



Report of the Preferred Future Search Committee

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by Hiemstra International
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To the Greater Community of Longview:

The Longview City Council in January 1995 committed to a strategic planning project that would encompass a twenty-year vision of what Longview's preferred future should look like. In 2006, Council adjusted the vision timeframe to extend to 2023, the 100th anniversary of Longview. The results are in your hands, "Longview 2023: Our Preferred Future." This guidebook illustrates ideas to assist the City in future development of policy, budgeting, and activity incorporated as a result of input from local citizens, Longview board and commission members, and representatives of other area government jurisdictions.

In 2004, Council met in an annual goal-setting retreat and again revisited our past accomplishments against the vision originally established. As we reviewed the individual elements, it became apparent that some of the goals had become outdated, such as the technology element, and the need to update the vision document was evident. In 2006, Council met again and established the new timeframe of 2023. All dates in the previous document have been changed from 2015 to 2023 to reflect the revised vision. Graphics in the document were updated to better illustrate the revised elements and to give it a more contemporary design.

In addition, it seemed appropriate to include the annual accomplishments in a supplement to "Longview 2023: Our Preferred Future." These accomplishments will serve as a reference to our past endeavors and a blueprint for future goals that were established in the original strategic plan. The City Council will continue to seek ideas and suggestions from its citizenry to ensure that we are on track and that the document reflects the future our citizens prefer.

Our vision for the future is not static, but dynamic and ever-changing to meet the goals of the citizens who live in Longview. This and future councils must remain flexible and open to change and improvement in order to perpetuate the goals established in our strategic plan for the future of Longview.

I encourage you to contribute to Longview's vision by attending meetings, joining one of Longview's boards and commissions, and speaking to your elected officials when you have an idea or suggestion for improvement. We are working today towards a healthy community for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Weber". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dennis Weber, Mayor

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Appendix - Council Goals & Accomplishments (by year)	Separate Document
(Note: The appendix is updated annually with Council accomplishments.	
A copy of the accomplishments can be obtained by contacting the City	
Manager’s Office at 442.5004, or downloading from the City’s website at	
<u>www.mylongview.com</u>.)	

Introduction

The City Council of Longview, Washington has successfully completed the strategic planning project which commenced in 1994. A twenty-year vision for the city describing preferred features of Longview in the year 2023 was developed and approved. The vision and strategic plan will guide City policy, budgeting, and activity, and is also expected to spark city-wide coalition efforts to build a preferred future for Longview.

The Council incorporated ideas collected through a number of information-seeking activities, including the following:

- ◆ Two workshops with representatives of other government jurisdictions in the area
- ◆ Two workshops with members of Longview boards and commissions
- ◆ Two “21st Century Town Meetings” in which 125 citizens discussed the future of Longview using electronic polling technology
- ◆ An intensive month of workshops with a “Preferred Future Search Committee” of 32 citizens representing the community, selected from more than 70 applicants
- ◆ Public input through a survey conducted at the Cowlitz County Fair
- ◆ A series of workshops held by City departments and department directors

The vision describes five elements of Longview’s preferred future:

Community Character and Spirit
A Vital Economy
Physical Environment and Structure
Educational and Cultural Opportunity
Regional Cooperation

The vision is presented first in summary form, then with more complete descriptions of each of the five elements. The vision describes essential preferred features of Longview in the year 2023. The description of each vision element is written in the present tense as though the vision were in place and completely implemented.

The Council recognizes that the nature of a vision is that it must be flexible and open to change and improvement as new possibilities and challenges emerge over the next twenty years. Used well and discussed often, the vision can serve to stimulate conversation about the kind of future the citizens of Longview prefer and

what can be done to bring that vision into reality.

Following the vision in this document is a set of strategies that will be pursued in order to move toward the vision. The strategies are presented first in summary form, then with more complete descriptions and definitions of responsibility.

We began implementing the strategies in 1995. Many opportunities for citizens to be involved in the implementation have been created, and indeed are necessary if we in Longview are to make deliberate progress toward our preferred future.

Vision 2023 - Summary

The Preferred Future Vision for Longview
established by the City Council in January 1995, revised in 2005.

Community Character and Spirit

Longview in 2023 is a mid-sized “All America” city. Characterized by volunteerism and unity, Longview is a great town in which to raise children or retire. Reduced crime, strong sports recreational programs, cohesive neighborhoods, care for all citizens, and appreciation of other cultures all contribute to a healthy community. A spirit of pride and celebration is the result.

