



Trees in the Planning Process

How growth, housing, development regulations, and urban forestry come together in Poulsbo

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What Does the Planning Department Do?

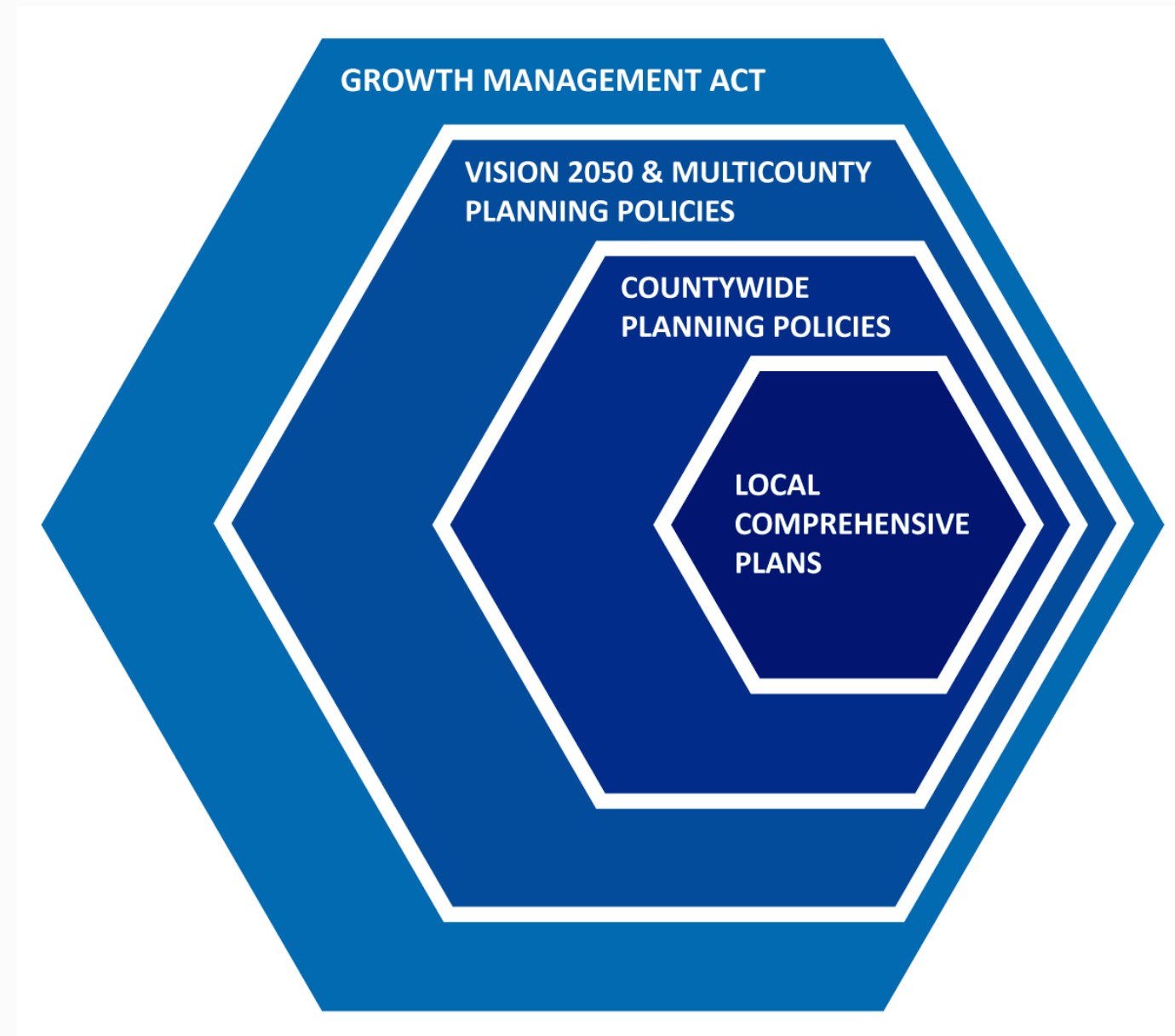
We help develop policy, make recommendations, and administer what the City Council adopts.

