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CHAPTER 2**COMMUNITY CHARACTER ELEMENT**

Agriculture Fair 1912

INTRODUCTION

Roy was one of the early communities in the area, a prosperous boom-town and a major stop on the railroad line. The city played an important role for the entire region. Roy was home to many saw mills that supplied lumber for the ever-growing Tacoma, and provided a water stop for the steam trains that needed to refill before making the climb into the Cascade foothills. Roy was also a prime growing region for hops, which are used in making beer.

Three major events occurred to largely shape the community as it exists today. A major fire in 1929 wiped out most of the downtown businesses just prior to the start of the Depression. The railroad stopped using Roy as a main stop. And, the U.S. Army annexed most of the surrounding area to the north and west, thereby limiting expansion and the local tax base.

Today, Roy is planning for renewed growth that will continue to shape the character of the community. As growth occurs, there are characteristics that residents would like to retain, such as Roy's small town, rural character; a safe and friendly community; and some physical remnants of the past as reminders of its early history.

The Community Character Element provides a design framework for new development and redevelopment and addresses natural features and historic character preservation. The element is meant to address the goals of retaining and enhancing Roy's distinct character and creating gathering places and cultural opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds. It addresses Roy's desire to develop a more a successful business climate and to foster innovative thinking. It addresses the vision of respect for the natural environment. It is also intended to help carry out the vision of Roy being a safe, healthy, friendly and attractive community in the future.

This element is complementary to other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Specific aspects of community character are addressed in other elements. For example, Roy's locations for various uses are addressed primarily in the Land Use Element. The Community Character Element focuses more closely on design goals and historic resource opportunities and challenges for the city over a 20-year planning horizon. It considers the following aspects of Community Character:

- People and Public Places
- Events and Community Building
- Entrances and Landmarks
- Buildings and Site Design
- Street and Pathway Linkages
- Urban Forest Management
- Streetscape Landscaping
- Residential Character
- Historic Resources

COMMUNITY CHARACTER VISION

Looking ahead 20 years...

Roy has maintained its distinctive character.

The quality design of new development is a reflection of the value Roy's community members place on the community's appearance. Care has been taken to create a distinctive main street with a historic western design theme and establish pathways that enhance the comfort, safety and usability of public places. Entryways that announce to residents and visitors alike that they have entered Roy have been enhanced. The city's historic roots are still apparent through preservation of special sites, structures and buildings. Interpretive signage has also been used to enhance the community's sense of its heritage.

Community gathering places are found throughout the city.

Spaces for parks have been acquired and improved by the City or developed by the private sector in conjunction with new residential development. Plazas are incorporated into larger new mixed use developments. Both public and private investment into place-making creates and maintains spaces where informal social gatherings and community building occur. A centrally located town commons

developed on land between the BNSF railroad line and McNaught Street (SR 507) accommodates a children's play area, farmers market, display area for artwork, staging area for a variety of events, restrooms, a ride share/transit park and ride, and other amenities. This community gathering place is connected to Roy's commercial core on the east side of McNaught by pedestrian crosswalks. The City and private partners sponsor a variety of community events in this area. Community members enjoy the Roy City Park, community gardens, other parks and plazas, and walkable and bikeable neighborhoods that support healthy lifestyles and a sustainable future.

Care has been given to preserve elements of the natural environment.

Landscaping regulations have ensured preservation of special natural areas and significant trees, especially the Garry Oak, which help define the character of the city. New landscaping has, when appropriate, incorporated native plants and low-impact development design elements. Areas of open space and forested groves have been preserved where possible through public/private collaboration. Through creative design, such as in combination with community entryways, public and private projects have incorporated natural features and enhanced natural systems. Roy continues to promote the value of the natural environment by supporting protection of elements that define the city's green character, including forested parks and open space.

GOALS AND POLICIES

This element contains the community character goals and policies for the City of Roy. The following goals represent the general direction of the City related to community character, while the policies provide more detail about the steps needed to meet the intent of each goal. Discussions provide background information, may offer typical examples, and clarify intent.

