

AGENDA PLANNING COMMISSION April 9, 2026

Hybrid Meeting In-person and via Zoom



Ellensburg Planning Commission welcomes and encourages public participation in their public meetings. Members of the public may attend Planning Commission meetings either in person in the Council Chambers, 501 N Anderson Street, Ellensburg, WA 98926 or by registering to attend remotely via video conference.

To attend the Planning Commission meeting virtually register here:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3nj2VWDPQDiYrrl5HazkEA

Accessibility

The City of Ellensburg strives to make our services, programs, and activities readily accessible.

- Closed Captioning is available to Zoom viewers. To enable closed captioning, you will need to click on the "CC" button at the bottom of your Zoom screen and then select either "Show Subtitle" or "View Full Transcript."
- Members of the public who do not speak English or who have limited proficiency may request an interpreter if they wish to participate in public meetings.
 - The City will provide reasonable accommodation for members of the public with disabilities.

The City of Ellensburg strives to make our services, programs, and activities readily accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations will be made upon request. Please furnish the ADA Coordinator with your request in sufficient time for the City to provide a reasonable accommodation. A Request for Accommodation form may be obtained on the first floor of City Hall or by calling the City of Ellensburg ADA Coordinator at (509) 962-7222 or email ADAcordinator@ci.ellensburg.wa.us

**CITY OF ELLENSBURG
PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
Council Chambers
501 North Anderson Street
Ellensburg, WA 98926
And remotely via Zoom
Thursday, April 9, 2026
5:45 PM - Regular Meeting**

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Agenda (No Public Comment)**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - 3.A Review of March 26, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting minutes.
- 4. Public Comment**
- 5. New Business**
 - 5.A Housing Element draft review (Public Comment Opportunity)
 - 5.B Land Use Element Draft Review (Public Comment Opportunity)
- 6. Unfinished Business**
- 7. Staff Update/Discussion Items**
- 8. Commission Representative Update**
- 9. Adjournment**



For more information on the Ellensburg Planning Commission, contact Planning Manager, Stacey Henderson, at 509-962-7232.

The Contents of this agenda have been photocopied on recycled paper.



CITY OF ELLENSBURG

Date of Meeting

Time of Meeting

Place of Meeting

Minutes of Planning Commission, Regular Meeting

March 26, 2026

5:45 PM

Council Chambers

501 North Anderson Street

Ellensburg, WA 98926

And remotely via Zoom

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair O'Mahony called the meeting to order at 5:45pm.

Present: Michael Buehn, Ed Harrell, George Bottcher, Skylar Bisom-Rapp, Joe Sheeran, Geraldine O'Mahony

Others Present: Dan Carlson, Community Development Director; Mark Rud, Associate Planner; David Miller, City Council Liason

2. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Sheeran moved to approve the agenda.

Motion passed 6-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Buehn moved to approve

michael approved minutes

ed seconded

- 3.A Review of February 12, 2026 Meeting Minutes
Review of February 26, 2026 Planning Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Buehn moved to approve February 26, 2026 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion passed 6-0.

4. Public Comment

5. New Business

- 5.A P25-136 D&N Development LLC Annexation Petition (Public Comment Opportunity)
Public Hearing (Legislative) to Consider item P25-136 D&N Development LLC Annexation Petition.
Chair O'Mahony opened the public hearing to consider P25-136 Annexation Petition. Associate Planner Rud gave the staff report, noting the future land use

designation is Industrial Light, and the proposed zoning designation is Industrial Light. Rud summarized the annexation process, and suggested a motion to recommend approval of the D&N Development LLC Annexation Petition P25-136 to City Council. Commissioners asked minor follow-up and clarification questions. Chair O'Mahony closed the public testimony. Commissioner Bisom-Rapp motioned that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the proposed annexation to Council. Motion Passed 6-0.

6. Unfinished Business

7. Staff Update/Discussion Items

8. Commission Representative Update

9. Adjournment

Chair O'Mahony adjourned at 6:02pm.



Meeting Date: April 9, 2026

**City of Ellensburg
Planning Commission Agenda Report**

Agenda Subject: Housing Element draft review (Public Comment Opportunity)
Submitted by:
Department: Community Development

Suggested Motion/Action:

Background/Summary:

The periodic update to the Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan is due December 31, 2026. This deadline includes all elements required to implement the plan (e.g. development regulations, zoning changes). Additional housing element related sections for review will include the racially disparate impacts analysis memo (for review at a future Planning Commission meeting), "adequate provisions" analysis of barriers to housing types that have been underproduced (including moderate density or middle housing, multifamily, permanent supportive housing and emergency housing and accessory dwelling units) and code changes to address identified barriers.

Today's item includes the housing needs analysis and a discussion of proposed changes to the goals and policies section. The Action items section will see additional edits following review of this draft and related materials. Overall element changes are not marked; proposed changes to goals and policies are tracked.

The Affordable Housing Commission reviewed the current draft of the housing element on April 1, 2026 and recommended this material to the Planning Commission for approval.

A formal adoption process covering all components of the housing element will follow in a future meeting.

Previous Council Action:

On January 8, 2026, the AHC and PC jointly reviewed the Land Capacity Analysis, which will be an annex to the Comprehensive Plan and from which some housing element materials are drawn. The discussion also included Ellensburg housing allocations, which figure in the housing element.

Analysis:

For discussion.

Financial Impact:

None.

Budget Adjustment: No

Attachments:

1. Housing_element_draftforAHCreview_GPchanges

4. Housing

Overview

This section contains a snapshot of housing supply, condition, occupancy and affordability in Ellensburg. The community has grown over the past ten years with a slowing rate of growth, due in part to declines in enrollment at Central Washington University (CWU) between 2020 and 2025. Demand for housing has remained steady, particularly among those with low to moderate incomes. Compared to prior plans, this section includes additional analysis of future housing needs by income based on changes to the Growth Management Act.

The goals, policies, and programs found at the end of this chapter identify steps the City of Ellensburg can take in response to community housing challenges. These steps are intended to ensure the community vitality, plan for safe and affordable housing at all income levels and provide direction to implement programs to meet current and future housing needs.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- Information about community housing need.
- Information about land capacity for future housing at all income levels.
- Policies that provide a framework for increasing housing supply and housing variety while preserving historic structures and community.
- Policies that direct the City's efforts to maintain and increase affordable housing.
- Policies that address the needs of members of the community who require housing accommodation or assistance due to disability, health, age, or other circumstance.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The Kittitas County Conference of Governments (COG) established growth projections for each jurisdiction in the county. This includes Ellensburg, Cle Elum, South Cle Elum, Roslyn, and Kittitas, as well as the unincorporated areas of the County. Each projection is the amount of growth expected to be accommodated during the time period from 2026-2046. Ellensburg's growth projection for this period is 4,834 additional people over the next 20 years. In order to plan for these new households, the City must



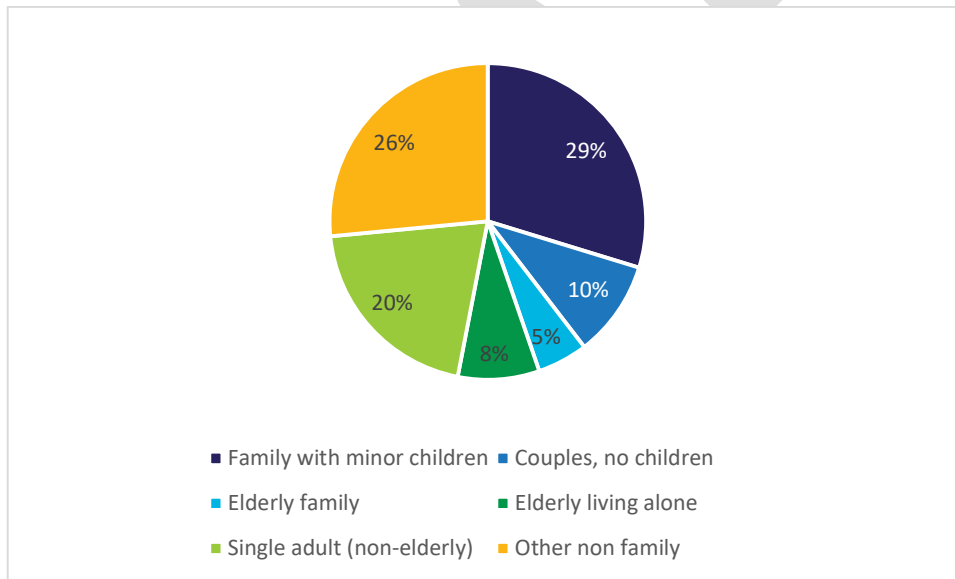
identify that there is sufficient land and zoning capacity to accommodate this growth. Planning for expected growth requires an understanding of household characteristics, demographic trends, current housing inventory, and housing market conditions. The City must also identify strategies to show that there will be available housing and services for this projected increase in population.

Household Characteristics

As of 2025, 22,997 people live in the City of Ellensburg and its surrounding Urban Growth Area (UGA). This breaks out to 8,972 total households in the City of Ellensburg and about 804 additional households in the UGA. According to data from the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), about 11% of the population resides in group quarters, such as college residence halls, jails, or nursing facilities, while the remainder reside in households.

Figure 1 breaks down the households inside the city by type. Family households make up about 45% of the total households in Ellensburg. About one-fifth of households are non-elderly residents living alone, another nearly 26% are non-family households, and 8% of households are older adults living alone. Nearly three-quarters of households in Ellensburg have only one or two members, and just 15% of households have four members or more.

Figure 1. Households by Household Type

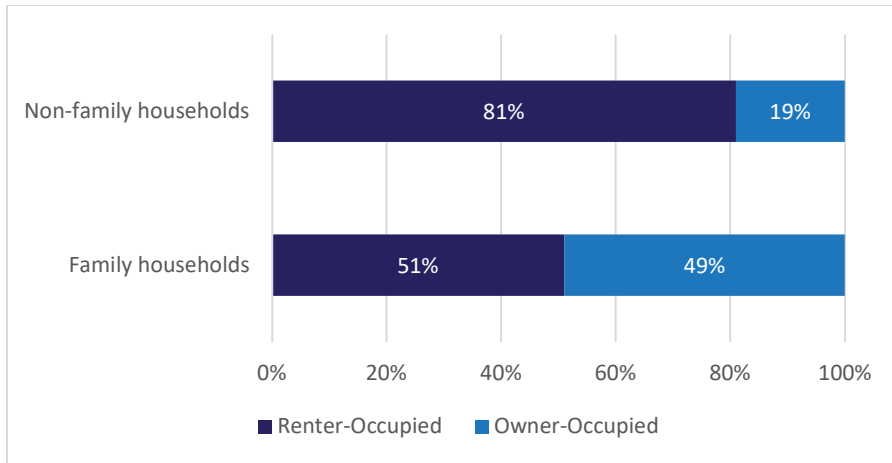


Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019-2024, S2501

About 67% of households in Ellensburg are renters. As shown in Figure 2, non-family households are much more likely to be renters than family households are. Many non-family households in Ellensburg consist of students living off campus.

Figure 1. Household Tenure by Household Type





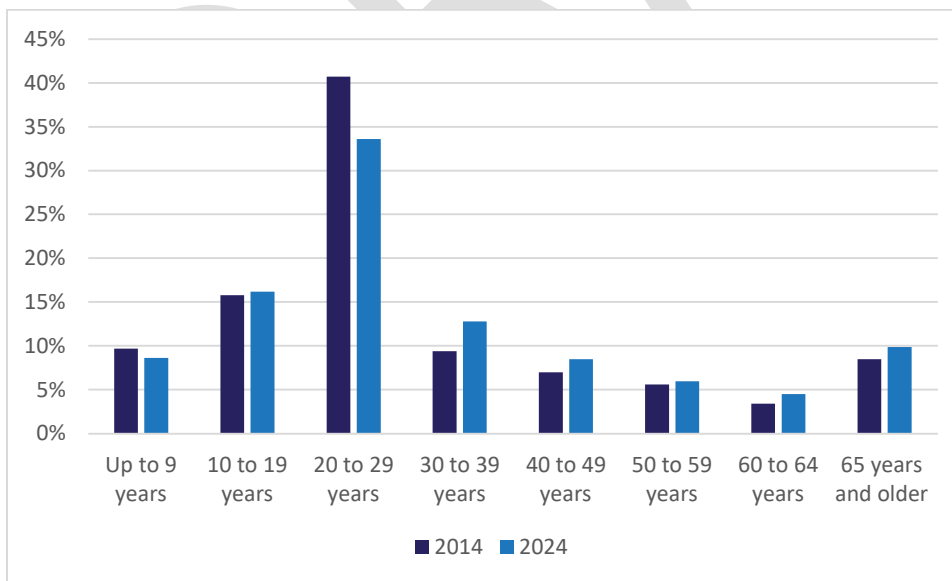
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019-2024, S2501

Demographic trends

Central Washington University is a major presence in Ellensburg. Over 6,700 students are enrolled at the Ellensburg campus. About 18% of the population of Ellensburg consists of students living off campus. CWU enrollment has decreased about 30% since the last periodic update, which has affected housing demand in Ellensburg. The presence of CWU within the city limits significantly affects, and will continue to affect, housing types and distribution.