Plan	Regulate	Review	Implement
• Comprehensive Plan • Housing and growth • Environmental policy • Long-range code work	• Zoning • Development standards • Critical areas • Landscaping • Tree retention	• Subdivisions • Site plans • Development applications • Clearing/tree retention • Design review	• State law • City Council policy • Comprehensive Plan • Poulsbo Municipal Code



Planning for Our Future

- Washington's GMA guides how cities plan for growth
- **Requires** cities to:
 - Plan for future population growth
 - Ensure infrastructure keeps pace with growth
 - Adopt and maintain a Comprehensive Plan
- The Comp Plan is Poulsbo's 20-year policy framework
- Updated periodically to reflect:
 - Growth projections
 - Community priorities
 - Updated facility needs



Balancing Goals (RCW 36.70A.020)

- Urban growth
- Reduce sprawl
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic development
- Property rights
- Permits
- Natural resource industries
- Open space and recreation
- Environment
- Citizen participation
- Public facilities and services
- Historic preservation
- Climate change and resiliency
- Shoreline management



The Comprehensive Plan Sets the Direction

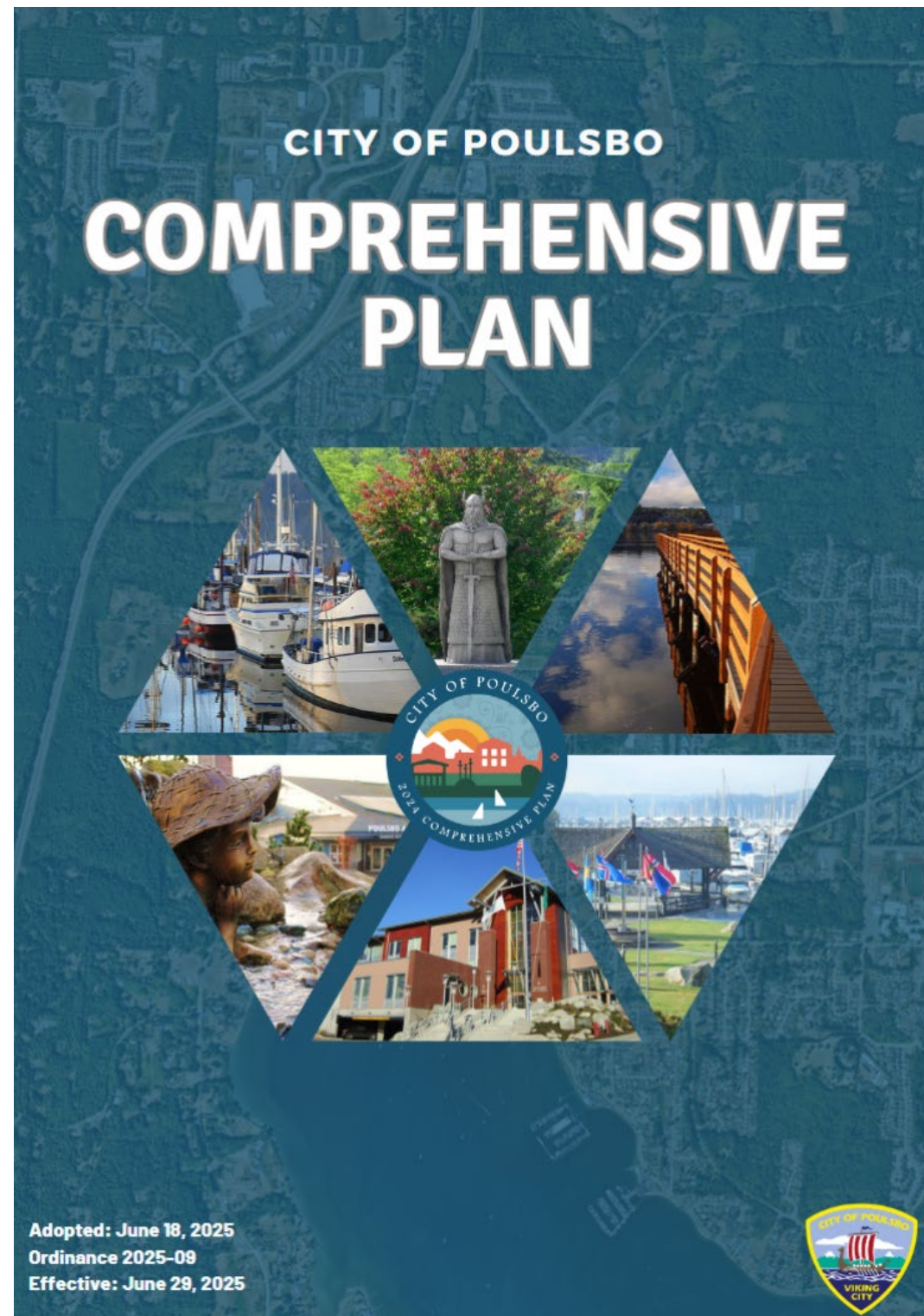


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The Comprehensive Plan Sets the Direction

Policy NE-12.3

Protect natural resources that sequester and store carbon such as wetlands, estuaries, stream buffers and urban tree canopy.

Policy NE-13.4

Enhance the City's urban tree canopy to support community resilience, mitigate urban heat and stormwater runoff. This can be accomplished through a program of tree planting in public areas, including street trees, public parks, public open spaces, and public facilities. Consider programs that create incentives for residents and business to plant trees on their private property, in addition to any required applicable landscaping standards.

Urban Forestry

The urban forest is an important part of the Poulsbo landscape. Urban forests are dynamic ecosystems that provide critical benefits to people and wildlife. Urban forests help to filter air and water, control storm water, reduce the impact of high winds, conserve energy, and provide animal habitat and shade. They add beauty, form, and structure to urban design. By reducing noise and providing places to recreate, urban forests strengthen social cohesion, spur community revitalization, and add economic value to communities.

