

# CHAPTER 1: GENERAL PLANNING ELEMENT

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## **1-01 GOALS**

**1-01-01** To actively guide and manage growth in a way that preserves and enhances the quality of life in Des Moines and its diverse neighborhoods.

## **1-02 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

**1-02-01** The City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1995 and was entitled the *Greater Des Moines Planning Area Comprehensive Plan*. The original plan has been amended according to the Legislative History included on page one of this document. Since 1995, the majority of potential annexation areas that surrounded the City have been annexed by Des Moines and surrounding cities. To reflect this change in conditions, the name of this document has been changed to the *City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan*.

**1-02-02** The City of Des Moines has undergone rapid growth and development during the last ten years largely due to annexations. Current economic conditions and forecasts suggest that growth will continue within the existing city boundaries throughout the next decade.

**1-02-03** Growth and development within Des Moines are influenced by activities outside the city, including: Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (STIA), regional economic trends, regional transportation systems and commuting patterns, regional development plans, development within bordering jurisdictions and state regulations.

**1-02-04** Des Moines is bordered by the Cities of Kent, Normandy Park, Burien, SeaTac, and Federal Way.

**1-02-05** The 1990 Growth Management Act, that was adopted by the 1990 State Legislature and has been amended several times, requires Des Moines to undertake numerous planning activities including but not limited to:

- (1) Adopt a Comprehensive Plan.
- (2) Adopt development regulations in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.
- (3) Make capital improvement decisions in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.
- (4) Coordinate planning with neighboring jurisdictions.
- (5) Regularly review and amend the Comprehensive Plan.
- (6) Involve citizens in the process of updating and amending the Comprehensive Plan.

### **1-03 POLICIES**

- 1-03-01** Manage community growth so that overall public benefits exceed public cost.
- 1-03-02** Utilize the Comprehensive Plan as the policy basis for preparing neighborhood plans, establishing development regulations, prioritizing capital improvement construction, reviewing individual development proposals and making other decisions affecting the growth and development of Des Moines and the surrounding area.
- 1-03-03** Monitor, review and update the Comprehensive Plan annually to reflect current community values, economic conditions, and technologies.
- 1-03-04** Promote citizen involvement in updating the Comprehensive Plan, preparing development regulations, and reviewing major development proposals.
- 1-03-05** Plan for and regulate development to enhance the quality and maintain the unique character of Des Moines' neighborhoods and business districts.
- 1-03-06** Establish and enforce development standards that are clear, predictable and allow for flexibility to account for unique circumstances.
- 1-03-07** Coordinate planning for Des Moines with state, regional, county-wide and neighboring jurisdictions' planning activities.
- 1-03-08** Cooperate with other governmental bodies, institutions and businesses and assume a leadership role in pursuing activities of mutual benefit.
- 1-03-09** Cooperate with adjacent jurisdictions to adjust irregular municipal boundaries when the adjustment is in the best interest of Des Moines.

### **1-04 STRATEGIES**

#### **1-04-01 Planning Consistency**

- (1) As part of the Comprehensive Plan, prepare plans guiding growth and development in each of the following neighborhoods in Des Moines (Figure 1-1, Neighborhood Planning Areas map):
- |                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| (a) Central Des Moines | (f) Pacific Ridge |
| (b) Downtown           | (g) Woodmont      |
| (c) North Central      | (h) North Hill    |
| (d) Zenith             | (i) Redondo       |
| (e) South Des Moines   |                   |

- (2) Update the Zoning Code, Subdivision Code and other development regulations to be consistent with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- (3) Evaluate proposed subdivisions, rezones, conditional use permits, planned unit developments, unclassified use permits and other development proposals involving discretionary decisions by the City for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
- (4) Evaluate all capital improvement proposals for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
- (5) Utilize the authority of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) to ensure that new development is designed and constructed consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Monitoring and Updating
- (6) Maintain a current record of developed and undeveloped land. Regularly update the record to keep track of development trends.
- (7) Establish a schedule to review one or more elements of the Comprehensive Plan each year so that all elements may be regularly amended to present an accurate statement of existing city policy. This schedule should ensure that each element of the plan is reviewed as often as necessary to remain current, but at least once every five years. A proposed schedule is included in Appendix C. The plan should be amended no more frequently than once each year, except in emergency situations when the City Council determines that a more frequent amendment is necessary in the public interest.