Ellensburg’s population distribution by age has changed since 2014, with increases in populations ages 30 to 39 years, 40 to 49 years and 60 to 64 years and 65 years and older and decreases in age groups 20 to 29 years and up to 9 years.

Figure X: Age Distribution as Percentage of Population Total 2014 & 2024



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2009-2014; 2019-2024, S0101



There are over 1,400 households in Ellensburg with a senior householder, about 45% of which are renters (Table 1). According to 2022 OFM projections, the percentage of the population age 65 and older is expected to remain around 19 to 20% for Kittitas County from 2025 through 2045.

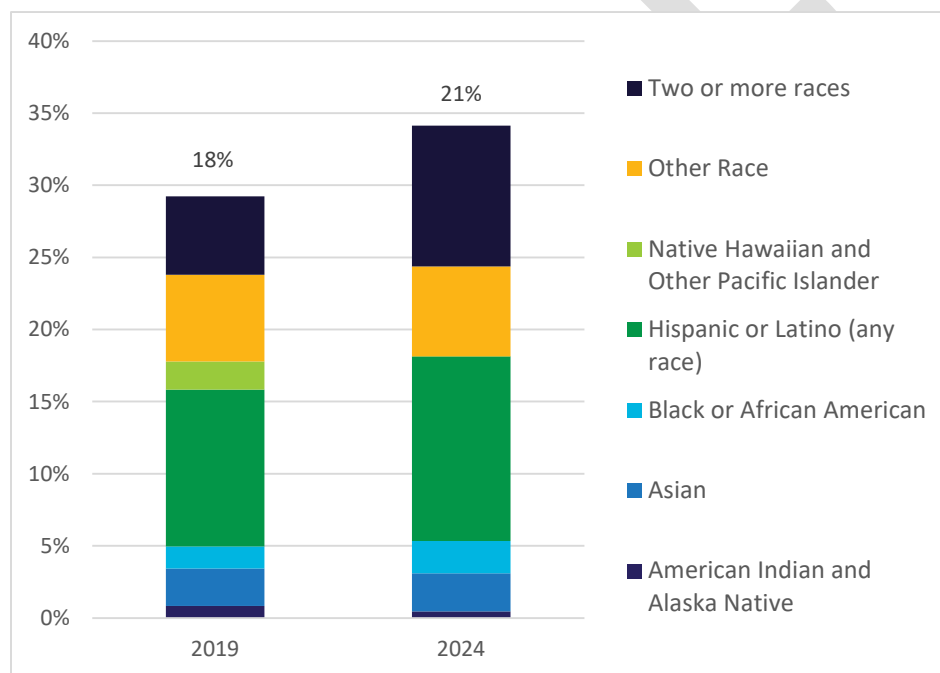
Table 1. Households with a Senior Householder

Renter-occupied	639
Owner-occupied	785
Total	1424

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019-2024, S2501

Ellensburg has seen slight changes the racial and ethnic makeup of residents since 2019, with increases in the Hispanic and Latino populations of any race and an increase in residents identifying as two or more races. At the same time the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander and American Indian and Alaska Native populations have declined. The overall population identifying as White and Asian have stayed the nearly the same between 2019 and 2024.

Figure: Non-White Populations in Ellensburg as a Percentage of Total Population 2019 & 2024



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019-2024, DP05

Homelessness and unhoused population

Data on homeless and unhoused population in Ellensburg is limited and sometimes inconsistent because different institutions define and count homeless populations differently. HopeSource, the coordinated entry provider for Kittitas County, organizes an annual point in time (PIT) county of the homeless population, conducted in January. The 2025 PIT count identified a total of 26 homeless people, 19 sheltered (including both emergency and transitional) and 7 unsheltered across Kittitas County. In 2026, preliminary PIT count figures identified a total of 45 homeless people, 28 of whom were sheltered and

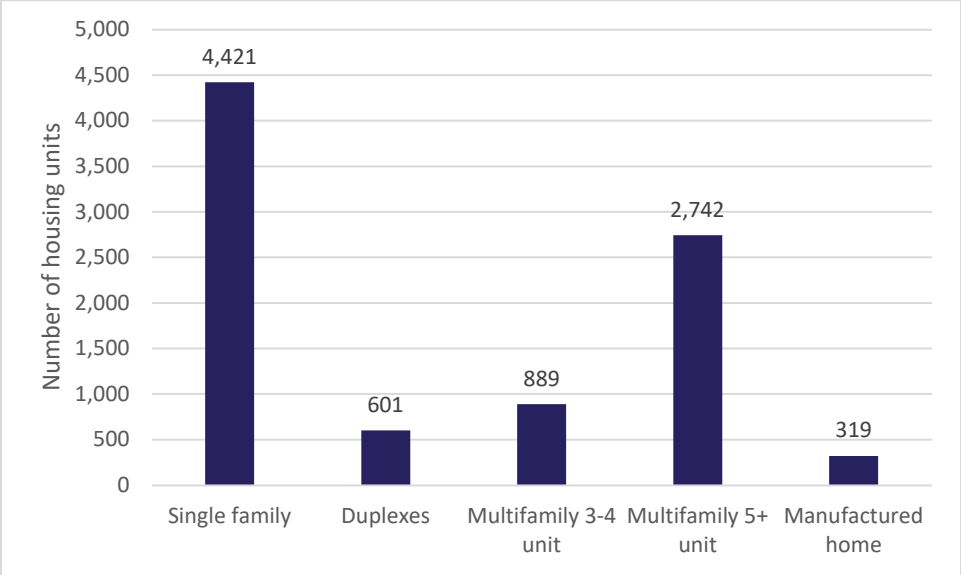


17 unsheltered. These figures are preliminary until combined and validated by the Washington State Department of Commerce.

Existing Housing Stock

As of 2025, there were 9,563 housing units in the City of Ellensburg. Figure 3 breaks down all units in the City by unit type. Single family homes make up 48% of the housing stock, 49% are in multifamily structures, and less than 3% are mobile homes. Among the multifamily units, the majority are in larger buildings with five or more units.

Figure 3. Housing Units by Type



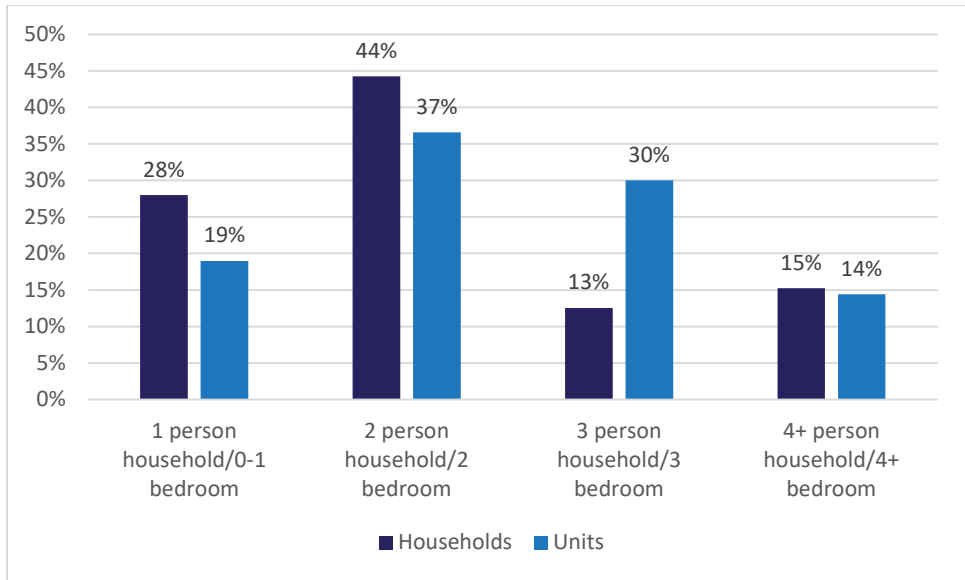
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019-2024

Figure 4 breaks down the housing stock by the number of bedrooms and compares it to the size of households in Ellensburg. There are about 2,500 households with only one member, yet there are fewer than 1,800 studio and one-bedroom housing units combined. While not all one person households are looking for a studio or one bedroom unit, it is likely that there are people living in larger shared houses that would prefer to live in a studio or one bedroom unit if they are available. Sharing of larger houses indicates the demand for studio and one-bedroom units potentially exceeds what is indicated by looking at census data about household sizes. Smaller units may also be suitable for residents without families or small families seeking an affordable housing option.

Housing units with three or more bedrooms make up 44% of the existing housing stock while only 28% of households have three or more members. Assuming that people seeking small apartment units are instead sharing larger units due to lack of appropriate supply in the apartment market, there is potential that the number of households with three or more members is higher than actual demand.

Figure 4. Alignment between Household Sizes and Size of Units in Housing Stock





Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019-2024

Between 2020 and 2025, permits were issued for 523 new housing units in Ellensburg; about 60% of the units permitted were single family homes. Nearly 40% of permitted housing during this period were duplexes, triplexes or multifamily residences.

The City’s rental vacancy rate has slowly increased from 1% or less in 2016 to 5.5-7% in 2025, according to the Washington Center for Real Estate Research (WCRER). A vacancy rate of 5-8% allows households to find new housing units and is an indicator of a healthy rental market. Much higher vacancy rates could lead to decreases in civic activity, safety and property values.

CWU student housing

Table 2 shows current operating capacity within student housing provided by CWU. Most of the capacity is in the residence halls. As of Fall 2025, nearly 6,800 students were enrolled on the Ellensburg campus, so approximately 3,400 students live off campus, though not all are necessarily living in student-only households or within the city.

Table 2. CWU Student Housing: Current Operating Capacity

Residence halls	2,448
Apartments	939
Total	3,387

Source: CWU

Subsidized housing

Subsidized housing is publicly assisted housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities when available (see definitions for more information). There are a total of 699 subsidized rental housing units in Ellensburg. The income eligibility requirements for these units vary by building, but range between 30% of Area Median Income to 95% of Area of Median Income. The Area



Median Income for Kittitas County is calculated at \$107,700 in 2025. The table below shows HUD’s calculations of the income threshold for affordable units at 30%, 50%, and 80% AMI, based on household size. These figures represent the maximum household income for households that would qualify for subsidized affordable housing at the associated income level.

Table xxx. HUD Income Limits in Kittitas County, 2025

Median Family Income	FY 2025 Income Limit Category	Persons in Family							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
\$107,700	Extremely Low (30%) Income Limits (\$)	22,650	25,850	29,100	32,300	37,650	43,150	48,650	54,150
	Very Low (50%) Income Limits (\$)	37,700	43,100	48,500	53,850	58,200	62,500	66,800	71,100
	Low (80%) Income Limits (\$)	60,350	68,950	77,550	86,150	93,050	99,950	106,850	113,750

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

In addition to the subsidized housing units that are available in Ellensburg, an additional 30 households receive housing choice vouchers (see definition) to subsidize rental units available on the private market.

Table 3. Subsidized Rental Housing Units by Population Served and Income Eligibility

Name	Owner	Total subsidized units	Population Served	Income Eligibility/ Preference	Subsidy Expiration
Addison Place	HopeSource	8	Mixed	<60% AMI	2050
Alder Terrace	Housing Authority of Kittitas County	50	Mixed	<40-95% AMI	2046
Briarwood Commons	Preferred Capital Management Inc.	174	Senior/disabled	<30-60% AMI	2036
Brookwood Apartment	Brookwood Association	40	Senior/disabled	<30% AMI	2033
Cherry Lane	Housing Authority of Kittitas County	9	Families	<80% AMI	None
Crestview Terrace	Crestview Terrace Community Partners	168	Mixed	<50% AMI (<30% preference)	2034
Hampton Court	HopeSource	35	Senior/disabled	<30% AMI	2040



Helena	Housing Authority of Kittitas County	5	Families	<80% AMI	None
Huntington Court I & II	HopeSource	44	Senior/disabled	<30% AMI	2056
Mount Stuart Vista	Housing Authority of Kittitas County	30	Families	<80% AMI	None
Paulan	HopeSource	9	Mixed	<60% AMI	
Pine Place	HopeSource	18	Unhoused youth	<50% AMI	2062
Trinal Manor	Housing Authority of Kittitas County	30	Senior/disabled	<80% AMI	None
Spurling Court	HopeSource	48	Families/Previously homeless	<50% AMI	2062
Windsor Park	HopeSource	31	Families	<30% AMI	2040
Totals	15 developments	699 units			

Source: Housing Authority of Kittitas County, HopeSource, Property owners, Novogradac

None of the units have subsidies that are expected to expire within the next six years. However, 498 units are in buildings with subsidies that will expire within the next 20 years. Of these, 224 units have private owners that may not maintain the property permanently as affordable housing.

The majority of the subsidized housing stock in Ellensburg is available to renter households.

Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity runs an affordable home ownership program. This program provides homes to families earning up to 80% of Area Median Income based on need and ability to contribute sweat equity. Between 1993 and 2020, Habitat built 19 homeownership units in the City of Ellensburg. In 2021, the Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity merged with the King County affiliate to become Habitat for Humanity Seattle – King and Kittitas Counties and has since completed 12 permanently affordable homes with plans to complete nine more in 2026 and 2027. Additional affordable homeownership projects are also in predevelopment.