Climate change and its impact on existing and new trees as well as new wildland urban interface (WUI) requirements will continue to impact the ways the city regulations tree protection and preservation. Balancing these sometimes competing requirements with property owners' rights to develop and manage their property is an ongoing challenge.

GOAL NE-15

Recognize that trees provide many important benefits to our natural and built community - such as reducing erosion, moderating the temperature, cleaning the air, providing wildlife habitat, producing oxygen, and beautifying the community. The City shall recognize and enhance these benefits by encouraging the preservation and management of trees on public and private lands, protecting trees from unnecessary removal or damage during development, and promoting the planting of new trees.





Policy NE-15.1

Continue to support and assist the City’s Tree Board in its efforts for the promotion, preservation, and enhancement of Poulsbo’s public tree resources.

Policy NE-15.2

Maintain or increase the tree canopy in the city through tree retention and/or replacement by:

- Implementing educational programs for property owners and managers;*
- Provide incentives for tree retention and planting, including the City’s Heritage Tree program;*
- Prohibit or limit the amount of significant tree removal on undeveloped property without an approved land use development permit;*
- Protect healthy stands or groves of trees on property proposed for development;*
- Require where appropriate, financial assurances for required tree planting and maintenance.*

Policy NE-15.6

No forest harvesting of property (i.e. forest practice conversion type activity) or tree cutting/clearing shall be approved or authorized by the City until such time as the City has approved a land use development permit.

Policy NE-15.7

Identify and plant suitable native trees and vegetation within degraded stream and wetland buffers and on steep slopes as a critical step in ecological conservation and erosion control.

Policy NE-15.8

When funding is available, complete an assessment of the urban tree canopy to evaluate the extent, health, and diversity of trees across the city.

Policy NE-15.9

Encourage and incorporate into the City’s tree canopy adequate species diversity and an appropriate mix of tree types (evergreen vs. deciduous) to protect the health of the urban forest.

