

SUSTAINABILITY ELEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is generally defined as meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations. For the purpose of local planning, the City of Chelan further defines a sustainable community as one in which:

- Economic enhancement, environmental stewardship, and social well-being are balanced, and all three are recognized as essential to the quality of life. (Quality of life is a core value of the City of Chelan's Comprehensive Plan, and it plays a central role in guiding how the City accommodates growth and provides services)
- Residents can meet their basic needs for life, health, and safety
- Lake Chelan is recognized and honored as a highly-prized asset, and its qualities, including the purity of its water, are protected
- The community is recognized as a complex, multi-faceted system in which all choices have far-reaching effects
- The limits of our understanding, and the challenges inherent in making decisions in the face of those limits, are acknowledged
- The precautionary principle is recognized as one factor in decision making, and is considered to the extent practical without unduly compromising the functioning of the community. The precautionary principle generally provides that where threats of serious or irreversible harm to people or nature exist, anticipatory action will be taken to prevent damages to human and environmental health, even when full scientific certainty about cause and effect is not available, with the intent of safeguarding the quality of life of current and future generations
- The causes of imbalances (economic, environmental, or social) are addressed, rather than just the symptoms
- Citizens recognize the geographic context within which they live, including the arid climate and potential scarcity of water
- Importation of resources is minimized and resources are used, re-used, and recycled within the community

Based on that definition, the citizens of Chelan have developed the following vision statement:

We envision a community in which sustainable living is a way of life, and is incorporated into the culture that has evolved (and continues to evolve) in Chelan. Citizens and leaders are educated about their community's assets and the consequences of their decisions; and they dare to think creatively and make decisions based on the best information to which they have access. Citizens voluntarily make choices to live sustainably; regulatory interference is minimized. Costs and benefits are evaluated in terms of economic, environmental, and social factors (the triple bottom line), with all three given consideration. The community

sustains itself while acknowledging its connection to the greater whole of which it is a part. The buildup of wastes, degradation of the environment, and destruction of nature and natural processes are minimized. The City, in its roles as an employer, builder, landowner and regulator, leads by example.

There are many ways in which the City can act to foster sustainability. For example, the City can lead by its own behavior in delivering services, building and operating its facilities, and managing its land in an environmentally sustainable manner. And, the City can support education and awareness that help residents and visitors make sustainable choices.

This Sustainability Element has been developed as an optional element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, in accordance with Washington's Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.080). Some of the Plan's other elements include goals and policies addressing how environmental values specifically relate to the topics covered in those elements. For instance, the Land Use Element includes policies to guide management and development that affect natural systems and critical areas (aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, and wetlands); the Transportation Element addresses possible environmental impacts and improvements associated with transportation choices.

The Sustainability Element contains broad goals and policies and is intended to link the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan so that sustainability is addressed holistically. It addresses 11 subject areas:

- Climate
- Energy
- The natural environment
- Economy
- Building and development
- Transportation
- Government operations
- Waste reduction and recycling
- Environmental quality (including water & sewer systems, air and water quality)
- Urban agriculture
- Sustainability education and awareness

The City's general sustainability goals and policies are listed below. Goals and policies for each of the 11 subject areas are listed in the sections that follow.

Goals

Sustainability Goal 1: Economic enhancement, environmental stewardship, and social well-being

Sustainability Goal 2: Voluntary participation in creating and maintaining a sustainable community

Sustainability Goal 3: Protect and improve the quality and function of air, land, and water resources because of their relationship to human health, wildlife, and the region's natural and cultural heritage and economy.

Sustainability Goal 4: Cost-effective choices

Policies

Sustainability Policy 1: The City should consider the effects of its actions and decisions on the natural environment and human health, and favor sustainable choices, and avoid or offset potential unsustainable effects, including those caused by private projects permitted by the City.

Sustainability Policy 2: The City should consider the effects of its actions and decisions on the economic and social well-being of the community and on the freedom of choice of the people who live, work, and own property in Chelan, and favor choices that promote freedom and prosperity within the context of community health, safety, welfare, and sustainability as the City has defined it.

Sustainability Policy 3: When sustainability goals compete with other City goals, such as those related to economic development, the City should give due consideration to the sustainability goals to protect the functions that natural systems can perform and to prevent harmful effects on human health. In particular, the City should continue to engage the community in a dialogue about ways in which the City can give consideration to the precautionary principle (defined above).

Sustainability Policy 4: The City should foster and promote choices that will address the causes of imbalances in natural, economic, and social systems, rather than just the symptoms of those imbalances