Housing market trends and housing affordability

Between 2019 and 2025, per WCRER data, rents increased an average of 2.3% annually (18% for the six-year period). The rate of increase has ranged from less than 1% in 2023 to about 4% in 2025.

AREA MEDIAN INCOME (or AMI) is determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) using American Community Survey five-year estimates of median household income for a family of four.

Kittitas County Area Median Income: \$107,700.

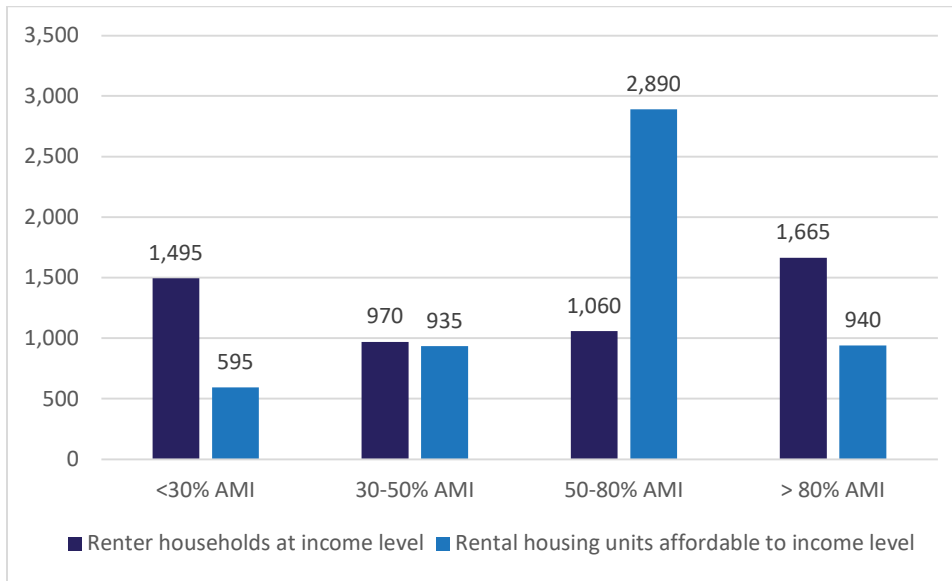
A household is considered **COST BURDENED** if they spend more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs (rent or mortgage and basic utilities); more than 50% on housing cost is considered **SEVERE COST BURDEN**.

Increased rental prices, combined with slower wage growth and a shortage of housing units, have resulted in a shortage of housing affordable for many Ellensburg residents, particularly those with the lowest incomes. During the 2018 to 2022 period, the United States Census estimates indicate there were nearly 1,500 Ellensburg renter households earning below 30% of area median income while less



than 600 units were offered at a rent affordable to these households. This means that there were 900 households that were unable to find rental units at prices that would be considered affordable. While a surplus of units was available affordable to households earning 50-80% of area median income, rental housing units were also limited for renter households with incomes over 80% AMI. Figure 6 visually compares household income level to units offered at that affordability level to highlight the areas of greatest shortage and surplus.

Figure 6. Renter Households by Income Level Compared to Units Offered by Affordability Level



Source: US HUD, 2018-2022 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)

Table 4 shows cost burdened households by household type. The household type ‘Other’ includes non-family households with no members 62 years and older. It is likely that many of these households include CWU students, and it is the best proxy for student households for which cost burden data is available. The largest number of cost burdened renter households are in this category. The other household types in Table 4 are useful for understanding needs among households that are less likely to be university students. Among these household types, the greatest need is affordable housing for small families and elderly people living alone.

Table 4. Cost Burdened Renter Households by Household Type

Household type	Income level			
	Extremely low (<30% AMI)	Very low (30-50% AMI)	Low (50-80% AMI)	Moderate or above (>80% AMI)
Elderly family	0	10	0	0
Single elderly	205	70	40	15
Large family (5+ persons)	25	0	0	80
Small family (2-4 persons)	150	90	10	105
Other non-family household	965	595	420	90

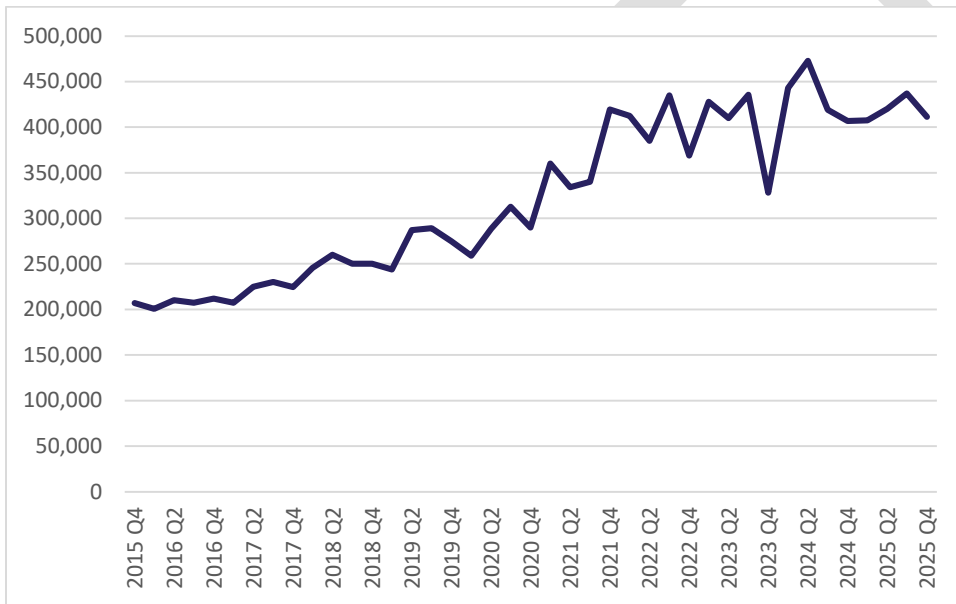


Total cost-burdened households	1345	765	470	290
<i>As a percentage of total households</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>17%</i>

Source: US HUD, 2018-2022 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)

Figure 7 shows changes in median home sale prices between late 2015 and 2025. Between late 2016 and 2024, the median home sales price rose by 8.9% annually. Assuming a household can afford a 20% down payment, a household requires about \$91,600 in yearly income to afford a mortgage for a home at the 2025 median selling price of \$411,250. By comparison, WCRER’s composite median income for the same period was about \$62,000 or a third less than what would be required to afford the median home. According to realtor listing data, approximately 100 homes were listed for sale annually in Ellensburg over the past three years.

Figure 7. Median Home Sale Price

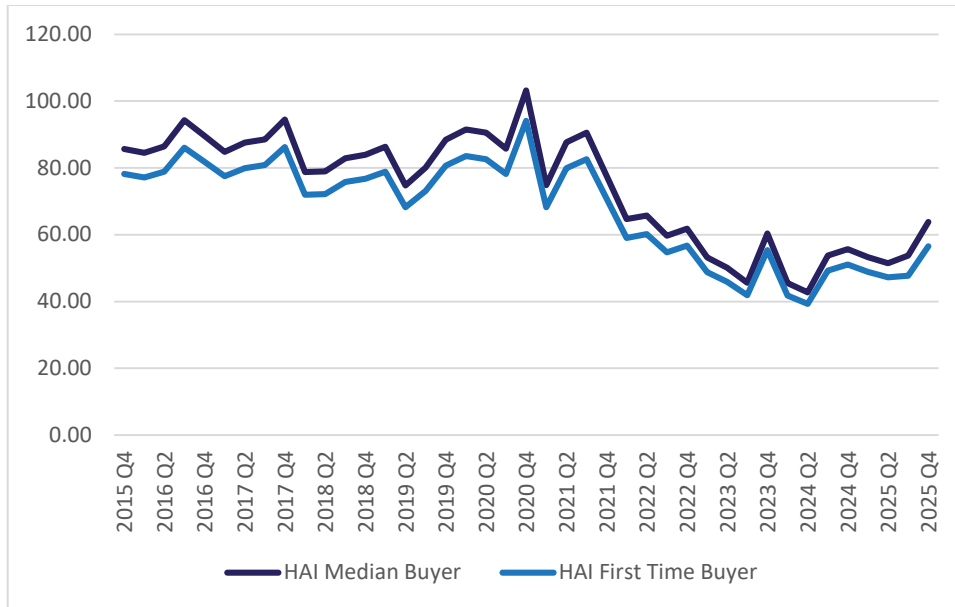


Source: Washington Center for Real Estate Research (City Dashboards)

Housing price increases outpaced income gains during this period yielding erosion of affordability for both median and first-time buyers, as shown in Figure X. Combined with the significant percentage of cost-burdened renters, these price increases have made it harder for Ellensburg renters who would want to become homeowners from doing so.

Figure X. Homeowner Affordability Index Trends (City Dashboards)





Source: Washington Center for Real Estate Research (City Dashboards)

Other non-family households are represented in cost burdened owners, as are more single elderly and small family households. While a similar percentage of extremely low income homeowners are cost burdened as renters, at all other income levels, a smaller total percentage of homeowners are cost burdened than renters.

Table 5. Cost Burdened Owner-Occupied Household by Household Type

Household type	Income level			
	Extremely low <30% AMI	Very low 30-50% AMI	Low 50-80% AMI	Moderate or above >80% AMI
Elderly family	15	0	4	10
Single elderly	90	15	80	0
Large family (5+ persons)	0	0	50	0
Small family (2-4 persons)	0	10	90	40
Other non-family household	75	60	0	50
Total cost-burdened households	180	85	224	100
As a percentage of total households	92%	38%	39%	5%

Source: US HUD, 2018-2022 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)

Table 4 and Table 5 estimate there are about 3,459 cost burdened households in Ellensburg. The majority of these households are other non-family households, followed by small families and elderly people living alone .



This data indicates that there is not enough housing stock to meet the needs of the existing population in 2026, particularly multifamily housing suitable for the expected new residents at estimated income levels. At the current rate of production, the housing stock will not meet the demand of the expected growth of 4,755 more people over the next twenty years. Furthermore, the pressures between supply and demand have exacerbated the affordable housing challenges for Ellensburg residents. The City recognizes the need to encourage and promote a higher rate of housing production, and the need to successfully implement important housing programs to offer options affordable to all economic segments of the community.

The following sections will describe opportunities identified for providing new housing, as well as a description of what success would look like for Ellensburg. This is followed by goals, policies and programs intended to guide future policy decisions, as well as a section pertaining to Action Items that can be pursued in the more immediate future.

Housing Incentives, Tools and Barriers

Ellensburg has established several incentives and tools to support housing development.

In 2017, Ellensburg voters passed a 0.1% sales and use tax for housing and related services under RCW 82.14.530. Between 2018 and 2025, this mechanism collected more than \$5 million. The funds have been used to fund five projects and allowed these funds to leverage nearly \$45 million in additional funds for local housing.

In 2017, the City identified surplus properties that could be allocated for affordable housing development consistent with RCW and three projects are in various stages of development on the identified properties.

Ellensburg has had a multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program since 2007. In the Central Commercial and Central Commercial II zones, eight-year tax exemptions on improvements are available for market rate developments and 12-year exemptions are available for properties that set aside at least 20% of units for households with incomes below 80% AMI. Through 2025, seven projects have created a total of 151 multifamily housing units using this program.

Ellensburg offers up to a 100% density bonus in the R-S and R-L zones for affordable housing and water and sewer plant impact fee and traffic impact fee waivers are available for qualifying developments.

As noted in the Existing Housing Stock section above, permits for duplexes, triplexes, townhomes and cottage housing have remained low and Ellensburg anticipates making additional regulatory changes to ensure the City is making adequate provision for these needed housing types.

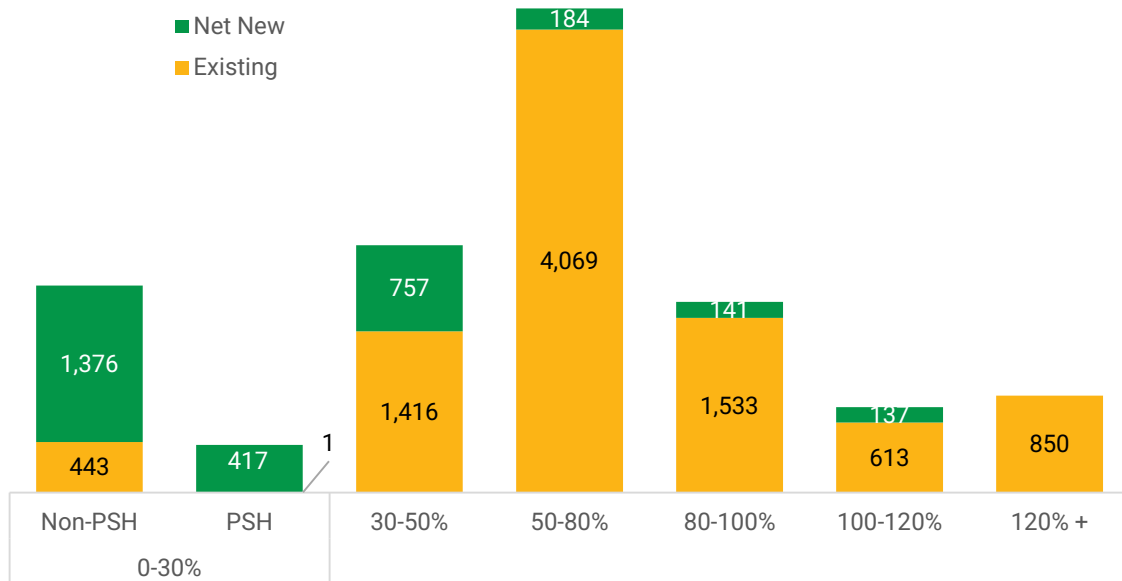
Housing Capacity by Income Band

Based on House Bill 1220, which amended the Growth Management Act in 2021, cities are required to analyze housing needs and future growth by income band, expressed as a percentage of the area median income (AMI). AMI figures are published annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and are available for Kittitas County rather than City of Ellensburg; see summary in table **XXX**.