**1-04-02      Citizen Involvement**

- (1) Involve citizens in the process of preparing and amending the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations by using such techniques as Planning Agency review, public opinion polls, advisory committees, newspaper articles, public hearings, and public workshops.
- (2) Conduct public hearings on all development proposals that seek changes from existing development regulations (e.g., rezones, variances and planned unit developments) or which are potentially incompatible with neighboring development (e.g., conditional and unclassified uses) prior to city approval of those proposals. Provide an opportunity for public comment on all development proposals subject to SEPA review.
- (3) Notify the public of all development proposals involving SEPA review or public hearings by using the most efficient methods available.

### **1-04-03      Development Standards**

- (1) Review and amend as appropriate the Zoning Code, Subdivision Code and other development regulations to provide high standards for new development.
- (2) Review and amend as appropriate the Zoning Code, Subdivision Code and other development regulations to establish development standards that are clear and predictable, that simplify the review process, and adapt to varied site or neighborhood conditions.
- (3) Consistently and equitably enforce development standards. If such enforcement is not possible, re-evaluate the standards and amend them to be more precisely defined.
- (4) Require property owners to maintain their property consistent with public health, safety, and welfare. Consistently and equitably enforce such requirements.
- (5) As permitted by state and federal law, ensure that all actions required by the City of Des Moines, including but not limited to, approvals, permits and licenses, are consistent with SEPA and the City's lawful exercise of its SEPA authority pursuant to RCW 43.21C.060. The City may impose conditions on any action where such conditions are necessary to mitigate specific adverse environmental impacts identified in environmental documents prepared under SEPA. The City may deny any action if the City finds: (a) the proposal would be likely to result in a significant adverse environmental impact(s) identified in a final or supplemental impact statement prepared under SEPA, and (b) reasonable mitigation measures capable of being accomplished are insufficient to mitigate the identified impact(s).

### **1-04-04      Intergovernmental Cooperation/Annexation**

- (1) Participate in planning activities affecting Des Moines undertaken by state agencies, King County, regional agencies, tribes, and special purpose districts. Seek to influence the decisions of those agencies to be consistent with the City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan. When decisions are made by state, county, regional agencies, tribes, or special purpose districts, and those decisions are clearly in the best interests of the state, county or region, take appropriate steps to implement those decisions within the City of Des Moines. This may include the imposition of conditions necessary to mitigate specific adverse environmental impacts on the City of Des Moines identified in environmental documents prepared under SEPA. The City may deny any action if the City finds: (a) the proposal would be likely to result in a significant adverse environmental impact(s) identified in a final or supplemental environmental impact statement prepared under SEPA, and (b) reasonable mitigation measures capable of being accomplished are insufficient to mitigate the identified impact(s).

- (2) Work cooperatively with King County, tribes, and other cities within King County to implement the following county-wide growth management goals. Implementation may include the imposition of conditions necessary to mitigate specific adverse environmental impacts on the City of Des Moines identified in environmental documents prepared under SEPA. The City may decide not to implement a proposal if the City finds: (a) the proposal would be likely to result in a significant adverse environmental impact(s) identified in a final or supplemental environmental impact statement prepared under SEPA, and (b) reasonable mitigation measures capable of being accomplished are insufficient to mitigate the identified impact(s).
  - (a) Protect and preserve environmental features, and air and water quality.
  - (b) Acquire open space and develop parks and recreation opportunities.
  - (c) Preserve significant historic features and buildings.
  - (d) With consideration of Des Moines' existing stock of low and moderate income housing, address the need for housing for all income groups, including low and moderate income households.
  - (e) Provide for urban densities in areas where adequate public facilities and services are in place or will be in place concurrent with development approval.
  - (f) Provide for economic development that meets regional employment needs and a local balance of jobs and housing.
- (3) Monitor and seek to influence planning activities and development decisions of neighboring jurisdictions affecting the neighborhoods surrounding Des Moines, and seek to influence those decisions consistent with the City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan.
- (4) Straighten irregular boundaries between Des Moines and neighboring communities where such irregularities adversely affect the ability to manage growth, provide municipal services, and reinforce or establish community identity.

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