals are typically followed by associated policies and these are identified by the letter of the goal and a sequential number (for example, "D.2")

**Climate Change Goal A.** Inventory and monitor community greenhouse gas emissions, establishing carbon footprint baselines and monitoring programs to measure future progress and program needs.

- A.1 Establish baselines for greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprint for both Edmonds city government and the broader Edmonds community.
- A.2 Establish a monitoring program for consistently updating estimates on City and community greenhouse gas emissions. The monitoring program should be designed so as to enable a comparison between measurement periods.
- A.3 The monitoring program should include assessment measures which (1) measure progress toward greenhouse gas reduction goals and (2) evaluate the effectiveness of or need for programs to work toward these goals.

**Climate Change Goal B.** Establish targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainability for both city government and the Edmonds community. Regularly assess progress and program needs, identifying opportunities and obstacles for meeting greenhouse gas emission targets and sustainability.

- B.1 City government should take the lead in developing and promoting GHG emissions reduction for the Edmonds community.

- B.2 Establish and evaluate targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions for both Edmonds city government and the broader Edmonds community. Targets should be set for both short- and long-range evaluation.
  - B.2.a. By 2020, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases to 1990 levels;
  - B.2.b. By 2035, reduce overall emissions of greenhouse gases to twenty-five percent below 1990 levels;
  - B.2.c. By 2050, Edmonds will do its part to reach global climate stabilization levels by reducing overall emissions to fifty percent below 1990 levels, or seventy percent below the expected emissions that year.
- B.3 Establish measures for evaluating the degree of sustainability of Edmonds city government and the broader Edmonds community.
- B.4 Annually assess the status and progress toward emissions reduction goals.

**Climate Change Goal C.** Assess the risks and potential impacts on both city government operations and on the larger Edmonds community due to climate change. The assessment of risk and potential responses – both in terms of mitigation and adaptation – should evaluate the full range of issues, paying particular attention to those arising from the city’s location on Puget Sound.

- C.1 Develop a climate change risk assessment and impact analysis for city government facilities and operations.
- C.2 Develop a climate change risk assessment and impact analysis for the Edmonds community which considers the potential long-term impacts to economic, land use, and other community patterns as well as the risks associated with periodic weather or climate events.

**Climate Change Goal D.** Work with public and private partners to develop strategies and programs to prepare for and mitigate the potential impacts of climate change, both on city government operations and on the general Edmonds community.

- D.1 Develop a strategic plan that will help guide and focus City resources and program initiatives to (1) reduce greenhouse gas production and the carbon footprint of City government and the Edmonds community, and, (2) reduce and minimize the potential risks of climate change. The strategic plan should be coordinated with and leverage state and regional goals and initiatives, but Edmonds should look for and take the lead where we see opportunities unique to the Edmonds community.
- D.2 Build on and expand the strategic action plan to include programs that can involve both public and private partners.

- D.3 Undertake a policy review of City comprehensive, strategic and specific plans to assure that City policies are appropriately targeted to prepare for and mitigate potential impacts of climate change. These reviews may be done to correspond with scheduled plan updates, or accelerated where either a higher priority is identified or the next update is not specifically scheduled.

**Climate Change Goal E.** Develop mitigation strategies that can be used by both the public and private sectors to help mitigate the potential impacts of new and ongoing development and operations. Develop programs and strategies that will encourage the retrofitting of existing development and infrastructure to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

- E.1 Develop policies and strategies for land use and development that result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions for new development as well as redevelopment activities.
- E.2 Develop mitigation programs and incentives that both public and private development entities can use to reduce or offset potential greenhouse gas emissions associated with both new development and redevelopment.
- E.3 Develop programs and incentives that encourage existing land use, buildings, and infrastructure to reduce their carbon footprint. Demonstration programs and other cost-efficient efforts that do not rely on long-term government subsidies are preferred, unless dedicated funding sources can be found to sustain these efforts over time.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, see IPCC, 2014: *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Core Writing Team, R.K. Pachauri and L.A. Meyer (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, 151 pp.

<sup>3</sup> The Kyoto Protocol was adopted at the third Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Kyoto, Japan, on 11, December 1997, and established potentially binding targets and timetables for cutting the greenhouse-gas emissions of industrialized countries. The Kyoto Protocol has not been ratified by the U.S. government.

<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement is as amended by the 73rd Annual U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting in Chicago in 2005.

<sup>5</sup> ICLEI was founded in 1990 as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives following the World Congress of Local Governments for a Sustainable Future, held at the United Nations in New York.