PEOPLE AND PUBLIC PLACES

Community cohesiveness develops in many ways. It can come from a shared vision for the community. It can be developed through the use of public places for interaction. Successful public places have the following qualities: accessibility, comfort or image, activity, a welcoming feeling and sociability. Accessibility means having good links from surrounding areas, by foot, bike or other means for people of all abilities. It also means visual accessibility. The comfort and image come from several characteristics, including a perception of safety, cleanliness and availability of seating, both formal and informal. Identifying features, such as a fountain, artwork or a unique building, may also enhance image. Activity may be a natural outcome from a collection of uses or may be programmed through music presentations, performing arts or other endeavors.

People typically feel welcome at public places that provide basic features, such as lighting, shelter and play areas for children, along with spaces for meetings or other gatherings. Sociability is when a space becomes a place sensitive to diverse cultural context for people to go or to meet, usually because it has elements of the first four qualities.

GOAL CC1**Secure BNSF Railroad property for a new Town Commons to be developed between the railroad line and SR507.****Policy CC1.1**

Work with the BNSF Railroad to explore opportunities for donation, purchase and long-term lease of the BNSF site. Seek funding from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and other sources to help achieve this goal.

GOAL CC2**Facilitate the success of public places that foster community cohesiveness by ensuring well-designed spaces that support activity and community interaction.****Policy CC2.1**

Provide community gathering places in recreation facilities and park sites throughout the city and encourage development of new community gathering places, especially in underserved areas of the community.

Discussion: Roy City Park represents an example of a publicly-owned and managed community gathering place in the historic core of the community. New larger-scale residential development in the southernmost area of Roy should be designed to provide neighborhood-scaled parks and open space areas to serve residents in this area of the community.

Policy CC2.2

Develop and enhance informal community gathering places such as plazas in mixed use centers that include local cafes and coffee shops with comfortable outdoor seating. This can be accomplished by:

- Providing seating opportunities with multi-seasonal amenities, such as canopies or other cover from the elements and heating during periods of cooler temperatures;
- Encouraging installation of art or water features;
- Installing outdoor plantings and other landscape features
- Providing visual access to sites;
- Providing for active uses in the space; and
- Promoting partnerships and implementing incentives where appropriate to create public places, such as plazas in combination with outdoor cafes.

Discussion: Future planning and project designs, especially for mixed use areas located on SR507 at the north end of the community, should explore opportunities for establishing new informal gathering places. Design standards and guidelines that support development of such gathering places should be enforced by the City.

Policy CC2.3

Ensure that public places such as a Town Commons are designed and managed to encourage high levels of activity by including:

- Multiple entrances;
- Flexible spaces;
- Linear urban park facilities;
- Focal points that create activity throughout the space;
- A signature attraction that provides a compelling identity;
- Multi-seasonal attractions; and
- Active management of space and activities.

Policy CC2.4

Incorporate and provide opportunities for art in and around public buildings and facilities. Encourage additional opportunities throughout the city for art as design elements or features of new development, as well as placement of significant art.

Discussion: The Pacific Northwest has an international reputation for displaying works of art in public settings. The City can contribute to this regional legacy by incorporating art in public projects and encouraging developers to incorporate art into their projects. Many items in the public environment – lighting, railings, walls, benches, etc. can be made more visually interesting through the participation of artists.

EVENTS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Community cohesiveness can also be nurtured by community events. Community events provide an opportunity to help foster people's interest in getting to know the diverse cultures of the community and their neighbors and form friendships and collaborative networks. These events can also enhance awareness of diversity, cultural traditions, and Roy's heritage throughout the community. By providing or supporting community events, such as the Hometown Heroes Community Day and Cleanup, 4th of July Parade with community potluck, and Christmas Tree Lighting and Open House, as well as a variety of other public activities, the City serves as a conduit supporting these interactions and possible community building outcomes.

GOAL CC3

Promote activities and events that enliven public spaces, build community, and enrich the lives of Roy citizens.

Policy CC3.1

Provide links to public places to encourage their use through such means as:

- Providing safe and convenient pedestrian walkways;
- Providing bikeways; and
- Designing for visual access to and from the site.