Approximately 60% of the population growth planned in Ellensburg is in the extremely low-income category, or 0-30% of AMI, including the need for 417 new units of permanent supportive housing (PSH). For the 91% of Ellensburg’s allocated growth serving households with incomes up to 80% AMI, the City will increase land zoned to accommodate low-rise multifamily apartment buildings. Additional new housing serving a variety of income bands could include traditional single-family homes, cottage housing, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, or townhomes throughout the City’s residential zones.

Figure X: Ellensburg Existing (2020) and New Housing Units Needed by Income Band, 2020-2046



Source: Kittitas County, Washington Department of Commerce

Ellensburg undertook a land capacity analysis as part of this comprehensive planning process to evaluate capacity to meet housing targets by income based on current zoning. The full land capacity analysis is found in Appendix XX, The analysis considered vacant, redevelopable and partially used parcels based on county assessor data and lot size. It also considered pending projects, critical area acreage, future infrastructure needs and a reduction factor since only a portion of possible land is likely to redevelop. The housing capacity of the remaining land in each zone was then estimated based on recent development patterns and likely future density based on current allowed density. The Department of Commerce methodology indicates that housing for households with incomes up to 80% AMI is accommodated through multifamily apartments. Townhomes, duplexes, cottage housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and additional multifamily apartments can accommodate 80%-120% AMI households.

The land capacity analysis identified surplus capacity for units above 80% AMI and a slight deficit for households below 80% AMI as shown in Figure XX.

Figure XX2. Ellensburg Land Capacity Analysis by Income Band Results under Current Zoning, 2020-2046



Income Band	Housing Needs	Aggregated Housing Needs	Pending Units	Remaining Needs	Total Capacity	Surplus/ Deficit
0-30 PSH	417	2,734	329	2,405	2,314	(91)
0-30 Non PSH	1,376					
30-50	757					
50-80	184					
80-100	141	278	159	119	240	121
100-120	137					
120+	0	0	937	-937	1,903	2,840
Total	3,012	3,012	1,425	1,587	4,457	2,870

Source: Kittitas County, Leland Consulting Group

To address this deficit, several areas are proposed for zoning changes to increase capacity for multifamily housing. These zoning changes would permit denser residential and mixed-use development in locations along transportation corridors and close to employment opportunities. In addition to these rezone areas, the City is also planning to consolidate the Residential Suburban (R-S) and Residential Low (R-L) zones into a single zone which allows for more flexibility for townhomes and duplexes compatible with the predominant single family residential uses, consistent with the City’s housing action plan goal of adding more variety to the housing stock and strategies for development of more of these housing types. Figure XX shows the revised land capacity based on the planned rezones. Note that not all of the increased capacity for multifamily housing will necessarily serve households earning under 80% AMI. Thus, having a surplus of land capacity for multifamily units that can serve lower-income households can help the city ensure sufficient capacity to meet its housing targets at all income levels. Ellensburg will adopt the proposed zoning changes concurrently with this Comprehensive Plan Update. Additional regulatory changes are also anticipated to make adequate provisions enabling development of multifamily housing.

Figure XX. Ellensburg Land Capacity Analysis by Income Band Results under Planned Rezones, 2020-2046

Income Band	Housing Needs	Aggregated Housing Needs	Pending Units	Remaining Needs	Total Capacity	Surplus/ Deficit
0-30 PSH	417	2,734	329	2,405	4,086	1,681
0-30 Non PSH	1,376					
30-50	757					
50-80	184					
80-100	141	278	159	119	304	185



100-120	137					
120+	0	0	937	-937	1,438	2,375
Total	3,012	3,012	1,425	1,587	5,828	4,241

Source: Kittitas County, Leland Consulting Group

Racially Disparate Impacts

[Summary of forthcoming memo to be added.]

Housing Opportunities

[To be revised after discussion]

This Housing Chapter supports innovative methods to achieve important housing goals while maintaining flexibility to fulfill different priorities in different neighborhoods. This section describes some of the innovative housing types in Ellensburg and the context in which they may work well.

- **Smaller units** – There are many more one- and two-person households than studio and one-bedroom units. It is likely that there is additional market for smaller, potentially more affordable units.
- **Mixed use housing.** Ellensburg encourages creative and innovative uses on commercial and mixed use land to increase housing supply. Mixing housing and commercial uses can enhance the vitality of commercial areas by encouraging foot traffic to support neighborhood shops, and to provide eyes on the street. Over time, areas of downtown and areas near the south and west freeway interchanges could become distinct mixed use neighborhoods.
- **Downtown housing.** Second and third story residential and mixed used buildings will provide housing for people who want to live in an urban setting where there is a higher concentration of jobs and services and a variety of transportation options.
- **Middle housing and accessory dwelling units.** New housing opportunities may also be provided in well-established neighborhoods. Accessory dwelling units may provide affordable housing opportunities, help those with limited income keep their homes, and extend opportunities for aging in place.
- **Universal design and aging in place.** Housing opportunities are created when housing design and choice accommodates the ordinary changes that people experience over their lives due to aging and life circumstances. Ellensburg encourages housing options, programs, and services, that support independence and choices for those who want to remain in their homes or neighborhoods regardless of age or ability.

What does success look like?

Ellensburg maintains the vitality of existing neighborhoods and employs an array of housing tools to increase housing opportunities across the city. A broader range of housing choices serve residents at various income levels and life stages, including housing for a varied workforce, for young adult workers



and students, for seniors aging in place, and for those who desire to live in walkable neighborhoods. For a housing strategy to be considered successful, the following outcomes will be visible:

- All residents have equitable access to affordable, safe housing that meets their needs.
- Housing production creates a more diverse market of dwelling types serving projected growth

GOALS, POLICIES, & PROGRAMS

These housing goals, policies, and programs contain steps that the City of Ellensburg can take in response to housing issues found within the community. These steps are intended to ensure the vitality of the existing residential stock, estimate current and future housing needs, and provide direction to implement programs that satisfy those needs.

Goal H-1: ~~S~~Preserve, protect, and strengthen the vitality and stability of existing neighborhoods.

Policy A Encourage development ~~of an appropriate mix of~~ a range of housing choices through ~~innovative~~ land use and ~~well-crafted~~ regulations.

Program 1 Integrate new development, with consideration to design and scale that complements existing neighborhoods, and provides ~~effective~~ transitions between different uses and intensities.

Program 2 Encourage infill development on vacant and underused sites.

~~Policy B~~ ~~Establish additional logical access routes outside of the existing street system for bicycle and pedestrian traffic.~~

~~Program 1~~ ~~Identify trail easements and develop an effective maintenance strategy.~~

Policy C ~~Protect and c~~Connect residential neighborhoods so they ~~retain identity and character~~ and provide amenities that enhance quality of life.

Program 1 Encourage housing opportunities in mixed residential/commercial settings throughout the city.

Program 2 Provide increased residential density ~~and improve infrastructure along arterials and transit routes through redevelopment and retrofitting, such as sidewalks and stormwater treatment to accommodate housing needs at all income levels.~~

Program 3 Implement clear and objective design regulations for reasonable buffers between housing and non-residential uses or zones. ~~Assure that site, landscaping, building, and design regulations create effective transitions between different land uses and densities.~~

Policy D Promote sense of place in neighborhoods.



~~Program 1 — Promote high quality design that is compatible with the overall style and character of established neighborhoods.~~

Program ~~12~~ Support the ~~preservation of Ellensburg’s historically significant housing through the~~ City’s historic preservation program, which maintains a list of historic properties and districts, and provides education and incentives.

Program ~~23~~ Encourage the use of long-lived, low-maintenance building materials; high-efficiency energy systems; and low impact development techniques that reduce housing life-cycle costs and provide better environmental performance.

Program ~~34~~ Foster innovative housing and mixtures of housing types that preserve natural resources and consolidate open space.

Goal H-2 ~~Allow and Encourage and accommodate a variety of housing types and densities to meet housing needs of all economic segments of the community.~~

Policy A Review the Land Development Code to allow for a wider variety of housing types.

Program 1 ~~Review barriers to the development of denser housing types such as duplexes, townhomes, and accessory dwelling units. Implement regulatory changes to enable additional development of needed middle and multifamily housing.~~

~~Program 2 Monitor permitting process and land use regulations to identify barriers to middle and multifamily housing and proactively address these barriers.~~

Policy B Encourage residential development in commercial and mixed use zones, especially those within proximity to transit.

Program 1 Expand the Multifamily Tax Exemption program beyond the downtown area to encourage multifamily housing in other areas where it is needed.

~~Program 2 Evaluate, review, revise, and publicize the density bonus incentive program.~~

Program ~~23~~ Work with Central Washington University and private developers to support on-campus housing for students and in transit-served mixed residential/commercial settings throughout the city.

Policy C Consider housing cost and supply implications of proposed regulations and procedures.

Program 1 ~~Consider r~~Reduce parking requirements for mixed-use housing developments and affordable housing developments in close proximity to jobs and transit.

Policy D Create and preserve ADA accessible and affordable housing opportunities locally and with a regional perspective.

Program 1 Promote working partnerships with public, private, non-profit groups, and developers to plan and develop a range of housing choices.



Program 2 Evaluate other housing affordability programs utilized in other communities that could be incorporated into the Land Development Code.

Program 3 Support the preservation, maintenance, and improvements of older/historic housing and naturally occurring affordable housing. ~~and assistance to low income households who want to stay in their homes.~~

Program 4 ~~Create an inventory of surplus property suitable for~~ Support development of affordable housing on designated surplus lands.

Policy E Identify ~~P~~potential properties to allow for emergency housing, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing.

~~Program 1 — Develop a conditional use provision in the permitted use table in the land development code allowing for emergency housing, shelters, and permanent supportive housing in appropriate zones.~~

Goal H-3 Encourage and support a variety of housing opportunities for older adults ~~and,~~ people with disabilities, veterans, low-income families and others with special housing needs.

Policy A Collaborate with other jurisdictions, organizations, and private developers to meet special housing needs ~~that address a broad spectrum of solutions.~~

Program 1 Promote accessible and affordable housing in areas that are close to services and the rest of the community.

Program 2 Coordinate with local organizations and agencies to provide sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services.

Program 3 Promote the use of universal design principles for new development or redevelopment housing projects.



ACTION ITEMS

[To be revised after discussion/align with goals and policies]

Expand the Multifamily Tax Exemption Program

Expand the Multifamily Tax Exemption program into areas outside the Central Business District that have been prioritized for increased multifamily housing.

Review and revise land development code

Review and revise the land development code as necessary to allow for a wider variety of housing types; specifically review and identify potential barriers to small-scale multifamily developments, duplex, townhome, and accessory dwelling units.

Review barriers to missing middle housing types

Ellensburg needs increased housing production, particularly among missing middle formats such as duplexes, townhomes, small-scale multifamily developments (triplexes through sixplexes), tiny homes, and accessory dwelling units. Outreach to housing developers and to real estate professionals indicated there is a need for this housing, but that it may be difficult to produce under current conditions.

Review parking standards

Consider reducing parking requirements for new student-oriented housing or affordable housing near jobs and transit. Parking was identified as a significant cost barrier for building new multifamily housing, and as such additional residential parking and transit data should be collected and evaluated.

POLICY CONNECTIONS

The **Land Use** chapter includes policies and land use designations that support the development of many types of housing to ensure that people who live and work in Ellensburg have adequate housing choices.

The **Transportation** chapter includes goals and policies for establishing consistency and coordination between transit service and future housing and mixed use developments.

The **Economic Development** chapter includes goals and policies to encourage mixed-use areas and residential areas near job opportunities and amenities.





Meeting Date: April 9, 2026
City of Ellensburg

Planning Commission Agenda Report

Agenda Subject: Land Use Element Draft Review (Public Comment Opportunity)

Submitted by:
Department: Community Development

Suggested Motion/Action:

Staff requests Planning Commission review and discuss the proposed draft. This is an opportunity to ask questions and suggest changes to the draft.

Background/Summary:

The periodic update to the Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan is due December 31, 2026. This deadline includes final adoption of all elements required to implement the plan (e.g. development regulations, zoning changes).

This discussion item includes the proposed draft Land Use Element for review (Attachment 1) and the existing Land Use Element for reference (Attachment 2). Overall element changes are not marked, as this update will be a proposed repeal and replace.

The overall element format and content are expected to remain similar to the draft as presented. The public will have the opportunity to comment on this draft through the summertime open house, and formal hearings associated with the adoption process will occur later in 2026.