Policy NE-15.10

Acknowledge that the addition and retention of trees may impact public views. Maintenance practices of trees and shrubs should maintain or enhance designated shoreline public views.

Policy NE-15.11

Maintain the city’s status as a Tree City USA as designated by the Arbor Day Foundation through the following measures: a. Maintain certification through various programs and activities long term. b. Strive to achieve annual growth awards from the Arbor Day foundation as a part of long term implementation of the Tree City designation. c. Consider programs and policies which will further recognize the city’s efforts in relation to community forestry.

Policy NE-15.12

Upon consultation with the City Arborist, consider additional planning or resource documents (such as tree stewardship guide) related to ongoing tree stewardship and protection.

Policy NE-15.3

Street trees shall be a priority for any public improvement on the City’s Urban Collector, Commercial Collector and Neighborhood Collector street classifications. Further, street trees will be required for all Residential Collector streets created through new residential developments. Types, sizing, and space requirements shall be as established in the City’s Master Public Tree Plan (as amended). Street trees should be installed in planter strips or tree wells located between the curb and any sidewalk where feasible. Where streets are not a practical location, consider designating areas within the development where trees will be required to be planted on developable lots or separate tracts of land.

Policy NE-15.4

Existing trees within a proposed development project is an important factor in its site planning, including determination of building, parking, open space and other feature locations. Tree preservation provisions that encourage the early consideration of tree protection during design and planning of development proposals shall be developed for inclusion in the City’s Development Regulations.

Policy NE-15.5

Appropriate native tree species or non-native trees naturally adapted to local conditions should be encouraged and incorporated, in all new public project landscaping. City public projects and capital improvement projects should be designed to preserve trees to the maximum extent possible.

The Comprehensive Plan already tells us to:

- Maintain/increase canopy
- Protect healthy trees and stands
- Consider trees early in site design
- Plant for diversity and long-term health
- Better understand our urban canopy



Beyond the Comprehensive Plan

2026 – Critical Areas Ordinance Update, Phase I - adopted

2027 - Critical Areas Ordinance Update, Phase II

2027-2028 – Tree Retention Update

2029 – Shoreline Master Program Update

2029 – Climate Planning

- RESILIENCE and GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION
- Trees will inevitably be part of that conversation - Urban heat, Stormwater, Carbon storage, Air quality, Habitat, Drought, Wildfire



We Are Required to Grow

Poulsbo is an urban city under the Growth Management Act.

We are required to plan for:

- Population
- Housing
- Jobs
- Infrastructure (Sewer, Water, Stormwater, Transportation)

Increasingly: More housing choices + more housing capacity

Poulsbo is required to plan for the following 2044 targets:

- Population: 5,646 new residents
- Employment: 4,000 new jobs
- Housing: 1,977 new housing units



Today's Tree Retention Framework

25% of the existing trees which are 6" in diameter or greater measured 4'6" above grade.

The code also establishes:

- Retention priorities
- Tree protection requirements
- Alternative retention approaches
- Replacement requirements
- Arborist review
- Maintenance/protection provisions

The code recognizes that not every site, or every stand of trees, is the same.

Chapter 18.180 TREE RETENTION

- ☐ § 18.180.010 Purpose.
- ☐ § 18.180.020 Applicability.
- ☐ § 18.180.030 Retention required.
- ☐ § 18.180.040 Alternative tree retention option.
- ☐ § 18.180.050 Reduced landscaped areas.
- ☐ § 18.180.060 Tree retention plan.
- ☐ § 18.180.070 Tree protection measures.
- ☐ § 18.180.080 Long-term tree protection and maintenance.