Discussion: The redevelopment of SR507 into a *complete street* will support access to public spaces, including a future Town Commons.

Policy CC3.2

Encourage and support a wide variety of community festivals or events, such as the Hometown Heroes Community Day and Cleanup, Junior Rodeo, Pioneer Rodeos, 4th of July Parade with community potluck, and Christmas Tree Lighting and Open House, reflecting the heritage and cultural traditions of the Roy community.

Policy CC3.3

Facilitate the development of a farmers' market, community gardens and school gardens that increase residents' access to fresh produce and other healthy food, support local and regional agriculture, and increase community interaction.

ENTRANCES AND LANDMARKS

People orient themselves by remembering certain features that include unique public views, defined entries and landmarks. These features also can set apart one community from another and are part of what defines the unique character of a place. Preserving key features and creating new ones can help define Roy and its neighborhoods.

GOAL CC4

Preserve and enhance key features and create new ones that can help define Roy and its neighborhoods.

Policy CC4.1

Identify and establish distinctive gateways or entryways into the city, support neighborhood efforts to identify and maintain unique neighborhood entryways, and emphasize these locations with design elements, such as landscaping, signage, art or monuments.

Discussion: Key entry points to the community include the northern and southern approaches to Roy via SR507. Development and enhancement of gateway features at these locations will help to define the sense of arrival for those entering Roy.

Policy CC4.2

Encourage schools, religious facilities and other public or semi-public buildings to locate and design unique facilities to serve as community landmarks and to foster a sense of place.

Policy CC4.3

Prohibit new billboards and other large signs, and use design review for new signage to avoid visual clutter and ensure that Western Design Overlay guidelines and other design standards are met.

Policy CC4.4

Require, when practicable, underground installation of utility distribution lines.

Discussion: Numerous above-ground utility lines and cables lining streets produce a cluttered effect and detract from territorial views of the community -- as well as more focused views of buildings, landscaping and open space areas. Use of underground lines should be required, when practicable, in accordance with rate, tariffs, and franchise agreements and/or regulations applicable to the serving utility. The City should work with utility providers, citizens and developers to find ways of funding the undergrounding of existing utilities.

BUILDINGS AND SITE DESIGN

Design standards and guidelines, in particular those supporting a western design theme, provide local guidance. Commercial, multifamily, mixed use, civic, and traditional residential design projects receive a higher level of scrutiny than detached single-family homes. Generally, these projects are reviewed at either an administrative or planning commission level using the City's adopted design standards and guidelines, which may apply to specific locations or to types of uses.

GOAL CC5

Implement design standards and guidelines, and form-based codes, that will achieve design excellence, desired urban form, and community character goals consistent with citizens' preferred design parameters.

Policy CC5.1

Apply design standards and guidelines, and form-based codes, through an administrative design review process to help achieve or accomplish the following:

- A human-scale character that creates a pleasant walking environment for all ages and abilities. Buildings should provide "eyes-on-the-street";
- Elements of design, proportion, rhythm and massing that are desirable and appropriate for proposed structures and the site;
- Places and structures in the city that reflect the uniqueness of the community and provide meanings to its residents;
- Building scale and orientation that are appropriate to the site;
- The use of high-quality and durable materials, as well as innovative building techniques and designs;
- The use of environmentally friendly design and building techniques, such as LEED, for the construction or rehabilitation of structures;
- Minimization of negative impacts, such as glare or unsightly views of parking;
- Incorporation of historic features, preservation of historic buildings, and maintenance of historic town center character whenever possible; and
- A design that fits with the context of the site, one that is sensitive to its surroundings and reflective of natural features and existing character.

Policy CC5.2

Apply Western Design Overlay design criteria to new development and exterior modifications to existing buildings, excluding detached single-family dwellings, located within the Western Design Overlay District, which generally is centered on SR507.

Policy CC5.3

Foster the natural environment and maintain and enhance the green character of the city, while integrating healthy built environments through techniques such as:

- Encouraging design that minimizes impact on natural systems;
- Using innovations in public projects that improve natural systems;
- Preserving key areas of open space; and
- Requiring the preservation, maintenance and installation of street trees and other vegetation in accordance with the City's design standards and guidelines, and landscaping requirements.