Previous Council Action:

On January 8, 2026, the AHC and PC jointly reviewed the Land Capacity Analysis, which will be an annex to the Comprehensive Plan.

Analysis:

Staff will review specific changes and updates to the Land Use Element with the commission at the meeting.

Financial Impact:

None

Budget Adjustment: No

Attachments:

1. 2026-DRAFT-Land Use Chapter
2. EXISTING- Land Use Chapter

3. Land Use

What you will find in this chapter

- ◆ Information about the City's expected population and employment growth.
- ◆ Description and capacity of existing and future land use designations.
- ◆ Policies that direct the City's growth strategy and land uses.
- ◆ A map of future land uses.

Overview

One of the fundamental roles of the City of Ellensburg's Comprehensive Plan is to anticipate, guide, and plan for growth. The plan is a tool to look ahead to the likely growth and ensure alignment of the City's plan for land uses, infrastructure, and services.

The Land Use chapter addresses the general pattern of land use within the City and its Urban Growth Area (UGA) and provides a framework to guide the City's overall growth and development. It ensures an appropriate mix of land uses are available to support the City's economic goals, provide an array of housing choices, and ensure that adequate infrastructure and services are available.

The City's growth strategy emphasizes a combination of development on vacant land and redevelopment of underutilized properties within existing urban areas, while planning for orderly expansion within the Urban Growth Area. This approach supports efficient use of land and infrastructure and helps reduce environmental impacts associated with growth.

Land use patterns play an important role in supporting equitable access to housing, services, and employment opportunities, as well as helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging compact development and multimodal transportation options.

The Land Use goals, policies and programs help protect environmentally sensitive areas, maintain the character of established neighborhoods, and promote opportunities for healthy lifestyles while allowing the City to evolve to meet the changing needs of the community.

Background and Context

Core community values this chapter supports include the following:

- ◆ Attractive residential neighborhoods and a lively and vital downtown contribute greatly to Ellensburg's high quality of life.



- ◆ Allowing for a variety of housing types will add to Ellensburg's diversity and appeal, and will help to address housing affordability.
- ◆ Encouraging sustainable practices that consider environmental impacts and equitable access to opportunities will preserve a high quality of life for generations to come.
- ◆ Allowing for more neighborhood commercial development and more mixed-use areas will improve access to goods and services in the community.
- ◆ Encouraging entertainment and cultural uses will enrich the community and provide activities for all age groups.
- ◆ Increasing opportunities for local businesses will help support employment for Ellensburg's residents.
- ◆ Appropriate locations for industrial and institutional uses will help protect the city's neighborhoods, while providing essential facilities and employment opportunities.

Public Health and Land Use

The intersection between health and land use planning is becoming more important in today's communities. Long term plans impact how people make choices about where to live and how to get around in their communities. The way we plan our communities can affect things like access to healthy foods, safe and accessible opportunities for physical activity, and easy access to health and social services, as well as environmental conditions such as clean air and water and broader issues such as social equity. Our environments play a key role in helping healthy choices be the easy choices.

Existing Land Use Patterns

Residential

Residential land uses make up about 55% of land within the City limits and the Urban Growth Area. The current Comprehensive Plan includes several residential designations, with the overwhelming majority of residential land in suburban, low, and medium density categories. High Density Residential accounts for less than 1 percent of total residential acreage. Most of the high-density residential areas are located near the Central Washington University (CWU) campus and house large numbers of students residing off campus. Mixed residential is intended to provide for the development of housing at approximately four-to-12 dwelling units per acre. High density residential provides a target density of eight-to-18 units per acre. The high-density areas are located north of the CWU campus, on the north side of the Kittitas Highway, and southeast of the west Interstate-90 interchange.

Commercial

Ellensburg's downtown remains the main retail and commercial center of the City and the lower Kittitas Valley. Maintaining the prominence and vitality of downtown has been an important goal for Ellensburg dating back to the City's first Comprehensive Plan in 1975. Central Commercial and Central Commercial II together account for roughly 10 percent of land designated for commercial or mixed use. The majority



of commercial-designated land is located in the Commercial Highway zone, which comprises nearly 68 percent of the city’s commercial land base.

Industrial

Recent development activity indicates substantial growth in the Industrial Light zone, which accounts for the majority of pending nonresidential square footage and employment capacity. Government, education, healthcare, and agriculture remain important components of Ellensburg’s overall employment base.

Ellensburg's early industrial development centered along the railroad tracks to the west of the existing central commercial area. The heavy industrial land continues to be located on a narrow strip paralleling the railroad tracks, but light industrial land has expanded along Dolarway Road to the west interchange area, and to the area around the airport located north of the University.

Public/institutional

Ellensburg has a long-standing and important institutional component. Ellensburg is home to Central Washington University, it is the County seat, and it hosts Kittitas County's central medical and hospital services. Institutions are by far the largest employers in Ellensburg. The University campus is the primary public/institutional land use and occupies approximately 380 acres and employs almost 1,500 full time staff. Other public uses are spread throughout Ellensburg and include city and county offices, Kittitas Valley Healthcare, schools, fire stations, the Kittitas County Event Center, and other public services that provide necessary services to Ellensburg and the surrounding region.

Parks and Open Space

Ellensburg operates a park system that encompasses more than 300 acres. Current open space land includes both publicly owned land and private property that is generally open in nature and may or may not be developed.

Table 3-1 includes estimated acreages of existing land uses within the City of Ellensburg and the Urban Growth Area.

Table 3-1. Inventory of Existing Uses

Future Land Use Designation	Acres	Percent
Residential Neighborhood	1,705	18.4%
Blended Residential Neighborhood	921	10.0%
Urban Neighborhood	939	10.1%
Neighborhood Mixed Use	100	1.1%
Urban Center	208	2.2%
Community Mixed Use	601	6.5%
Industrial Residential	138	1.5%
Neighborhood Commercial	99	1.1%
Mixed Business Park	206	2.2%
General Commercial and Services	336	3.6%
Light Industrial	2,024	21.9%



Heavy Industrial	235	2.5%
Public/Institutional	659	7.1%
Parks and Open Space	632	6.8%
Open space (private/non-city owned)	455	4.9%
Total	9,258	100%

Growth Projections

Kittitas County’s adopted growth forecasts for the 2020 to 2046 planning period anticipate continued regional growth in population and employment. Ellensburg must plan for a total population of 25,631 residents by 2046, an increase of 4,834 people from the 2020 baseline. The city is also projected to accommodate 2,710 net new jobs during this period.

Within this context, Ellensburg is planning for 3,012 net new housing units between 2020 and 2046 to support anticipated population growth.

These projections are based on state Office of Financial Management forecasts and countywide allocations developed in coordination with Kittitas County and its jurisdictions. They are supported by the City’s 2026 Land Capacity Analysis, which evaluates the availability of land to accommodate projected housing and employment growth over the planning horizon. The targets reflect each jurisdiction’s commitment to provide adequate infrastructure, land capacity, and zoning to support growth over the 20 year planning horizon.

Residential and Employment Growth Capacity

Based on current zoning and the 2026 Land Capacity Analysis, Ellensburg demonstrates sufficient land capacity to accommodate projected population and employment growth through the 2020 to 2046 planning horizon. The LCA estimates capacity for approximately 5,882 housing units and 6,921 jobs, exceeding the City’s projected need of 3,012 housing units and 2,710 jobs.

This capacity is distributed across a range of land use designations and is expected to be accommodated through a combination of vacant land, redevelopment of underutilized properties, and mixed-use development. A significant portion of future growth is anticipated to occur through infill and redevelopment within existing urban areas, supporting efficient use of land and infrastructure.

Residential capacity is provided across suburban, low, medium, and high-density residential designations, as well as within mixed-use areas that allow housing integrated with commercial and employment uses. Commercial and industrial capacity is concentrated in the Commercial Highway and Industrial Light zones, supporting continued economic development and job growth.

In addition to capacity on vacant and redevelopable land, the LCA identifies additional housing potential through accessory dwelling units (ADUs), reflecting recent trends and changes in state law that expand opportunities for this housing type. The LCA was conducted using the Kittitas County methodology and incorporates assumptions related to development trends, densities, market factors, and infrastructure availability to provide a realistic and achievable estimate of development capacity over the planning horizon.



Growth Projections

- ◆ Ellensburg works cooperatively with Kittitas County and other incorporated areas to establish long-range population growth targets based on state and regional forecasts.
- ◆ The City's adopted growth targets include 4,834 additional residents, 2,710 net new jobs, and 3,012 net new housing units by 2046.
- ◆ The City uses these targets to ensure adequate zoning, infrastructure, and land capacity to support anticipated growth over the 20 year planning period. These projections represent planning targets rather than guarantees of market delivery.

Residential Capacity by Income Level

While the City demonstrates overall sufficient land capacity, the LCA identified a deficit in capacity for housing affordable to households earning below 80 percent of Area Median Income (AMI) under current zoning. To address this gap, the City is pursuing targeted zoning and land use changes to increase opportunities for multifamily and mixed-use development. These changes are expected to add capacity for approximately 1,700 additional housing units and ensure sufficient land capacity across all income levels. Additional information on land capacity by income level can be found in the Housing Element of this plan.

In addition to these rezone areas, the City is also planning to consolidate the R-S and R-L zones into a single zone which allows for more flexibility for townhomes and duplexes compatible with the predominant single family residential uses, consistent with the City's housing action plan goal of adding more variety to the housing stock and strategies for development of more of these housing types.

Future Land Use

Land use designations and policies provide a guide for the appropriate development, and redevelopment locations for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The future land use designations (Table 3-2) are aimed at ensuring a safe, livable, and sustainable environment that will shape Ellensburg's future development within the 20-year planning cycle. The City's comprehensive plan establishes the overarching guide for decisions related to land development regulations and patterns, with this chapter functioning as a summary of the intent.

The City of Ellensburg has been using land use designation maps since the mid-1970s. Descriptions and mapping of land use designations visually depict the community's desired direction as it meets new growth challenges and changing times. The descriptions of each land use designation along with the recommended locations for land use designations help to set a broad understanding of land use patterns that enables city services and agencies, along with residents and property owners, to effectively plan.

Land use designations are general in nature and serve as a guide; they do not carry the same force of law as zoning. The guiding land use designations help set up future considerations for zoning, but do not change zoning district locations or descriptions. Zoning regulations are adopted by the City to implement the Comprehensive Plan and are applied through a separate public process.



To provide a complete understanding of potential land development patterns, this chapter describes and illustrates the land use designations. Land use mapping is a visual representation of the goals, policies, and programs within this comprehensive plan. The map and the policies they represent are the general foundation for land use decisions and implementation strategies.

The land use patterns and policies discussed in this chapter apply to the Ellensburg City limits. Areas outside of the city limits and within Ellensburg's Urban Growth Area, which change from time to time with annexations, are included to inform private and public parties of the desired pattern for development as the city grows. The land use designations outside of city limits (within the UGA) are not binding in nature until lands are incorporated within the municipal boundaries. The process of looking beyond the city limits and planning for 20 years of growth within the Urban Growth Area helps to facilitate City-County coordination in land use planning and related issues, and provides a greater level of predictability to landowners and interested parties.

The Future Land Use Map (Figure 3-) reflects desired uses and implements the land use goals and policies in this plan; it does not always represent existing uses. Decisions and implementation based on these designations should include consideration of the entire comprehensive plan and site-specific conditions.

A description as well as the intent of specific land use designations are included for each designation. The Future Land Use Map provides recommended locations for each designation. The land use designations include four main categories: residential, mixed use, commercial, and industrial.

Residential

Residential land use designations are areas in the City where the primary activity is residential dwellings. Uses that complement residences should be incorporated into these areas, such as: parks, low-intensity home based occupations, fire stations, churches, small-scale neighborhood commercial services, schools, and other public facilities. The Future Land Use map, goals, and policies in this chapter encourage high density residential in close proximity to commercial centers to facilitate access to services and employment opportunities. All implementing zoning districts should consider the compatibility with adjacent development, natural constraints such as watercourses, and the overall goals of the Ellensburg comprehensive plan. The residential land use category includes three land use designations that support a range of housing densities to achieve the City's housing and affordability goals: Residential Neighborhood, Blended Residential Neighborhood, and Urban Neighborhood.

Residential Neighborhood

This designation applies to areas that have traditionally accommodated single-family detached homes and generally surround the urbanized core of the community or exist at the edge of the city in compatibility with unincorporated land. The residential neighborhood designation supports a range of residential zones with housing densities that help to achieve the City's housing diversity and affordability goals. The intent of this designation is to accommodate the many established residential neighborhoods and acknowledge the single dwelling residential building type as the primary use with the potential for accessory dwellings, townhouses, cottage housing, clustered housing, and other small-scale housing forms.



Blended Residential Neighborhood

This designation applies to areas close to the core of the community, and where city services and infrastructure are readily available but the pattern of existing development is less intense than primary multi-dwelling buildings. This designation accommodates a range of housing types, and functions as a transition between neighborhoods with less density and core uses such as mixed-use areas and higher density residential and commercial areas. This designation accommodates a range of building types from small-lot single dwellings, attached or semi-attached dwellings, duplexes, and small-scale multi-dwelling developments, such as triplexes and fourplexes. These areas are expected to accommodate a significant share of future residential growth, including multifamily and middle housing types.

