

ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS AND POLICIES

This element includes a section on goals and policies. The City must implement and be consistent with all goals and policies of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Goals

The Environment Element contains three goals:

GOAL EN-1. Clean air, clean water, and healthy natural environment

GOAL EN-2. Maximum Protection of critical areas

GOAL EN-3. Community involvement and coordination

Policies

Below are the Comprehensive Plan policies that correspond with each environmental goal. The City of Mountlake Terrace shall implement the following policies.

GOAL EN-1. Clean air, clean water, and healthy natural environment

Policy EN-1.1 Preserve significant environmental features for park, trail, and open space use.

Policy EN-1.2 Promote the use of environmentally-friendly building materials and techniques.

Policy EN-1.3 Enforce local regulations to protect the environment.

Policy EN-1.4 Promote clean air and energy conservation by selecting and operating City vehicles and equipment to maximize fuel efficiency.

Policy EN-1.5 Ensure that City facilities are designed and operated to conserve energy and other natural resources.

Policy EN-1.6 Encourage convenient alternatives to automobile travel within the City and region.

Discussion: Alternatives include walkways, bike routes, transit, and ride-sharing.

Policy EN-1.7 Ensure that development is designed to:

- a. Minimize or mitigate the amount of land that would be covered by pavement, roofs, and other impervious surfaces;
- b. Use soil and vegetation to disperse stormwater, as appropriate;

c. Retain natural slopes, to the greatest extent possible.

- Policy EN-1.8 Provide open space where natural habitat can be protected or enhanced.
- Policy EN-1.9 Increase natural area and open space preservation within the developed area, particularly along the Terrace, Lyons, McAleer and Hall Creek corridors, about Ballinger and Hall Lakes, and along the steep hillsides and right-of-way of Interstate 5.
- Policy EN-1.10 Seek opportunities to connect open spaces that will maximize environmental or recreational values.
- Policy EN-1.11 Prevent drainage problems and soil erosion by regulating: (a) the design and maintenance of stormwater management systems; and (b) clearing and grading practices.
- Policy EN-1.12 Encourage “low-impact stormwater techniques” to be used where suitable.
- Policy EN-1.13 Encourage the conservation of significant trees and their understory vegetation.
- Discussion: “Significant trees” are defined in the glossary as “Trees designated by the City to be important or unique, based on such factors as age, size, rarity, critical area function, or status as a landmark or species specimen.”
- Policy EN-1.14 Promote the planting of trees and other vegetation for beautification, air quality, noise control, and stormwater management.
- Policy EN-1.15 Encourage the planting or protection of trees, as appropriate, along public rights of way and in strategic locations where property is being developed.
- Policy EN-1.16 When significant trees must be removed, require their replacement by other trees that are appropriate for the site.
- Policy EN-1.17 Encourage the City’s acquisition of open space.

GOAL EN-2. Maximum protection of critical areas

- Policy EN-2.1 Update regulations and programs, as needed, to incorporate environmental guidance from state agencies or other reliable sources.

Discussion: Most city governments, by themselves, do not have the capacity to fully develop and maintain the most up-to-date expertise on all environmental subjects. By using relevant information from state agencies or other reliable sources, Mountlake Terrace will take a positive role in protecting the

natural environment. Examples of state documents that Mountlake Terrace considers include: the Model Critical Areas Code from the State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development and the Western Washington Stormwater Manual from the State Department of Ecology.

- Policy EN-2.2 Protect the functions and values of environmentally critical areas, especially as follows:
- a. Wetlands: Protect ability of wetlands to absorb, cleanse, and slowly release stormwater and to provide ecological balance;
 - b. Fish and wildlife habitat areas: Protect and enhance habitat for fish and wildlife, especially within and near streams, wetlands, Lake Ballinger, recreational lands, and designated open space. Provide for connected habitat where possible;
 - c. Aquifer recharge areas: Protect the water quality and hydrologic continuity of any underground aquifers;
 - d. Frequently flooded areas: Ensure that drainage systems and ground cover materials work properly to reduce flooding and prevent soil erosion and damage to property;
 - e. Geologically hazardous areas: Protect life and property from geologic hazards, especially by: (a) mitigating earthquake risks and (b) requiring development practices that maintain the stability of slopes.
- Policy EN-2.3 Include best available science in the protection of critical areas.
- Discussion: The Growth Management Act and other laws have referred to the need for best available science. To help identify such science, Mountlake Terrace considers the state’s rule on best available science, Chapter 365-195 WAC, as well as sources listed in a publication from the State Office of Community Development called “Citations of Recommended Sources of Best Available Science for Designating and Protecting Critical Areas.” Critical area regulations will be updated to incorporate best available science. As appropriate, the City will coordinate with other jurisdictions on the use of best available science.
- Policy EN-2.4 Protect and enhance shorelines to ensure their environmental sustainability, while providing opportunities for viewing and low-impact recreation.
- Policy EN-2.5 Recognize that policies of the City’s Shoreline Master Program are policies of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

- Policy EN-2.6 Ensure that land uses near Lake Ballinger and other surface waters maintain or enhance water quality.
- Policy EN-2.7 Provide special consideration for protecting the habitat of anadromous fisheries.
- Policy EN-2.8 Require clearing and grading practices to avoid or mitigate any harm to streams, lakes, steep slopes, and other critical areas.
- Policy EN-2.9 Require new development to provide minimum environmental buffers and building setbacks to protect the functions and values of critical areas.

Discussion: The recommended environmental buffers will be based on: (a) the State’s latest draft Model Ordinance for Designating and Protecting Critical Areas; (b) State Recommendations for Shoreline Management; (c) other relevant scientific information; and (d) consideration of existing urbanized conditions and stream types within Mountlake Terrace.

- Policy EN-2.10 Provide for some flexibility in applying critical area protection and development regulations to allow an economic use of property or a creative approach that provides equivalent protection.

GOAL EN-3. Community involvement and coordination

- Policy EN-3.1 Promote programs and information to help people learn about and participate in protecting the natural environment.
- Policy EN-3.2 Support all reasonable means to ensure water purity for treated sewage in accordance with state and federal standards.

Discussion: Mountlake Terrace is a partial owner of the Edmonds wastewater treatment plant, the plant that treats sewage for Edmonds and Mountlake Terrace.

- Policy EN-3.3 Promote and support the use of environmentally friendly and “least toxic” approaches to landscape management.

Discussion: City government can be a model for its citizens by demonstrating, identifying, and encouraging environmentally friendly practices to control vegetation and pests.

- Policy EN-3.4 Provide information and incentives for owners to clean up contamination from any chemical spills, underground gasoline tanks, or other pollution sources.

- Policy EN-3.5 Cooperate with nearby communities, regional organizations, and agencies to protect the environment.