Discussion: As Roy continues to urbanize in the future, many features of the natural environment can be preserved, enhanced and restored. Design of landscaping and the built environment can reduce the impacts to natural systems. At the same time, well-thought-out landscape design can enhance a site and create unique character.

Policy CC5.4

Encourage design and installation of landscaping that:

- Creates character and a sense of place;
- Retains and enhances existing green character;
- Preserves and utilizes native trees and plants;
- Enhances water and air quality;
- Minimizes water consumption;
- Provides aesthetic value;
- Creates spaces for recreation;
- Unifies site design;
- Softens or disguises less aesthetically pleasing features of a site; and
- Provides buffers for transitions between uses or helps protect natural features.

STREET AND PATHWAY LINKAGES

Streets can be more than just a means of getting from one point to another. They can define how the city is viewed as one passes through it and create a sense of unique character. Elements of street design, such as width, provisions for bikes, pavement treatments, and street-side vegetation, affect the quality of a traveler's trip and the sense of place. These design elements also can affect the behavior of motorists, such as their speed, their decisions to yield or take the right-of-way, and the degree of attention that is paid to pedestrians, bicycles and other vehicles.

Linear urban parks that incorporate pathways and complement the street system, such as would be created through development of a Town Commons on BNSF property, can create a park-like setting for the community.

GOAL CC6

Pay special attention to street design in order to create a sense of unique character that distinguishes Roy from neighboring communities.

Policy CC6.1

Promote the conversion of SR507, originally designed primarily to move motor vehicles quickly, to a *complete street* that supports safe and convenient access for all users within a uniquely designed corridor that is visually differentiated from portions of this highway that are located outside of the Roy city limits.

Discussion: SR507 should be redeveloped to enable pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities to safely move along and across this *complete street*. The design for this street should be unique and respond to its community context. It may include a mix of design elements including sidewalks, bike lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops (at such time as transit is extended to Roy), frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, and other traffic calming elements.

Policy CC6.2

Ensure that *complete street* designs result in an active urban street, accessible public spaces such as a Town Commons, and safe and convenient linkages for all users along SR507.

Discussion: A *complete street* will help create a more walkable community leading to increased street life, community vibrancy, and the development and preservation of a unique community character.

Policy CC6.3

Design and create trails, urban linear parks, sidewalks, bikeways and paths to increase physical activity and connectivity for people by providing safe, direct or convenient links between the following:

- Residential neighborhoods;
- Schools;
- Parks, open spaces, greenbelts and recreation facilities;
- Employment centers;
- Shopping and service destinations; and
- Civic buildings and spaces.

URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT

An urban forest refers to the natural and planted vegetation in an urban area -- both public and private. A community's urban forest is comprised not just of trees and other vegetation in parks but also trees and other landscaping that line the roadways and vegetation on private property. A well-managed, healthy urban forest:

- Provides opportunities to develop community partnerships that benefit the participants physically, sociologically and psychologically;
- Can lessen the impacts of drought, tree diseases, insect pests, construction, storm damage and stormwater runoff;
- Benefits the entire community economically, aesthetically, and ecologically;
- Supports the conservation, protection and enhancement of Roy's watershed and promotes the health of fish habitat; and
- Has a positive effect on surrounding businesses and residences and people's sense of well-being.

Trees and other vegetation within the urban forest provide a unique green infrastructure that if maintained and cared for will continue to give back to the community. Trees also have great potential to shape the character of a community. A worthwhile challenge is to find ways to increase the tree canopy and enhance the health, properly maintain and diversify the urban forest while achieving, over time, the community character desired by Roy citizens.

GOAL CC7

Promote the planning, management and preservation of a safe and healthy urban forest that reflects community character goals by establishing effective practices and administering landscaping standards and guidelines.

Policy CC7.1

Require landscaping with a drought-tolerant native plant component (trees, shrubs and groundcovers) to be installed when significant development activities take place.