Zoning districts that accommodate lower density housing types are appropriate adjacent to existing single family residential areas and are characterized primarily by detached housing units and zero lot line projects. Implementing zoning districts that accommodate higher density housing types are more appropriate adjacent to parks and the University campus, along transit routes and principal and minor arterials, on local streets adjacent to commercial areas and served by transit routes, and near recreational activity centers, shopping centers, and entertainment areas. Higher density zones would also be appropriate adjacent to existing or planned higher density development.

Urban Neighborhood

This designation accommodates areas close to the University campus, accessible by public transportation, close to other goods and amenities, and where city services and infrastructure are readily available. This designation accommodates a wide range of housing types and allows for the development of transitional areas between lower density neighborhoods and higher density residential and commercial areas. This designation accommodates a wide range of building types, from small-lot single dwellings to large-scale multistory, multi-dwelling developments. The Urban Neighborhood designation is anticipated to accommodate a significant share of future residential growth.

Implementing zoning districts that accommodate for lower density housing are appropriate adjacent to existing single family residential areas characterized primarily by detached housing units and zero lot line projects. Implementing zoning districts that accommodate higher density housing types are more appropriate adjacent to parks and the University campus, along transit routes and principal and minor arterials, on local streets adjacent to commercial areas and served by transit routes, and near recreational activity centers, shopping centers, and entertainment areas. Higher density zones would also be appropriate adjacent to existing or planned higher density development.

Mixed-use

Mixed-use developments provide a complementary mix of land use and development types to create focal points for community activity and identity. Mixed-use areas serve as a transition from the urban center toward primarily residential neighborhoods, and as a transition between commercial or industrial areas to residential neighborhoods. Mixed-use developments should be developed in an integrated, pedestrian-friendly manner and should not be overly dominated by any single type of land use. Higher intensity employment or residential uses are encouraged in the core of the area or adjacent to major streets or intersections, or adjacent to existing or planned higher density development.



Mixing residential and commercial uses within the same building or within the same development serves both residential and commercial uses. This enables people to live near their places of employment and services and thereby reduce vehicle miles traveled. The mixed-use designations accommodate a horizontal and/or vertical mixture of retail, service, office, restaurant, entertainment, cultural, and residential uses. Mixed-use structures that *vertically* integrate uses will have housing above ground floor commercial, office, or other pedestrian-active uses. A mixed-use development that is *horizontally* integrated may have a combination of buildings that are exclusively nonresidential, exclusively residential, and vertically mixed buildings. The four mixed-use land designations are Neighborhood Mixed Use, Urban Center, Community Mixed Use, and Industrial Residential. Mixed-use areas are expected to accommodate both residential and commercial development, consistent with assumptions used in the LCA.

Neighborhood Mixed Use

The purpose of this designation is to provide for a mix of residential, employment, retail, service, and other related uses at a scale that serves individual or small groupings of neighborhoods. Commercial uses typical of this designation include retail, offices, entertainment, professional services, eating and drinking establishments, live/work units, and shop front retail that serve a market at a small neighborhood scale. Implementation of this designation includes a range of housing equivalent to the Blended Residential designation. Development in this area requires lower demand on city resources (utilities are already installed) and is advantageous for development of denser affordable housing types.

Urban Center

The purpose of this designation is to create and sustain a commercial district that caters to pedestrians and emphasizes street activity. This area addresses the concentration of downtown uses including commercial office, retail, arts, and entertainment, eating and drinking establishments, and residential uses. This is where people can live, work, and recreate within minutes of each activity. Urban streetscapes, plazas, outdoor seating, public art, and open space and park amenities appropriately designed for urban character help to keep this area a vibrant community destination. This designation is consistent with the historic downtown district and is supportive of evening and weekend activity of lively uses and services to accommodate residents, employees, and visitors to our community. This designation accommodates zoning districts that provide a mix of retail and residential uses, and an increasing amount of evening and weekend entertainment and leisure activities. This land use designation extends beyond the historic downtown core of Ellensburg to include transitional areas between downtown and the University, and between downtown and higher intensity industrial and commercial activity to the west and south of downtown.

Implementation of this land use designation should encourage second and third floor residential, and office uses in the downtown core. It should also encourage new high-density residential or mixed use developments while providing areas of transition to adjacent areas and preservation of the downtown character.

Community Mixed Use

This designation accommodates a combination of commercial and/or office activities that include a residential component within a self-contained planned development.



Activities within this land use designation are the basic employment and services necessary for a vibrant community. Establishments located in this designation draw from the community as a whole for the employee and customer base. They serve the larger community as well as adjacent neighborhoods. A broad range of functions including retail, education, financial institutions, professional and personal services, offices, residences, and general service activities are typical in this designation.

Community mixed use areas should be integrated with main transportation corridors, including public transit and active transportation systems. The density of development may be higher than currently seen in most commercial areas in Ellensburg. Mixing commercial and residential uses within this designation, typically with residences on upper floors, will facilitate access to services and retail opportunities without requiring the use of an automobile. Implementation of this land use designation should include encouraging medium to high-density residential uses.

Industrial Residential

This designation accommodates a dynamic living and working environment that supports artisanal production. It supports small-scale, low-impact production uses integrated with residential development and contributes to the City's overall housing capacity in limited locations. Light industrial and residential uses are vertically or horizontally integrated into small-scale business park environments characterized by artist studios, design offices, and low impact facilities producing food products, garments, carpentry, or custom-made products.

This designation accommodates mixed-use projects that create small-scale business park environments suitable for residential, very-low impact light industrial uses, artisan industrial, and supporting commercial activity. A range of housing equivalent to the Urban Neighborhood designation is appropriate for this designation.

Commercial

The commercial land use designations provide for the creation of local jobs and other local economic activity in a manner consistent with the character of the community. Commercial based uses provide employment opportunities as well as the primary retail and service opportunities. These areas provide an array of commercial uses at a range of intensities to meet the demand of current and future market conditions. The land use designations include Neighborhood Commercial, Mixed Business Park, and Regional Commercial and Services.

Neighborhood Commercial

This designation accommodates employment, retail, service, and other related uses at a scale that serves individual or small groupings of neighborhoods. Commercial uses typical of this designation include retail, offices, entertainment, professional services, eating and drinking establishments, live/work units, and shop front retail that serve a market at a small neighborhood scale.

Mixed Business Park

This designation accommodates a range of commercial and industrial activities typified by office uses, low impact light industrial uses, businesses that may include several uses such as manufacturing, research and development, warehousing, distribution, office, retail, customer service, or showrooms.



Retail, residential, or services should be accommodated in an accessory or service role. This designation is often a transitional area between other uses and the scale and intensity of implementing zoning districts should be compatible with adjacent developments. Uses may be mixed vertically and horizontally with vertical mixed uses encouraged. Higher intensity uses are encouraged in the core of the area or adjacent to significant streets, intersections, or existing higher intensity development. This designation includes a broad spectrum of land uses, some of which can be compatible with mixed-use developments, regional commercial services, and live/work developments.

General Commercial and Services

Ellensburg is a retail, education, health services, public administration, and outdoor recreation hub, and provides opportunities for these activities at a regional scale. This designation accommodates uses with large land requirements, which may involve outdoor storage of merchandise; uses which are automobile or regional-retail related; uses that provide support service to business or industry; and uses that support highway travel. It is necessary that these types of facilities be located in proximity to major transportation routes. Since uses in this designation are large prominent facilities within the community and region, design guidelines ensure compatibility with the remainder of the community. Mixing of uses that encourages broad activity levels is encouraged. Any development within this designation should have a well-integrated transportation network that accommodates different modes of transportation and provides ready access within and to adjacent development.

Residential space should not be a primary function and should only be included as a use in combination with other compatible commercial uses if supportive residential services and spaces are within 1/4 mile of the proposed development. Supportive residential uses include public parks or open space, grocery, school, and transit.

Industrial

The industrial land use designations provide for the creation of local jobs and other local economic activity in a manner consistent with the character of the community. Industrial land typically includes businesses that manufacture, process, or otherwise generate products sold to commercial businesses later. Industrial land needs good transportation access, preferably with access to truck routes, for transport of products as well as for workers. These areas provide a range of intensities including heavy and light industrial uses.

Light Industrial

This designation typically accommodates activities that include light manufacturing, research and development, office, technology centers, light assembly, storage, and support services to industry. Light industry includes a broad spectrum of land uses, some of which can be compatible with mixed-use developments, regional commercial services, and live/work developments.

Heavy Industrial

This designation generally accommodates industries that process large volumes of raw materials into refined products and/or have significant external impacts. The uses in these areas tend to generate truck traffic and should have access to major transportation networks. Typically, these areas would not be compatible with residential uses.



Other land use designations

Public/Institutional

This designation accommodates a variety of activities. Schools are a dominant use including Central Washington University. Other typical uses are libraries, fire stations, Kittitas Valley Event Center, and publicly operated facilities and utilities. A significant portion of Ellensburg's employment occurs within this category.

Parks and Open Space

All publicly owned recreation lands, including parks, are included within this category, as well as certain private lands. These areas are generally open in character and may or may not be developed.

Open Space

This designation is for land that is currently open space but is either private or non-city owned and may or may not be developed and is not publicly accessible.

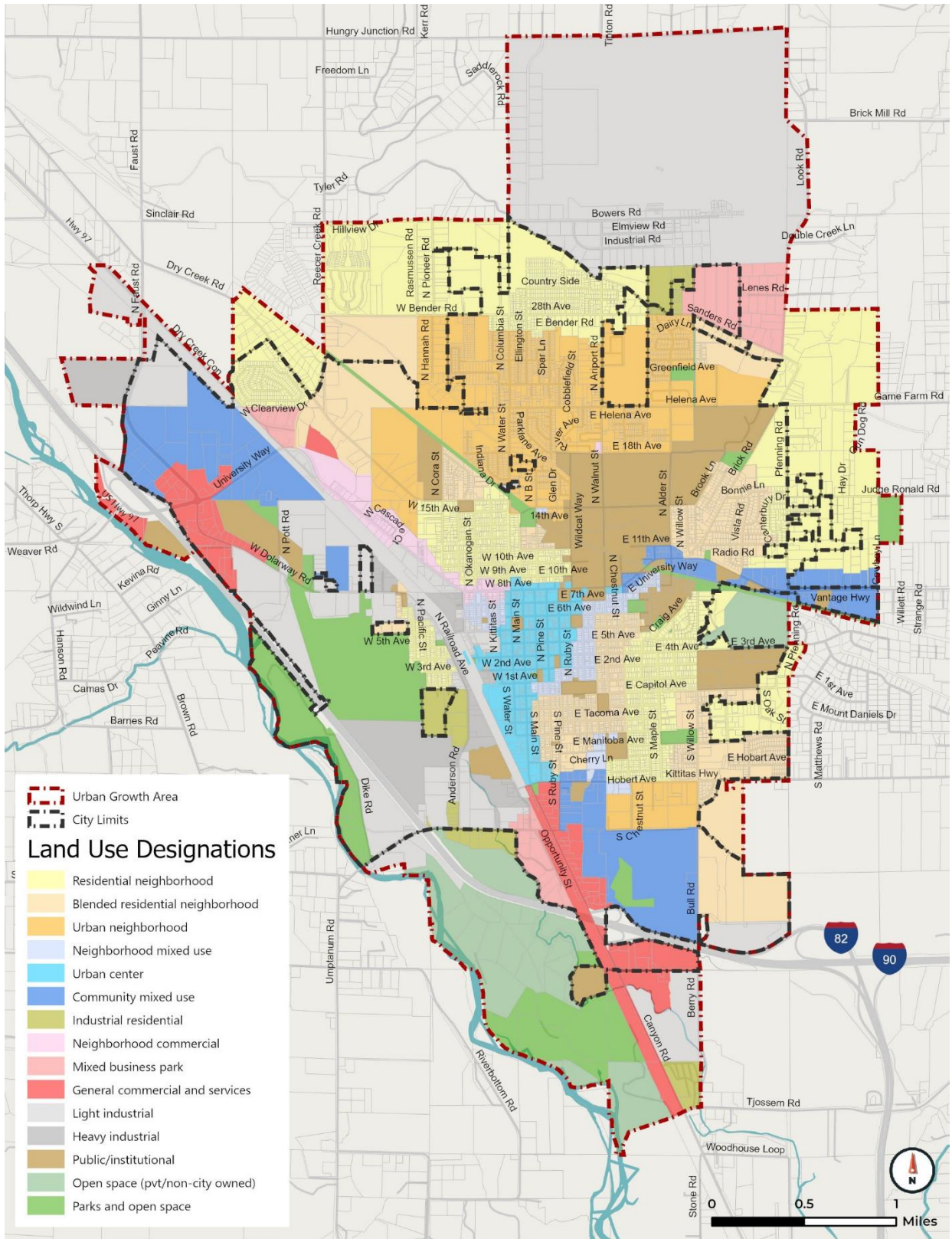
Table 3-2 includes estimated acreages of proposed future land use designations within the City of Ellensburg and the Urban Growth Area.