A Vital Economy

Longview in 2023 is a vibrant regional economic center. Support for traditional industries and health care services, a strengthened port, and flourishing new industries result from an environment that welcomes business. Tourism, improved productivity, and paperless business transactions through the use of applied technology reflect change and growth. A vital downtown that is safe, inviting, and historic complements the entire region.

Physical Environment and Structure

Longview in 2023 continues to be an attractive, carefully planned and well-maintained city. Tree-lined streets, parks, bike paths, river access, and quality housing make the city inviting. Multi-use neighborhood centers, new bridges, and a convention and conference center add to the physical environment.

Educational and Cultural Opportunities

Longview in 2023 has become a successful learning community with world-class education and sports recreation programs for all ages and enhanced cultural arts as well. Excellent public schools, access to higher and vocational education, and a school-to-work transition program are the result of cooperative efforts by the schools and colleges, business, labor, government agencies and the City.

Regional Cooperation

Longview in 2023 is a vital participant in regional cooperation on growth, transportation, and telecommunications issues, as well as economic development, education, utilities, public safety, and meeting the needs of families and youth.

Achieving Your Preferred Future

The future is not something which just happens to us.

The future is something we do.

*The preferred future plan should become the star that you steer by,
not a simple road map to be followed.*

*The vision is not so much a decision you make,
but rather a continuous conversation about who you are,
where you prefer to go, and why you want to go there.*

1994 Glen Hiemstra, Hiemstra International, Redmond, Washington, Project Consultant
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Community Character and Spirit



Longview in 2023 is a city with a spirit of volunteerism and unity, and has been recognized by the National League of Cities as an ALL-AMERICA city. We have the reputation as a great town in which to raise your children or a great community in which to retire. A positive, pro-active, and hopeful public attitude is evident. One senses a celebratory spirit in Longview, reflected in the enjoyment that people experience living in or visiting Longview, and in the special community celebrations throughout the year.

Crime has been reduced by a joint effort among our cities, county government, local schools and neighborhood groups. Our neighborhoods, with their individual

cohesiveness, personal relationship networks, and pride contribute to a truly healthy community. Longview is a city which demonstrates care and compassion for all its citizens through active participation with youth sports programs, social agencies, organizations, and individual citizens. There is an appreciation of other cultures in Longview and a recognition of the importance of language and cultural understanding as they relate to success in a more global and interconnected world.

Our children and grandchildren feel proud to live in Longview, and foresee an economic future for themselves in southwest Washington.

A Vital Economy



The City of Longview is a vibrant regional economic center in 2023. We actively foster an environment in which we welcome businesses and make it easier for them to operate. We recognize the close linkage between economic vitality and both individual and community health. We also recognize the need to constantly diversify our economy to match a changing world.

Longview continues to support its traditional industries. These industries have succeeded in sustaining high-paying jobs by joining the aluminum, paper, and wood products industries using advanced technology. Longview has strengthened its position as a regional health care employment center.

The City, the Longview business community, and major industries have cooperatively created an incubator research and development park where innovative businesses flourish. Here, new products and services are developed locally, including spin-offs such as environmental cleaning and energy efficiency.

This economic development consortium has also attracted a major air carrier to the regional airport which offers scheduled, frequent flights within the five-state area. The Port of Longview, in cooperation with sister ports, has expanded and strengthened its position and is a major contributor to Longview's involvement in international trade.

Continued

A Vital Economy - continued

A concerted effort to place Longview on the “information highway” has succeeded. Longview is recognized for advanced technology and as a place where entrepreneurs and others can conduct business on the global information network while enjoying the quality of life offered here.

Tourism has become central to Longview’s economic vitality and is recognized for the wealth and energy it brings to the community. Among the many developments to enhance tourism are the convention business, new hotel/motel providers, cultural and historic attractions developed around Mt. St. Helens, and water sports on the Cowlitz and Columbia rivers. Daily tour boats arrive from Portland as people visit to tour the historic downtown district and eat at the Northwest’s top-rated restaurants.

In 2023, a vibrant downtown is recognized as critical to maintaining our uniqueness as

a community. Downtown Longview offers residents and visitors a safe, comfortable, and inviting gathering place with shopping, restaurants, attractive greenery, and street-scapes. There are excellent accommodations for walking, driving, and public transportation. Key transportation linkages have been established between downtown and other primary shopping areas, and to I-5.

Longview is the region’s pre-eminent health care center providing broad services to citizens and significant professional jobs for the community. It is a vital and stable economic force contributing to the quality of life in the area.