Tree Cutting and Clearing

Chapter 15.35 TREE CUTTING AND CLEARING

[1]

[1] Prior legislation: Ords. 94-25, 97-04, 97-32, 2002-18, 2003-16, 2016-20

- ☐ § 15.35.010 Purpose.
- ☐ § 15.35.020 Applicability and authority.
- ☐ § 15.35.030 Interpretation.
- ☐ § 15.35.040 Definitions.
- ☐ § 15.35.050 Permit required.
- ☐ § 15.35.060 Activities requiring tree cutting and/or clearing permit.
- ☐ § 15.35.070 Activities exempt from tree cutting or clearing permit.
- ☐ § 15.35.080 Application submittal requirements.
- ☐ § 15.35.090 Class IV general forest practices.
- ☐ § 15.35.100 Trees in critical areas and shoreline.
- ☐ § 15.35.110 Trees and vegetation in open space tracts, tree retention tracts and other protective areas.
- ☐ § 15.35.120 Dead, dying or dangerous trees.
- ☐ § 15.35.130 Performance standards.
- ☐ § 15.35.140 Tree cutting and clearing limits.
- ☐ § 15.35.150 Best pruning practices.
- ☐ § 15.35.160 Financial guarantees.



TREES

- Master Public Tree Plan
- Existing Street Tree Maintenance, Removal, and Replacement Guidelines
- Chapter 15.35, Tree Cutting and Clearing
- PMC 18.180, Tree Retention
- Street Tree List (created 2024)
- Beneficial Planting Under Trees (created 2024)
- Firewise Planting Guidelines (created 2024)
- Tree Cutting and Clearing
- Tree Cutting and Clearing Request for Exemption
- Tree Cutting and Clearing and Class IV Forest Practices Permit

Beneficial Planting Under Trees

If done correctly, understory planting beneath trees can be beneficial for the trees and the environment. Planting low maintenance shrubs and groundcovers can reduce the need for weeding, help retain moisture and lessen the demand for irrigation and provide shade, cover nesting areas and food for wildlife. Choosing the right plants is essential and thought must be put into avoiding any clearance issues, creating a maintenance burden or future fire fuel hazard. Care also must be taken when planting beneath established trees to avoid encroaching on critical surface roots.

Recommended Shrubs

Common Name	Scientific Name	Attributes
*Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	Full sun to full shade. White flowers and dark purple berries are very important to native birds and insects.
*Red Osier Dogwood	<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	Attractive red twigs that provide bird friendly thickets. Tolerates moist soil. Flowers and berries important to insects and birds.
Buttercup Winter Hazel	<i>Corylopsis pauciflora</i>	Deciduous spreading shrub with masses of pale yellow fragrant pendant flowers in early spring. Prefers partial shade.
*Beaked Hazelnut	<i>Corylus cornuta</i>	Attractive catkins in the late winter, nuts are important to wildlife.
Enkianthus	<i>Enkianthus campanulatus</i>	Upright deciduous shrub with red veined bell-shaped flowers in the spring and brilliant fall color. Full sun to part shade
Witch Hazel	<i>Hamamelis x intermedia</i>	Fragrant flowers in the late winter with spectacular fall color. Deer resistant and pest free.

COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	CULTIVAR	MATURE HEIGHT	CROWN SPREAD	SPACING	MINIMUM PLANTER WIDTH
Large >50’ Tall					40-50’	
Sugar Maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Commemoration, Bonfire or Legacy	50- 60’	35’		8’
European Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>		50’	35’		8’
Rivers Purple Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Riversii	50’	40’		8’
Espresso Kentucky Coffee Tree	<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	Espresso-JFS	50’	35’		10’
Tuliptree	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>		70’	35’		10’
Scarlet Oak	<i>Quercus coccinea</i>		60’	40’		10’
Forest Green Oak	<i>Quercus frainetto</i>	Schmidt	50’	30’		10’
Northern Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>		70’	45’		10’
Oregon White Oak	<i>Quercus garryana</i>		75’	60’		10’
Medium – 35-50’ Tall					35-40’	
Red Horsechestnut	<i>Aesculus x carnea</i>	Briotti	40’	35’		10’
Katsura Tree	<i>Cercidiphyllum japonicum</i>		40’	40’		10’
Autumn Gold Ginkgo	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	Autumn Gold	40’	30’		10’
Honeylocust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	Shademaster	45’	35’		8’
Wildfire Tupelo/Black Gum	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Wildfire	35-40’	20’		7’
Chinese Pistache	<i>Pistacia chinensis</i>		40’	30’		7’
Littleleaf Linden	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Greenspire	40’	30’		8’
Emerald Sunshine Elm	<i>Ulmus propinqua</i>	JFS-Bieberich	40’	25’		7’
Medium - Narrow Crowns 35-50’ Tall					25-35’	