Table 3-2. Future Land Use Designations

Future Land Use Designation	Acre	Percent
Residential Neighborhood	1,482	16.0%
Blended Residential Neighborhood	876	9.5%
Urban Neighborhood	939	10.1%
Neighborhood Mixed Use	100	1.1%
Urban Center	208	2.2%
Community Mixed Use	943	10.2%
Industrial Residential	135	1.5%
Neighborhood Commercial	28	0.3%
Mixed Business Park	206	2.2%
General Commercial and Services	336	3.6%
Light Industrial	2,024	21.9%
Heavy Industrial	235	2.5%
Public/Institutional	659	7.1%
Parks and Open Space	632	6.8%
Open space (private/non-city owned)	455	4.9%
Total	9,258	100%



Figure 3-1. Future Land Use Map



Goals, Policies, and Programs

This chapter contains goals, policies, and programs necessary to support the City's responsibility for managing land uses and to implement regulations, guidelines, and programs. The Land Use policies contained in this chapter, along with the future land use map (Figure 3-), identify the intensity of development and density recommended for each area of the city. These designations help to achieve the City's goals by providing for sustainable growth that encourages housing choice; locates population centers adjacent to transit and services; provides areas with the city to grow businesses, services, jobs, and entertainment; respects existing neighborhoods; provides for appropriate transitions between uses with differing intensities; safeguards the environment; and maintains Ellensburg's sense of community.

Goal LU-1: Land use patterns provide a variety of housing, shopping, entertainment, recreation, gathering spaces, employment, and services that are accessible and well-integrated with surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy A Encourage infill development and increased residential density in and around the downtown area.

Program 1 Review and, if needed, revise the residential density bonus program to promote infill development in and around the downtown area consistent with adopted housing and growth targets.

Policy B Integrate new development with consideration to design and scale that complements existing neighborhoods and provides effective transitions between different uses and intensities.

Program 1 Incorporate Planned Unit Developments into the City's land development code.

Program 2 Encourage new neighborhood commercial uses in residential areas with particular attention to establishing pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods and regulating offsite impacts to adjoining residential areas.

Program 3 Allow healthy food purveyors, such as grocery stores, farmers markets, and community food gardens, in proximity to residential uses and transit facilities.

Program 4 Recognize the placemaking value of arts and cultural facilities and support their integration throughout the City to enhance neighborhood identity and community vitality.

Program 5 Regularly review and update the City's zoning regulations, design standards, and review process as needed to allow design flexibility and creativity, address emerging issues, and foster compatibility of development with the character of surrounding areas.



Policy C Support development of compact, walkable mixed-use centers that provide access to daily needs, housing options, employment opportunities, public spaces, and multimodal transportation choices.

Program 1 Support downtown's development with the mix of uses, amenities, and infrastructure that maintain it as a cultural, retail, and social destination.

Program 2 Assess the design and scale of commercial uses and other higher density uses when located in mixed use and predominantly residential areas.

Goal LU-2: Land use patterns promote walking, biking, and transit use to access goods, services, education, employment, and recreation, thereby supporting public health and reducing per capita vehicle miles traveled.

Policy A Enhance the character, quality, and function of existing residential neighborhoods while accommodating anticipated growth.

Program 1 Evaluate and process rezoning requests that allow appropriate mixing of residential and commercial uses consistent with adopted land use designations and neighborhood compatibility standards.

Program 2 Encourage urban development patterns that use land efficiently, support multimodal transportation, and provide adequate open space and amenities, particularly in newly developing areas and where infill is possible.

Program 3 Encourage large commercial or residential projects to include transit stop improvements when appropriate.

Program 4 Review parking requirements and costs and consider including regulatory provisions to reduce parking standards for those uses located within a quarter mile of public transit, or serving a population characterized by low rates of car ownership.

Program 5 Prepare or update corridor plans for Canyon Road, University Way, and Dolarway Road to ensure land use designations, design standards, and infrastructure investments align with the City's overall growth and transportation strategies.

Policy B Adopt and maintain policies, codes, and land use patterns that promote walking and biking in order to increase public health and reduce per capital vehicle miles traveled.

Program 1 Locate new community facilities near major transit routes and in areas convenient to pedestrians and bicyclists.



Goal LU-3: Commercial and mixed-use areas are designed at a pedestrian scale that supports walkability, safety, and an engaging public realm.

Policy A Develop and implement strategies that address on- and off-street parking management in the downtown area consistent with walkability and economic vitality goals.

Program 1 Prepare a parking study to assess parking demand and supply in the downtown area.

Policy B Facilitate development of vacant and underutilized land in and around downtown with commercial, civic, cultural, and higher-density residential uses that respect design, scale, and character of surrounding neighborhoods.

Program 1 Provide historic renovation training to contractors/developers interested in developing or renovating upper-story buildings.

Program 2 Encourage development of second floor housing and/or professional offices in the downtown area.

Program 3 Seek grant opportunities and partnerships to facilitate elevator placement in downtown buildings to foster ADA accessibility.

Goal LU-4: Downtown Ellensburg functions as a vibrant, mixed-use center that supports economic vitality, tourism, housing, and community life.

Policy A Encourage development and activity that increase pedestrian activity and economic vitality in the downtown area while ensuring safe and efficient access for all transportation modes.

Program 1 Support and encourage a mix of businesses, services, housing, cultural uses, and community attractions in downtown.

Policy B Maintain interconnectedness and high levels of access to downtown.

Program 1 Identify and improve critical rights of way and important pedestrian and bicycle corridors that provide access to downtown.

Program 2 Implement a program of trails, signs, and other strategies to connect downtown with the west and south interchanges, and the CWU campus.

Policy C Protect, preserve, and promote Ellensburg's historic buildings, districts, objects, sites, and structures as integral components of community identity and downtown revitalization.

Program 1 Integrate the train depot and other historically significant places into continued revitalization of downtown.

Program 2 Attract tourists to the City through regional promotion of the historic downtown.



Goal LU-5: Commercial and industrial areas serve community needs, are visually attractive and well designed, and support long-term economic vitality.

Policy A Ensure the comprehensive plan designates a diversity of commercial and industrial lands sufficient to provide an array of businesses and employment opportunities that serve the community.

Program 1 Land designated or zoned industrial in the City and UGA should be reserved for industrial and appropriate accessory uses.

Program 2 Access high-traffic generating land uses from arterials whenever possible. If this is not possible, provide mitigation to address access impacts.

Program 3 Encourage the master planning of multi-building and multi-parcel developments and large institutions to emphasize aesthetics and community compatibility. Include circulation, landscaping, open space, storm drainage, utilities, and building location and design in the master plan.

Program 4 Review and regularly update the City's commercial zoning regulations, design standards, and design review process as needed to allow design flexibility and creativity, address emerging issues, and foster compatibility of development with the character of surrounding areas.

Program 5 Separate heavy industrial uses from incompatible land uses. Use transition zoning, buffers, and other techniques to protect industrial areas and nearby uses from conflicts.

Program 6 Encourage live/work units in appropriate transitional zones, including light industrial zones.

Goal LU-6: Collaborate with Kittitas County to provide coordinated services and facilities in a manner that will be best suited to geographic, economic, demographic, and other factors that influence development needs.

Policy A Adopt an interlocal agreement with Kittitas County regarding land use designations, zoning districts, and public works standards for the UGA that are consistent between the City and County.



Action Items

Density Bonus Program

Review, revise, and publicize the density bonus program to promote infill development in and around downtown, including housing that is affordable to a range of income levels.

Design Charrettes

Conduct community design charrettes to develop gateway designs for each entryway to the City.

Interlocal Agreement with Kittitas County

Adopt an interlocal agreement with Kittitas County regarding land use designations and public works standards for the UGA that are consistent between the City and County.

Parking Study and Review of Parking Requirements

Review parking requirements and assess parking costs and consider revising parking requirements in areas within a quarter mile of transit and residential uses that are characterized by low rates of car ownership. Prepare a parking study to assess parking demand and supply in the downtown.

Planned Unit Developments

Incorporate Planned Unit Developments into the City's land development code.

Review Zoning Districts

Review and revise zoning districts, and the allowable uses within each zoning district, as necessary to permit and encourage mixing of residential and commercial uses, increase opportunities for a range of housing types and densities, and ensure compatible land use patterns.

Review Land Use Regulations

Review land use regulations and revise as necessary to allow neighborhood commercial uses in residential areas, where appropriate, with particular attention to establishing pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods and regulating offsite impacts to adjoining residential areas.

Implement Land Capacity Analysis Findings

Amend zoning and development regulations, as needed, to ensure sufficient land capacity for housing and employment growth, including housing affordable to a range of income levels, consistent with the 2026 Land Capacity Analysis.

Promote Infill and Redevelopment

Identify and reduce barriers to infill and redevelopment of underutilized properties within the City.

Policy Connections

The **Transportation** chapter contains a set of policies on active modes of transportation and ways to improve street and neighborhood connectivity.

The **Housing** chapter contains a set of goals and policies that provide a framework for increasing housing supply and diversity while protecting existing neighborhoods.

The **Capital Facilities and Utilities** chapter contains goals and policies to ensure that public services and infrastructure are available to meet growth and development demands.





CHAPTER 1 LAND USE

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- Information about the City’s expected population and employment growth.
- Description and capacity of existing and future land use designations.
- Policies that direct the City’s growth strategy and land uses.
- A map of future land uses.

OVERVIEW

One of the fundamental roles of the City of Ellensburg’s Comprehensive Plan is to anticipate, guide, and plan for growth. The plan is a tool to look ahead to the likely growth and ensure alignment of the City’s plan for land uses, infrastructure, and services.

The Land Use chapter addresses the general pattern of land use within the City and its Urban Growth Area (UGA) and provides a framework to guide the City’s overall growth and development. It ensures an appropriate mix of land uses are available to support the City’s economic goals, provide an array of housing choices, and ensure that adequate infrastructure and services are available.

The Land Use goals, policies and programs help protect environmentally sensitive areas, maintain the character of established neighborhoods, and promote opportunities for healthy lifestyles while allowing the City to evolve to meet the changing needs of the community.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Core community values this chapter supports:

- Attractive residential neighborhoods and a lively and vital downtown contribute greatly to Ellensburg’s high quality of life.
- Allowing for a variety of housing types will add to Ellensburg’s diversity and appeal, and will help to address housing affordability.
- Encouraging sustainable practices related to both the environment and social equity will preserve a high quality of life for generations to come.
- Allowing for more neighborhood commercial development and more mixed-use areas will provide easier access to goods and services in the community.
- Encouraging entertainment and cultural uses will enrich the community and provide activities for all age groups.
- Increasing opportunities for local businesses will help supply employment for Ellensburg’s residents.
- Suitable locations for industrial and institutional uses will protect the city’s neighborhoods, while providing essential facilities needed by every community.

Existing Land Use Patterns

Residential

Residential land uses make up about 44% of land within the City limits and the Urban Growth Area. The 2006 Comprehensive Plan created two residential categories: mixed residential and high density residential. Mixed residential currently makes up 97% of designated residential land. Most of the high-density residential areas are located near the Central Washington University (CWU) campus and house large numbers of students residing off campus. Mixed residential is intended to provide for the development of housing at approximately four-to-12 dwelling units per acre. High density residential provides a target density of eight-to-18 units per acre. The high-density areas are located north of the CWU campus, on the north side of the Kittitas Highway, and southeast of the west Interstate-90 interchange.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND LAND USE

The intersection between health and land use planning is becoming more important in today’s communities. Long term plans impact how people make choices about where to live and how to get around in their communities. The way we plan our communities can affect things like access to healthy foods, safe and accessible opportunities for physical activity, and easy access to health and social services, as well as issues such as clean air, clean water, and social equity. Our environments have a key role in helping healthy choices be the easy choices.

Commercial

Ellensburg's downtown remains the main retail and commercial center of the City and the lower Kittitas Valley. Maintaining the prominence and vitality of downtown has been an important goal for Ellensburg dating back to the City's first Comprehensive Plan in 1975. The Central Commercial land use (which includes downtown and South Water Street) makes up about 12% of land designated commercial. More recent developments on South Water Street and Mountain View Avenue have shifted some of the retail from the downtown area and currently about 43% of commercial land is located at the west and south freeway interchanges on the edge of town.

Industrial

Ellensburg's industrial sector has not seen as much growth as the retail commercial sector. Government, education, healthcare, and agriculture continue to be Ellensburg's largest employers. Activity in the agricultural sector has been relatively constant, and there has been little growth in other industrial areas. The result is that there has been relatively little industrial land development since 1995.

Ellensburg's early industrial development centered along the railroad tracks to the west of the existing central commercial area. The heavy industrial land continues to be located on a narrow strip paralleling the railroad tracks, but light industrial land has expanded along Dolarway Road to the west interchange area, and to the area around the airport located north of the University.

Public/institutional

Ellensburg has a long-standing and important institutional component. Ellensburg is home to Central Washington University, it is the County seat, and it hosts Kittitas County's central medical and hospital services. Institutions are by far the largest employers in Ellensburg. The University campus is the primary public/institutional land use and occupies approximately 380 acres and employs almost 1,400 full time staff. Other public uses are spread throughout Ellensburg and include city and county offices, Kittitas Valley Healthcare, schools, fire stations, the Kittitas County Event Center, and other public services that provide necessary services to Ellensburg and the surrounding region.