An historical district is established near a centrally located convention and conference center. Theme festivals and a Saturday street market are held in the historical district. The City, through ordinances, provides incentives for building restoration in this area.

Physical Environment and Structure



Longview in 2023 continues to be an attractive, carefully planned and well-maintained city. Longview is a beautiful city with green belts, tree-lined boulevards, and streets. People in Longview value its appearance and work to preserve it.

Our city has a quality environment with clean water and breathable air. Our infrastructure is consistently maintained at a capacity beyond the population base, both to assure service and to remain prepared for the future. Parks or green spaces have been included in every new annexation or development of land.

Planning and development have evolved to include environmental planning for safety.

New, quality housing has replaced substandard housing, and the City acts as a catalyst to enable private home ownership. Zoning concepts have evolved to provide quality mixed use, yet with our traditional emphasis on single-family homes.

Well-designed, attractive entrances to the city provide a welcome to visitors, and quality connections between neighborhoods serve residents. New bridges linking Longview to I-5 and to Oregon enhance our mobility.

An integrated system of bicycle paths surrounds the city and is linked to enhanced and attractive waterways which tie together our canals, rivers, and Lake Sacajawea.

Continued

Physical Environment and Structure - continued

This system provides a unique attraction both to residents and to tourists and is part of a well-planned infrastructure of streets, paths, waterways, bridges, and parks.

Multi-use neighborhood centers are valued for service to residents of all ages and for their special contribution to our youth and families.

Additional access to the rivers has been a priority, and now we enjoy a riverfront park and commercial development, and the enhanced recreation and economic development that they provide.

A convention and conference center in concert with a sports arena is a prominent town feature.

Educational and Cultural Opportunities



Intellectual

Longview has become a successful learning community where educational programs of all types have been enhanced. Life-long learning is the norm. Our library service has expanded in media variety and in collection size, and serves as a focal point for community learning.

Educational

The ability to achieve a world-class education locally, at any level from knowledge work to vocational and technical, has been established through pro-active, cooperative efforts by the City, schools, local colleges, and businesses. Working together, a campus-like setting has been built with facilities for the

community college and for higher education. The community college offers more transferable courses and, through cooperation with local businesses, superior ongoing training for workers.

Access to higher education as well as vocational and technical education has been significantly enhanced through use of innovative electronic means and cooperative efforts with existing four-year colleges and technical institutions which offer programs locally.

Longview citizens support a sincere effort on the part of the school district to provide quality and meaningful educational services to students who learn to think, imagine, and

Continued

Educational and Cultural Opportunities - continued

study, and become employable and productive. The school-to-work transition program, developed through business-school partnerships and facilitated by the City, is a key to educational success.

Cultural

The availability of cultural arts in Longview has been enhanced. The Columbia Theatre has created a children's theatre. Self-organizing community groups are regularly using the theatre for stage, dance, drama, music, and vaudeville performances as well as for self-perpetuating fundraising. Touring performances are sponsored and

sought by the Columbia Theatre for the Performing Arts Commission. Longview's symphony orchestra continues to grow and includes more potential performers.

Recreational

Longview provides a rich array of sporting and recreational activities for its citizens. Youth and adult leagues serve sports enthusiasts of all ages, and fields and facilities are modern, well-kept, and in constant demand. We are a regional destination point for tournaments, and draw supporters from throughout the Northwest.

Regional Cooperation



Longview local government acts as a catalyst to discuss issues and seek regional solutions to mutual challenges. Meetings are conducted in person and via electronic communications with regional and other local governments.

Regional cooperation in 2023 focuses especially on growth and transportation issues along the I-5 corridor. A shared, common vision in which both urban and rural areas have a major influence on growth and transportation issues forms the core of collaborative decision making.

Transportation planning focuses on opportunities to access high-speed rail and ground transportation on the I-5 corridor,

and transit connections to counties west and south into Oregon. The regional coalition for transportation planning extends beyond Cowlitz County to incorporate officials from the cities of Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, and Wahkiakum and Clark Counties to work with officials from cities in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties. Longview and Kelso share regional hub status to plan, implement, and maintain transportation connections.

Fiber optic connections, compatible computer systems, and satellite hook-ups for rural areas enable the entire region to offer services through the information highway. Regional growth issues include the impact of technology specialists who

Continued

Regional Cooperation - continued

have moved to the area. The City has responded by establishing service centers and skill-based educational efforts, again coordinated regionally.