Discussion: Generally, landscaping requirements should apply to new construction and substantial alterations of existing structures, parking areas, streets and sidewalks. The use of native, drought-tolerant plants within landscaping can provide for an attractive urban setting; support the urban citywide tree canopy and wildlife; buffer the visual impacts of development; help reduce storm water runoff; and, contribute to the planting, maintenance, and preservation of a stable and sustainable urban forest.

Policy CC7.2

Landscaping should comply with applicable City standards and guidelines for plant retention, selection, installation and maintenance. These standards are intended to maintain existing trees when practicable, better ensure that plants survive and thrive, minimize conflicts with infrastructure, and in some cases provide a substantial visual screen or buffer.

Discussion: The City should periodically review the effectiveness of its landscaping and tree retention requirements and amend them as necessary to ensure they will achieve desired urban forest goals and objectives.

STREETSCAPE LANDSCAPING

Street trees and other landscaping treatments are essential for creating beauty and improving the quality of life within the SR507 corridor, mixed use areas, residential neighborhood settings and other areas of a community. Benefits include: providing shade and cooling effects; providing a sense of enclosure; providing definition and scale to the street; protection from wind; separation from vehicular traffic; and reducing airborne dust and pollutants.

Many opportunities exist for street tree planting and other landscaping treatments in existing neighborhoods and areas undergoing redevelopment in Roy. The most favorable locations in terms of making a positive visual and functional impact within the SR507 corridor are within future sidewalks and planting strips to enhance the streetscape environment -- and within future traffic medians to reinforce traffic calming measures.

GOAL CC8

Achieve community character and design goals through the preservation, installation and maintenance of street trees and other landscaping in accordance with the City's adopted street tree list, landscape regulations, and applicable design standards and guidelines.

Policy CC8.1

Periodically review and update, as needed, the City's adopted street tree list and associated landscape design standards and guidelines to ensure that they reflect current science as to tree selection, installation and maintenance.

Discussion: Proper management of the urban forest requires attention be paid to diversity of plantings, the arrival of insect pests and disease to an area that may affect existing trees and future selections, and the long-term performance of trees previously identified as being suitable for specific applications. As new selections are identified as being good candidates for street tree plantings in Roy, or as other trees on the current list are identified as being ones to avoid in the future, the list of approved street trees should be updated to reflect this new information.

RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

The City's projected housing unit and population growth over the next couple of decades may be accommodated through construction of higher density housing in mixed use areas, infill development in established single-detached residential neighborhoods, and new single detached and attached housing units in larger scale subdivisions.

Today, factors such as an aging population, changes in family size and composition, and shifting generational preferences for different housing types and neighborhood designs and functions are contributing to changes in the social and economic factors relating to housing choices. These factors have the potential to influence the

character of the community. As such, it is important that the City guide future residential development in a manner that will be compatible with surrounding areas and build upon the positive aspects and character of the community.

GOAL CC9

Support residential infill development and redevelopment that responds to local preference and demand for innovative, high quality housing, that is sensitive to surrounding residential areas, and that supports community character goals and objectives.

Policy CC9.1

Periodically review and update design standards and guidelines and other zoning provisions that apply to commercial-residential mixed use development, single-detached infill housing, and new single-detached and attached residential subdivisions to assess their effectiveness in accomplishing design objectives and community character goals, and to assess the extent to which they successfully respond to neighborhood compatibility issues and concerns.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic resources offer a way to connect with the city's past and provide a sense of continuity and permanence. Those resources represent development patterns and places associated with Roy's notable persons and community events. The historic fabric, together with unique qualities of new development patterns, defines the character of a community. It is essential to preserve some historic resources to maintain the character of Roy and to continue to honor its past. Adaptive reuse of historic structures also helps reduce the need to obtain additional resources for new building construction.

Roy has a deep sense of history, and many of its older buildings are still standing – in spite of a major fire that wiped out most of the downtown businesses just before the depression began in 1929. Its general store and other buildings were built in the early 1900s, and the water tower that supplied the steam trains still stands as a reminder of the community's pioneering past. Public and private projects can help foster this connection and build community awareness by incorporating elements of Roy's history into design features.