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## Community Health

**Introduction.** Community health as it is used here means the overall aspects of public facilities and actions that can have an effect on the health and welfare of the community’s citizens. The focus here is on the public realm, understanding that public actions and policies can have an impact on the well-being of Edmonds citizens. The idea is that whenever possible, government should be an enabler, supporting the expansion of opportunities for people so that they can be as self-sustaining as possible, thereby reducing the potential need for intervention from government, community-based or privately-derived services – services which are becoming increasingly costly and difficult to provide.

Community health is closely linked to land use, transportation, public service delivery, and environmental quality. Clean water and clean air are a basic necessity when seeking to keep people healthy. In addition, there are certain land use and other actions that Edmonds can take to help foster healthy lifestyles throughout the community. Government also has a role in providing basic services, such as police and fire protection, while encouraging access to affordable housing and opportunities to live, work, and shop close to home.

Transportation systems, development patterns, community design, and planning decisions can have profound effects on health and wellbeing. All citizens should be able to live, work, and play in environments that facilitate physical activity and offer healthy choices.

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## Community Health Goals & Policies

Each key goal in this element (or section) is identified by an alphabet letter (for example, “D”). Goals are typically followed by associated policies and these are identified by the letter of the goal and a sequential number (for example, “D.2”)

**Community Health Goal A.** Develop a reporting and monitoring system of indicators designed to assess Edmonds’ progress toward sustainable community health.

- A.1 Develop community indicators designed to measure the City’s progress toward a sustainable community.
- A.2 Use these community indicators to inform long-term, mid-term (strategic), and budgetary decision-making.

**Community Health Goal B.** Develop and maintain ongoing City programs and infrastructure designed to support sustainable community health.

- B.1 Promote a healthy community by encouraging and supporting diversity in culture and the arts.
- B.2 Promote a healthy community by encouraging and supporting access to recreation and physical activity.

- B.3 Integrate land-use, transportation, community design, and economic development planning with public health planning to increase opportunities for recreation, physical activity and exposure to the natural environment. One example is planning for and implementing a connected system of walkways and bikeways which will provide alternative forms of transportation while also encouraging recreation and physical activity.
- B.4 Promote a healthy community by seeking to protect and enhance the natural environment through a balanced program of education, regulation, and incentives. Environmental programs in Edmonds should be tailored to and reflect the unique opportunities and challenges embodied in a mature, sea-side community with a history of environmental protection and awareness.
- B.5 Develop and encourage volunteer opportunities in community projects that promote community health. Examples of such programs include beach clean-ups, walk-to-school groups, and helpers for the elderly or disabled.
- B.6 Increase access to health-promoting foods and beverages in the community. Form partnerships with organizations or worksites, such as health care facilities and schools, to encourage healthy foods and beverages.

**Community Health Goal C.** Promote a healthy community by encouraging and supporting a diverse and creative education system, providing educational opportunities for people of all ages and all stages of personal development, including those with special needs or disabilities.

- C.1 City regulatory and planning activities should be supported by education programs which seek to explain and encourage progress toward desired outcomes rather than relying solely on rules and penalties.
- C.2 The City should partner with educational and governmental organizations to encourage community access to information and education. Examples include the Edmonds School District, Edmonds Community College, Sno-Isle Library, the State of Washington (including the Departments of Ecology and Fish and Wildlife), and the various private and public educational programs available to the Edmonds community.
- C.3 Encourage and support broad and flexible educational opportunities, including both traditional and new or emerging initiatives, such as technology-based solutions. Education should be flexible in both content and delivery.

**Community Health Goal D.** Promote a healthy community through supporting and encouraging the development of economic opportunities for all Edmonds' citizens.

- D.1 Sustainable economic health should be based on encouraging a broad range of economic activity, with an emphasis on locally-based businesses and economic initiatives which provide family-supporting wages and incomes.

- D.2 Encourage the provision of a variety of types and styles of housing that will support and accommodate different citizens' needs and life styles. The diversity of people living in Edmonds should be supported by a diversity of housing so that all citizens can find suitable housing now and as they progress through changes in their households and life stages.
- D.3 Encourage the development and preservation of affordable housing.
- D.4 Develop programs and activities that promote and support a diverse population and culture, encouraging a mix of ages and backgrounds.

**Community Health Goal E.** Support a healthy community by providing a full range of public services, infrastructure, and support systems.

- E.1 Recognize the importance of City services to local community character and sustainability by planning for and integrating public safety and health services into both short- and long-term planning and budgeting. Strategic planning should be a regular part of the decision-making process underlying the provision of these services to the community.
- E.2 Reduce energy consumption and maximize energy efficiency by promoting programs and educational initiatives aimed at a goal to “reduce, re-use, and recycle” at an individual and community-wide level. Reduce material consumption, waste generation, and resource depletion.
- E.3 Future planning and budgeting should be based on full life-cycle cost analysis and facility maintenance needs, as well as standards of service that best fit clearly articulated and supported community needs.