Collaboration concerning growth, transportation, and telecommunication

issues has stimulated successful regional agreements in other arenas including economic development, education, utilities infrastructure, and public safety. Regional approaches to meeting the needs of families and youth assist people in achieving self-sufficiency and responsibility.

Vision Critical Strategies - Summary

- ◆ Maintain the City in financially solvent position
- ◆ Infuse and perpetuate the vision beyond election cycles
- ◆ Communicate the vision
- ◆ Strengthen the City's commitment to a proactive role in area economic development
- ◆ Preserve riverfront areas for multiple use including public/private development
- ◆ Engage the City of Longview in regional efforts to establish seamless, multimodal, regional transportation systems which will include access to high-speed rail, ground and air transportation and an integrated system of bike paths and routes
- ◆ Celebrate the high quality of life in Longview and Cowlitz County

Specific accomplishments are included in an appendix to this document, and are updated annually.

Planning Philosophy

The planning model used is called **Preferred Future Planning**. There are several distinctions between this planning approach and other models of strategic planning. Among the more important features for Longview are the following...

- 1. *Three questions about the future underlie planning.*** What is probable? What is possible? What is preferred? These questions are captured in the simple "three-cone" planning model on the next page.
- 2. *It really is the process which matters.*** The worst that can happen when the project is finished is for those who participated to say, "Whew, I'm glad that is finished. Now we can get back to work!" The best that can happen is for City leadership in particular, and citizens in general, to view strategic or preferred future planning as a continuing opportunity to discuss the preferred future of the city. The vision and strategies should overlay future Council and City work as well as citizen action and be used constantly rather than being reviewed now and then or not at all.
- 3. *The key challenge is to create just the right amount of creative or dynamic tension*** between things as they are and things as we wish them to be. Too little "reach" and the effort will be viewed as a waste of time. Too much "reach" and the effort will be viewed as an exercise in futility.
- 4. *Not everything can be done at once.*** Therefore, the most valuable and successful outcome of a strategic planning process is the discovery and designation of a few "vision critical strategies," those activities which must be pursued now if we are to move toward the vision.
- 5. *Participation and ownership are vital.*** Leading edge enterprises are looking for the most effective ways to make everyone a true stakeholder in the enterprise, and participation in dynamic planning and implementation is one strategy which works.
- 6. *Major forces of change are buffeting communities large and small.*** These forces are likely to become more, not less, turbulent in the coming years. A dynamic and effective planning process is a basic survival strategy for the 21st century.

Project Phases

The preferred future planning process consisted of six phases. The full project report provides a comprehensive list of events. A brief overview follows.

Phase 1: Project Start-Up

February 16 - March 3, 1994

The project schedule was finalized. The project consultant interviewed City Councilmembers to learn their views of desired outcomes of the project and preliminary thinking about long-term issues facing the City. Based on the interviews and Council discussion, the project was revised to include greater public involvement.

Phase 2: Exploring Assumptions, Probable & Possible Futures

March 3 - April 23, 1994

A coordinating team began work monitoring the project. The Council met in a “mini-retreat” to outline key trends and issues facing the city. Input on issues and trends was sought in workshop meetings with representatives of neighboring jurisdictions, members of Longview boards and commissions, and employees and directors of City departments. An all-city “21st Century Electronic Town Meeting” enabled citizens to add their input regarding anticipated issues and trends as well as initial vision ideas.

Phase 3: Developing the Preferred Future Vision

May 2 - June 11, 1994

Councilmembers were interviewed individually about their vision for the city in 2015. Members of Longview boards and commissions and City departments met in workshops to brainstorm and discuss their own visions for the city. A special citizen task force, the Preferred Future Search Committee, was created. Thirty-two citizens were selected from seventy applicants to broadly represent the city. The committee worked intensively in four evening workshops to refine ideas for a city vision for the year 2015. They also conducted a “scenario analysis.” The material created was pondered by the Council in a two-day retreat

to conclude this phase. In this retreat the Council completed a draft vision for Longview 2015.

Phase 4: Feedback to the Vision

July 13 - October 8, 1994

A variety of opportunities to respond to the draft vision were created. Citizens were polled at a City booth at the Cowlitz County Fair. Representatives of neighboring jurisdictions met once again in a workshop and suggested improvements. Another all-city electronic town meeting, televised live, brought area citizens together to refine the vision. Finally, the Council met in a retreat to integrate the feedback and finalize the vision, as well as to conduct initial work on strategies.