GOAL CC10

Support the preservation and active use of cultural and historic resources to enhance Roy's quality of life, economic vibrancy and environmental stewardship.

Policy CC10.1

Encourage preservation, restoration, and appropriate adaptive reuse of historic properties to serve as tangible reminders of the area's history and cultural roots.

Policy CC10.2

Incorporate features, such as interpretive signage and other elements reflecting original historic designs into park projects, transportation projects and buildings on historic sites, when feasible, as a means of commemorating past events, persons of note and city history.

Policy CC10.3

Work with the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Pierce County Landmarks and Historic Preservation Commission, and community members to explore establishing an ongoing process of identification, documentation, and evaluation of historic properties. Maintain and update the historic property inventory as new information arises to guide planning and decision making, as well as to provide reference and research material for use by the community.

Discussion: Identification of historic properties and archaeological sites is an essential step towards preservation. This includes evaluation of the historic and cultural significance of a property and the extent to which it has maintained its integrity. Property evaluation forms, deed documents, news articles and other information may all be used to evaluate a property. Knowing the history and significance of properties can foster stewardship by owners and the public.

Policy CC10.4

Encourage nomination of historic resources that appear to meet Historic Landmark criteria by individuals, community groups and public officials.

Discussion: A Historic Landmark designation is the most common method to identify which historic and cultural resources to protect. Designation of a property can occur at four levels: local, county, state or national. Pierce County, the State of Washington and the United States -- through the United States National Park Service (Secretary of the Interior) -- all maintain registers of Historic Landmarks. The City of Roy has not established a local historic landmark register but may consider exploring options for doing so.

Policy CC10.5

Emphasize the preservation of historic properties through methods such as adaptive reuse for promoting economic development and /or public use.

Discussion: Without special code provisions for historic or cultural sites, adaptive reuse (placing new uses in a building once intended for another use) or even modification of a building to make it more functional or economically competitive may trigger a requirement to bring the structure up to existing codes. The economics of bringing older construction types up to modern ones can be prohibitive to the point that the owners often choose not to make alterations. The resulting effect may be that owners allow the building to deteriorate because of its inability to draw sufficient income to cover adequate maintenance. Alternatively, the property owner may be inclined to tear down and replace the structure.

Policy CC10.6

Encourage restoration and maintenance of historic properties through code flexibility, fee reductions, and other regulatory and financial incentives.

Discussion: Historic resources reflect a use of certain materials, an architectural style, or an attention to detail. Improper alterations or additions can eliminate the very reason that the structure gave character to the area. Incentives actively encourage both preservation of existing structures and restoration of structures to more closely resemble the original style and setting.

Policy CC10.7

Protect Historic Landmarks from demolition or inappropriate modification.

Policy CC10.8

Protect Historic Landmarks and significant archaeological resources from the adverse impacts of development.

Policy CC10.9

Mitigate adverse impacts to the following by methods such as documentation of the original site or structure, interpretive signage, or other appropriate techniques:

- Landmark or archaeological sites; and
- Properties proposed to be demolished or significantly altered that are eligible for landmark designation, or are of sufficient age and meet a portion of the other criteria for landmark designation.

Discussion: There may be instances where alteration or demolition of a Historic Landmark is reasonable or necessary. In these cases it is valuable for later researchers to have records of the modifications or past use. New land uses and development can have adverse effects on historic resources. Sensitive design of new development can allow new growth, while retaining community character.

Policy CC10.10

Share survey and inventory information with Pierce County, the State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, federal agencies, the public, historical societies, museums and other appropriate entities. Use technical assistance from other agencies as appropriate.

Policy CC10.11

Support efforts by residents, property owners, cultural organizations, public agencies and school districts to support the development of a more active historic preservation program, including:

- Brochures and plaques;
- Online information; and
- Educational efforts to foster public awareness of Roy's history.

Discussion: Survey and evaluation work is time intensive. It is not efficient to duplicate such efforts, and opportunities such as grants to foster preservation should be explored. There are financial or other limits to maintaining or contracting personnel with technical knowledge of preservation. It is important to maintain some resources to preserve the historic character of Roy and, through cooperation knowledge can be preserved and shared.