**Community Health Goal F.** Support a healthy and resilient community by providing for community health care and disaster preparedness.

- F.1 Plan for and prepare disaster preparedness plans which can be implemented as necessary to respond effectively to the impacts of natural or man-induced disasters on Edmonds residents.
- F.2 Prepare and implement hazard mitigation plans to reduce and minimize the exposure of Edmonds citizens to future disasters or hazards.
- F.3 Promote food security and public health by encouraging locally-based food production, distribution, and choice through the support of home and community gardens, farmers or public markets, and other small-scale, collaborative initiatives.
- F.4 Support food assistance programs and promote economic security for low income families and individuals.
- F.5 Promote and support community health by supporting national, state and local health programs and the local provision of health services.

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## Environmental Quality

**Introduction.** The environmental quality and beauty of the City of Edmonds is largely reflected through its natural resources, and especially its location on the shores of Puget Sound. The city’s watersheds – including Lake Ballinger, a well-known landmark – and streams that flow into the Sound provide a rich and diverse water resource. The beaches, wetlands, and streams provide habitat for diverse wildlife including many species of migrating and resident birds which adds to the aesthetic and pleasing quality of the environment.

As Edmonds has grown and developed, what were once abundant native forests and wetland habitats have now become increasingly scarce. Nonetheless, our parks, open spaces, and the landscaped areas of our neighborhoods integrate pleasing vistas and differentiation necessary to provide relief in a highly developed landscape. Throughout the city, woodlands, streams, wetlands and marine areas contain native vegetation that provide food and cover for a diverse population of fish and wildlife. Preserving and restoring these natural resources through environmental stewardship remains a high priority for the Edmonds community. Healthy ecosystems are the source of many less tangible benefits that humans derive from a relationship with nature such as providing a sense of well-being and sites for nature trails and other educational and recreational opportunities. Some ecological services that native plants and trees provide are stabilizing slopes and reducing erosion, replenishing the soil with nutrients and water, providing barriers to wind and sound, filtering pollutants from the air and soil, and generating oxygen and absorbing carbon dioxide. Our city beaches and the near-shore environment also represent unique habitats for marine organisms.

So interconnected are the benefits of a functioning ecosystem, that non-sustainable approaches to land development and management practices can have effects that ripple throughout the system. The combination of marine, estuarine, and upland environments should be seen as an integrated and inter-dependent ecosystem supporting a variety of wildlife valuable to the entire Edmonds community.

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## Environmental Quality Goals & Policies

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**Environmental Quality Goal A.** Protect environmental quality within the Edmonds community through the enforcement of community-based environmental regulations that reinforce and are integrated with relevant regional, state and national environmental standards.

- A.1 Ensure that the city’s natural vegetation, especially native vegetation, associated with its urban forests, wetlands, and other wildlife habitat areas are protected and enhanced for future generations.

- A.2 City regulations and incentives should be designed to support and require sustainable land use and development practices, including the retention of urban forest land, native vegetation, and wildlife habitat areas. Techniques such as tree retention and low impact stormwater development methods should be integrated into land use and development codes.
- A.3 Provide for clean air and water quality through the support of state and regional initiatives and regulations.
- A.4 Coordinate land use and transportation plans and implementation actions to support clean air and water.

**Environmental Quality Goal B.** Promote the improvement of environmental quality within the Edmonds community by designing and implementing programs based on a system of incentives and public education.

- B.1 The City should promote and increase public awareness and pride in its natural areas and wildlife heritage. Special emphasis should be directed toward preserving natural areas and habitats (forests, wetlands, streams and beaches), especially those with native vegetation, that support a diversity of wildlife.
- B.2 Education and recreation programs should be designed and made available for all ages.
- B.3 Environmental education should be coordinated and integrated with other cultural, arts, and tourism programs.
- B.4 To encourage adherence to community values and goals, education programs should be designed to help promote understanding and explain the reasons behind environmental programs and regulations.

**Environmental Quality Goal C.** Develop, monitor, and enforce critical areas regulations designed to enhance and protect environmentally sensitive areas within the city consistent with the best available science.

- C.1 Critical areas will be designated and protected using the best available science pursuant to RCW 36.70A.172.
- C.2 In addition to regulations, provide incentives that encourage environmental stewardship, resource conservation, and environmental enhancement during development activities.

**Environmental Quality Goal D.** Develop, implement, and monitor a shoreline master program, consistent with state law, to enhance and protect the quality of the shoreline environment consistent with the best available science.

- D.1 Adopt a Shoreline Master Program that meets the requirements of state law and is consistent with community goals while being based on the best available science

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## Implementing Sustainability

**Introduction.** One of the reasons for adopting this Community Sustainability Element as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan is to provide a positive conceptual framework for coordinating and assessing the community's progress toward sustainability. For that to happen, there must be a tie between long-range comprehensive planning, mid-range strategic planning, and short-term implementation decisions embodied in budgeting and operations.