City of Poulsbo Firewise Planting Guidelines

Although there is abundant information available on the subject, there are several important guidelines to keep in mind and help keep your property safe:

- While there is no such thing as 100% fire resistant planting, fire consciousness is not an excuse for zero landscaping. Trees and plants are critical in climate mitigation.
- Create a defensible space around the area or structure you want to protect. Not only can inappropriate plantings cause damage to infrastructure, they can be fire hazards as well. A 10’ no planting zone and 30’ firewise zone is commonly recommended.
- Make use of fire-resistant mulches (such as decorative rock or a combination with wood bark)



Trees Outside of Development Projects

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

- Tree inventory and retention plan
- 25% retention framework where applicable
- Retention priorities
- Alternative retention/replacement
- Tree protection during construction
- Arborist review as needed
- Long-term maintenance

Primary question: How do trees fit into the development of the site?

EXISTING / DEVELOPED PROPERTY

- Generally, up to 7,000 sq. ft. of disturbance per year is exempt
- Normal maintenance and certain dead, dangerous, or storm-damaged trees may be exempt
- Larger or nonexempt clearing requires a permit
- Additional protections apply in critical areas, shorelines, open-space/tree-retention tracts, required landscaping, and rights-of-way

Our current approach generally regulates the amount and location of clearing, not every individual tree.



Trees In Development Review



Saving a Tree on Paper Isn't Enough

Development changes the environment around a tree.

- Grading
- Root disturbance
- Drainage
- Wind exposure
- Sun exposure
- Soil compaction
- Nearby tree removal
- Utilities