Phase 5: Developing the Vision into Strategies

October 9 - October 27, 1994

City department directors polled their departments for strategy ideas and then met intensively over a two-day period in a workshop setting to draft a proposed set of strategies to achieve the vision. They also reflected on strategy suggestions provided by project participants including Council members in earlier events. The Council concluded this phase by meeting in retreat to review the strategy proposals and to refine them into a plan.

Phase 6: Adoption of the Preferred Future Plan

November 10 - December 8, 1994

The final plan was drafted and approved by the Council with formal adoption set for January 1995.

Phase 7: Annual Update of Appendix

The current year’s accomplishments are updated annually and added to the appendix. For a copy of the current year accomplishments, please contact the Executive Office at 360.442.5004, or via email at:

tamara.larson@ci.longview.wa.us.

Important Definitions

There are many models for conducting strategic or long-range planning. Each tends to use particular definitions for key terms. Often the definition of the same term will differ from model to model. Our planning effort has been called “Preferred Future Planning.” The key terms in this model are those for the **outcomes** of the process. Their special definitions are presented here.

VISION:

A compelling description of our preferred future

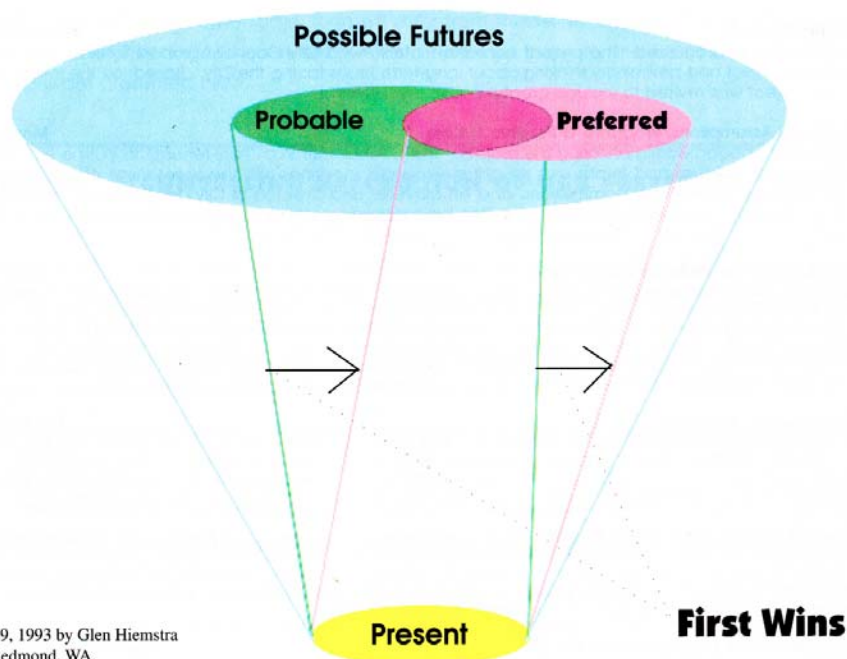
The description of the vision must be magnetic, compelling, even powerful if it is to draw people toward it. It may consist of words or visual images or a combination. The description is of the future, typically some future point in time — 5 years, 10 years, 20 years or more — capturing the preferred elements of our community as we wish it to be. The best visions connect to the heart as well as the head. Good community visions also contain many features from the past and present. A vision may be brief and symbolic or specific and detailed, depending on the needs of the situation.

VISION-CRITICAL STRATEGIES:

What we intend to do to move toward our vision

Vision-critical strategies are those few strategies which ***must be pursued*** if we are to achieve our vision. Each strategy will usually imply a number of activities to be pursued over a period of several years.

PREFERRED FUTURE PLANNING



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Acknowledgements

1994 Longview City Council:

John Crocker, Mayor
Karen Bergquist
Mark Hoehne
Ramona Leber
Mark McCrady
Hal Palmer
Ron St. Jean

1994 Members of the Preferred Future Search Committee:

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Thanks also to...

Participants from neighboring jurisdictions, Longview boards and commissions, and members of the community who participated.

2004 Project Coordinating Team

Longview City Council:

Mayor Mark McCrady	Ramona Leber
Kurt Anagnostou	Susan Stockard
Ron DiRe-Day	Dennis Weber
Don Jensen	

City of Longview Staff

Appendix

Accomplishments (1998-2005)

Note: This appendix is updated annually
as a separate document and posted
on the City's website at www.mylongview.com.