There are a number of important principles to keep in mind when linking these sets of plans and actions.

- **Engage and educate.** Connect with the community and provide ways to access and share information and ideas.
- **Integrate.** Be holistic in approach, recognizing linkages and seeking to expand problem-solving and solutions beyond traditional or institutional boundaries.
- **Innovate.** Go beyond conventional approaches; be experimental.
- **Be adaptive.** Be flexible, discarding or modifying approaches that don't work and shifting resources where or when needed. Rigid rules will not always work or result in the most effective solution.
- **Be strategic.** Target and prioritize actions to be effective and gain community support and momentum. Acknowledge limitations, but be creative and persistent in seeking solutions.
- **Be a leader.** Lead by example, and by forming partnerships that effect decision-making while providing ways to address differing views and perspectives.
- **Measure and assess.** Set benchmarks to monitor progress and provide feedback to policy development and decision-making.

A key to being successful in applying these principles to sustainability will be the need to apply an adaptive management approach to planning and resource allocation. A passive approach can emphasize predictive modeling and feedback, with program adjustments made as more information is learned. A more active approach will emphasize experimentation – actively trying different ideas or strategies and evaluating which produces the best results. Important for both approaches is (a) basing plans and programs on multi-scenario uncertainty and feedback, and (b) integrating risk into the analysis. Either of these approaches can be used, as appropriate in the situation or problem being addressed.

## Implementation Goals & Policies

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**Implementation Goal A.** Develop benchmarks and indicators that will provide for measurement of progress toward established sustainability goals.

- A.1 Benchmarks and indicators should be both understandable and obtainable so that they can be easily explained and used.
- A.2 Establish both short- and long-term benchmarks and indicators to tie long-term success to interim actions and decisions.
- A.3 Develop a reporting mechanism and assessment process so that information can be gathered and made available to the relevant decision process at the appropriate time.

**Implementation Goal B.** Provide mechanisms to link long-range, strategic, and short-term planning and decision-making in making progress toward community sustainability.

- B.1 Schedule planning and budgeting decision processes to form a logical and linked progression so that each process builds on and informs related decisions.
- B.2 Long-range, strategic, and short-term planning should acknowledge the other time frames, decisions, and resources involved. For example, short-term budgetary and regulatory decisions should be designed to effect strategic and long-term goals.

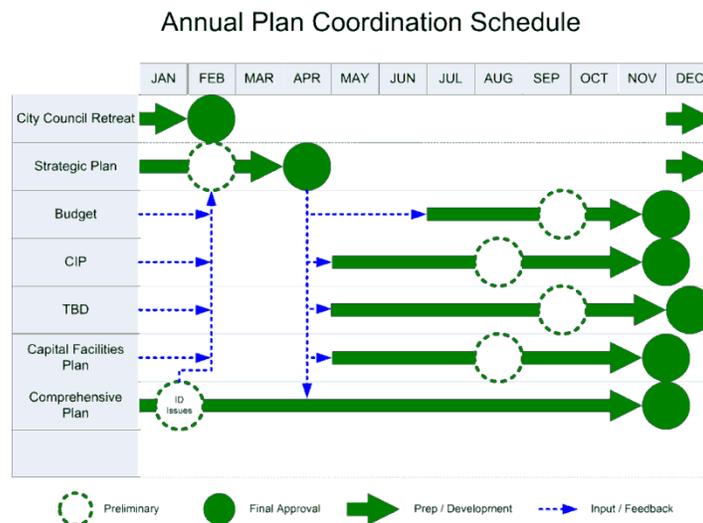


Figure 8: Example of Process Coordination

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## Implementation Actions and Performance Measures

Implementation actions are steps that are intended to be taken within a specified timeframe to address high priority sustainability goals. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan contains a small number performance measures (no more than one per element) that can be used to monitor and annually report on the implementation and effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan.

Performance measures, as identified in the Comprehensive Plan, are specific, meaningful, and easily obtainable items that relate to sustainability and can be reported on an annual basis. They are intended to help assess progress toward achieving the goals and policy direction of each major Comprehensive Plan element. {Note: The measure identified below is specifically called out as matching the above criteria and being important to community sustainability goals and will be reported annually, along with performance measures for other Comprehensive Plan elements. It is not intended to be the only measure that the City may use for community sustainability purposes.

Implementation Action: By 2017, update the City’s Hazard Mitigation Plan to reference emerging risks and hazards related to climate change, such as rising sea levels and ocean acidification.

Performance Measure: Annually report on energy usage within the City, both by City government and by the larger Edmonds community.