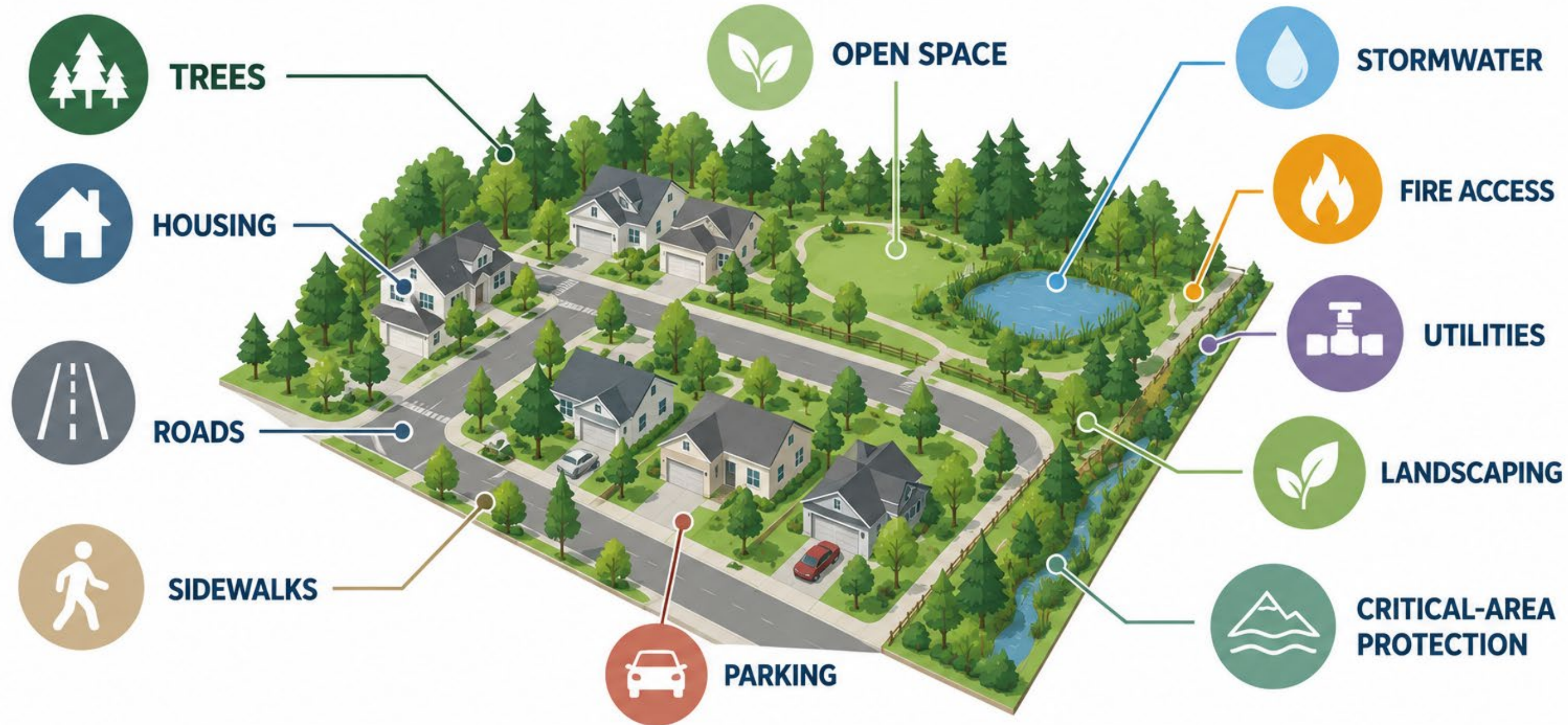
RETAINED* doesn't always mean **VIABLE*

The goal should be trees and stands that have a reasonable likelihood of surviving development.



One Acre. A Lot of Expectations.

ON THE SAME ACRE WE MAY NEED:



Every one of these is a legitimate public objective.
They still have to physically fit.

The Math Gets Hard Pretty Quickly

- More housing capacity means more homes on the same amount of urban land.
- More tree retention means more land committed to existing trees and their protection areas.
- And neither exists alone. Roads, sidewalks, utilities, stormwater, fire access, critical areas, open space

Every requirement may be reasonable on its own.

The cumulative effect is what matters.



When Good Policies Compete

URBAN FOREST

- Canopy
- Habitat
- Stormwater
- Shade
- Climate resilience
- Character

**BOTH ARE CITY
GOALS**

HOUSING + GROWTH

- Housing supply
- Affordability
- Housing choice
- Compact development
- GMA obligations
- Efficient infrastructure

The question isn't "Which one matters?"

The question is "How much of each can we accomplish?"



Every Approach Has Trade-Offs

PRIORITIZE EXISTING TREE RETENTION

- More existing canopy
- More mature trees preserved
- Potentially less development flexibility
- Potential impacts to housing capacity
- Can create difficult construction interfaces

PRIORITIZE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

- Housing supply
- More flexibility for housing/site design
- More efficient infrastructure layouts
- Greater loss of existing canopy
- Greater reliance on replacement trees
- Long wait for replacement canopy to mature

The policy question is where Poulsbo wants to be between those two ends.



What Does “Better Tree Retention” Mean?

- Number of Trees?
- Percent of Canopy?
- Diameter/Tree Credits?
- Large or Heritage Trees?
- Healthy Tree Stands?
- Trees Most Likely to Survive
- Replacement Canopy 20 Years From Now?

A Tree Code Has to Work After Adoption:

- Clear – What is protected?
- Measurable – Can we determine compliance?
- Documented – Do we know what was there?
- Enforceable – What happens if it is removed?
- Administrable – Who reviews it and who pays?



Different Roles, One City.



Finding the Balance

- A healthy urban forest.
- Enough housing.
- A resilient community.

The goal isn't to eliminate the tension.

The goal is to make better decisions within it.