Parks and open space

Ellensburg operates a park system that encompasses more than 300 acres. Current open space land includes both publicly owned land and private property that is generally open in nature and may or may not be developed.

The following table includes estimated acreages of existing land uses within the City of Ellensburg and the Urban Growth Area.

Table 5. Inventory of Existing Uses

Current Land Use Designation	Acres	Percent
Mixed residential	3,950	43.5%
Residential high density	131	1.4%
Central commercial	206	2.3%
Industrial residential	24	0.3%
Neighborhood commercial	175	1.9%
Commercial tourist	420	4.6%
Business office park	42	0.5%
General commercial	590	6.5%
Light industrial	2,039	22.5%
Heavy industrial	95	1.0%
Public/institutional	646	7.1%
Open space	758	8.4%
Total	9,074*	100%

*Differences in total acres between existing uses and future uses are due to slight difference in mapping methods. Existing land use designations were mapped to exclude road right-of-ways. Future land use designations (Table 6) were mapped to include road right-of-ways, which is consistent with 2017 zoning maps.

Growth projections

The Kittitas County Conference of Governments projects that between 2017 and 2037 the region will grow by over 23,000 people, and that the economy will generate more than 11,000 additional jobs. Within this regional context, Ellensburg is expected to grow by about 11,757 people and 6,998 jobs by 2037.

These local projections are based on state and regional growth forecasts and collaboration with Kittitas County’s incorporated areas and the County to identify where growth should be anticipated. The projections reflect commitment from each jurisdiction to have the infrastructure and zoning in place to support anticipated growth within the 20-year planning period.

Residential and employment growth capacity

Based on existing land use regulations and zoning, Ellensburg has sufficient land capacity to accommodate the projected population and employment growth. A Land Capacity Analysis conducted in 2016 showed that there are vacant commercial/industrial lands near each of the interchanges, and that capacity for developing commercial/industrial lands in the downtown area will primarily be through infill and redevelopment. In terms of residential capacity there is both vacant and partially developed land surrounding and to edges of the urban core and in the downtown area.

GROWTH PROJECTIONS

- Ellensburg works cooperatively with Kittitas County and other incorporated areas to establish long-range population growth targets based on state and regional forecasts.
- The City’s current adopted growth targets are for 11,757 additional people 6,998 additional jobs for the 2017-2037 planning period.
- The City uses these targets to identify the needed zoning and infrastructure to accommodate this level of growth. The projections are not a commitment that the market will deliver these numbers.

Future Land Use

Land use designations and policies provide a guide for the appropriate development, and redevelopment locations for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The future land use designations (*Table 6*) are aimed at ensuring a safe, livable, and sustainable environment that will shape Ellensburg's future development within the 20-year planning cycle. The City's comprehensive plan establishes the overarching guide for decisions related to land development regulations and patterns, with this chapter functioning as a summary of the intent.

The City of Ellensburg has been using land use designation maps since the mid-1970s. Descriptions and mapping of land use designations visually depict the community's desired direction as it meets new growth challenges and changing times. The descriptions of each land use designation along with the recommended locations for land use designations help to set a broad understanding of land use patterns that enables city services and agencies, along with residents and property owners to effectively plan.

Land use designations are general in nature and serve as a guide; they do not carry the same force of law as zoning. The guiding land use designations help set up future considerations for zoning, but do not change zoning district locations or descriptions. Zoning is a private property development right that requires a separate public process for changes.

To provide a complete understanding of potential land development patterns, this chapter describes and illustrates the land use designations. Land use mapping is a visual representation of the goals, policies, and programs within this comprehensive plan. The map and the policies they represent are the general foundation for land use decisions and implementation strategies.

The land use patterns and policies discussed in this chapter apply to the Ellensburg City limits. Areas outside of the city limits and within Ellensburg's Urban Growth Area, which change from time to time with annexations, are included to inform private and public parties of the desired pattern for development as the city grows. The land use designations outside of city limits (within the UGA) are not binding in nature until lands are incorporated within the municipal boundaries. The process of looking beyond the city limits and planning for 20 years of growth within the Urban Growth Area helps to facilitate City-County coordination in land use planning and related issues, and provides a greater level of predictability to landowners and interested parties.

The Future Land Use Map (*Figure 2*) reflects desired uses and implements the land use goals and policies in this plan; it does not always represent existing uses. Decisions and implementation based on these designations should include consideration of the entire comprehensive plan and site-specific conditions.

A description as well as the intent of specific land use designations are included for each designation. The Future Land Use Map provides recommended locations for each designation. The land uses designations include four main categories: residential, mixed use, commercial, and industrial.

Residential

Residential land use designations are areas in the City where the primary activity is residential dwellings. Uses that complement residences should be incorporated into these areas, such as: parks, low-intensity home based occupations, fire stations, churches, small-scale neighborhood commercial services, schools, and other public facilities. The Future Land Use map, goals, and policies in this chapter encourage high density residential in close proximity to commercial centers to facilitate access to services and employment opportunities. All implementing zoning districts should consider the compatibility with adjacent development, natural constraints such as watercourses, and the overall goals of the Ellensburg comprehensive plan. The residential land use category includes three land use designations that support a range of housing densities to achieve the City's housing and affordability goals: Residential Neighborhood, Blended Residential Neighborhood, and Urban Neighborhood.

- **RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD**

This designation applies to areas that have traditionally accommodated single-family detached homes and generally surround the urbanized core of the community, or exist at the edge of the city in compatibility with unincorporated land. The residential neighborhood designation supports a range of residential zones with housing densities that help to achieve the City's housing diversity and affordability goals. The intent of this designation is to accommodate the many established residential neighborhoods and acknowledge the single dwelling residential building type as the primary use with the potential for accessory dwellings, townhouses, cottage housing, clustered housing, and other small-scale housing forms.

- **BLENDED RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD**

This designation applies to areas close to the core of the community, and where city services and infrastructure are readily available but the pattern of existing development is less intense than primary multi-dwelling buildings. This designation accommodates a range of housing types, and functions as a transition between neighborhoods with less density and core uses such as mixed-use areas and higher density residential and commercial areas. This designation accommodates a range of building types from small-lot single dwellings, attached or semi-attached dwellings, duplexes, and small-scale multi-dwelling developments, such as triplexes and fourplexes.

Implementing zoning districts that accommodate lower density housing types are appropriate adjacent to existing single family residential areas and are characterized primarily by detached housing units and zero lot line projects. Implementing zoning

districts that accommodate higher density housing types are more appropriate adjacent to parks and the University campus, along transit routes and principal and minor arterials, on local streets adjacent to commercial areas and served by transit routes, and near recreational activity centers, shopping centers, and entertainment areas. Higher density zones would also be appropriate adjacent to existing or planned higher density development.

- **URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD**

This designation accommodates areas close to the University campus, accessible by public transportation, close to other goods and amenities, and where city services and infrastructure are readily available. This designation accommodates a wide range of housing types and allows for the development of transitional areas between lower density neighborhoods and higher density residential and commercial areas. This designation accommodates a wide range of building types, from small-lot single dwellings to large-scale multistory, multi-dwelling developments.

Implementing zoning districts that accommodate for lower density housing are appropriate adjacent to existing single family residential areas characterized primarily by detached housing units and zero lot line projects. Implementing zoning districts that accommodate higher density housing types are more appropriate adjacent to parks and the University campus, along transit routes and principal and minor arterials, on local streets adjacent to commercial areas and served by transit routes, and near recreational activity centers, shopping centers, and entertainment areas. Higher density zones would also be appropriate adjacent to existing or planned higher density development.

Mixed-use

Mixed-use developments provide a complementary mix of land use and development types to create focal points for community activity and identity. Mixed-use areas serve as a transition from the urban center toward primarily residential neighborhoods, and as a transition between commercial or industrial areas to residential neighborhoods. Mixed-use developments should be developed in an integrated, pedestrian-friendly manner and should not be overly dominated by any single type of land use. Higher intensity employment or residential uses are encouraged in the core of the area or adjacent to major streets or intersections, or adjacent to existing or planned higher density development.

Mixing residential and commercial uses within the same building or within the same development serves both residential and commercial uses. This enables people to live near their places of employment and services and thereby reduce vehicle miles traveled. The mixed-use designations accommodate a horizontal and/or vertical mixture of retail, service, office, restaurant, entertainment, cultural, and residential uses. Mixed-use structures that *vertically* integrate uses will have housing above ground floor commercial, office, or other pedestrian-active uses. A mixed-use development that is *horizontally* integrated may have a combination

of buildings that are exclusively nonresidential, exclusively residential, and vertically mixed buildings. The four mixed-use land designations are Neighborhood Mixed Use, Urban Center, Community Mixed Use, and Industrial Residential.

- NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED USE

The purpose of this designation is to provide for a mix of residential, employment, retail, service, and other related uses at a scale that serves individual or small groupings of neighborhoods. Commercial uses typical of this designation include retail, offices, entertainment, professional services, eating and drinking establishments, live/work units, and shop front retail that serve a market at a small neighborhood scale.

Implementation of this designation includes a range of housing equivalent to the Blended Residential designation. Development in this area requires lower demand on city resources (utilities are already installed) and is advantageous for development of denser affordable housing types.

- URBAN CENTER

The purpose of this designation is to create and sustain a commercial district that caters to pedestrians and emphasizes street activity. This area addresses the concentration of downtown uses including commercial office, retail, arts, and entertainment, eating and drinking establishments, and residential uses. This is where people can live, work, and recreate within minutes of each activity. Urban streetscapes, plazas, outdoor seating, public art, and open space and park amenities appropriately designed for urban character help to keep this area a vibrant community destination. This designation is consistent with the historic downtown district and is supportive of evening and weekend activity of lively uses and services to accommodate residents, employees, and visitors to our community. This designation accommodates zoning districts that provide a mix of retail and residential uses, and an increasing amount of evening and weekend entertainment and leisure activities. This land use designation extends beyond the historic downtown core of Ellensburg to include transitional areas between downtown and the University, and between downtown and higher intensity industrial and commercial activity to the west and south of downtown.

Implementation of this land use designation should encourage second and third floor residential, and office uses in the downtown core. It should also encourage new high-density residential or mixed use developments while providing areas of transition to adjacent areas and preservation of the downtown character.

- COMMUNITY MIXED USE

This designation accommodates a combination of commercial and/or office activities that include a residential component within a self-contained planned development. Activities within this land use designation are the basic employment and services

necessary for a vibrant community. Establishments located in this designation draw from the community as a whole for the employee and customer base. They serve the larger community as well as adjacent neighborhoods. A broad range of functions including retail, education, financial institutions, professional and personal services, offices, residences, and general service activities are typical in this designation.

Community mixed use areas should be integrated with main transportation corridors, including public transit and active transportation systems. The density of development may be higher than currently seen in most commercial areas in Ellensburg. Mixing commercial and residential uses within this designation, typically with residences on upper floors, will facilitate access to services and retail opportunities without requiring the use of an automobile. Implementation of this land use designation should include encouraging medium to high-density residential uses.

- **INDUSTRIAL RESIDENTIAL**

This designation accommodates a dynamic living and working environment that supports artisanal production. Light industrial and residential uses are vertically or horizontally integrated into small-scale business park environments characterized by artist studios, design offices, and low impact facilities producing food products, garments, carpentry, or custom-made products.

This designation accommodates mixed-use projects that create small-scale business park environments suitable for residential, very-low impact light industrial uses, artisan industrial, and supporting commercial activity. A range of housing equivalent to the Urban Neighborhood designation is appropriate for this designation.

Commercial

The commercial land use designations provide for the creation of local jobs and other local economic activity in a manner consistent with the character of the community. Commercial based uses provide employment opportunities as well as the primary retail and service opportunities. These areas provide an array of commercial uses at a range of intensities to meet the demand of current and future market conditions. The land use designations include Neighborhood Commercial, Mixed Business Park, and Regional Commercial and Services.

- **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL**

This designation accommodates employment, retail, service, and other related uses at a scale that serves individual or small groupings of neighborhoods. Commercial uses typical of this designation include retail, offices, entertainment, professional services, eating and drinking establishments, live/work units, and shop front retail that serve a market at a small neighborhood scale.

- **MIXED BUSINESS PARK**

This designation accommodates a range of commercial and industrial activities typified by office uses, low impact light industrial uses, businesses that may include several uses such as manufacturing, research and development, warehousing, distribution, office, retail, customer service, or showrooms. Retail, residential, or services should be accommodated in an accessory or service role. This designation is often a transitional area between other uses and the scale and intensity of implementing zoning districts should be compatible with adjacent developments. Uses may be mixed vertically and horizontally with vertical mixed uses encouraged. Higher intensity uses are encouraged in the core of the area or adjacent to significant streets, intersections, or existing higher intensity development. This designation includes a broad spectrum of land uses, some of which can be compatible with mixed-use developments, regional commercial services, and live/work developments.

- **GENERAL COMMERCIAL AND SERVICES**

Ellensburg is a retail, education, health services, public administration, and outdoor recreation hub, and provides opportunities for these activities at a regional scale. This designation accommodates uses with large land requirements, which may involve outdoor storage of merchandise; uses which are automobile or regional-retail related; uses that provide support service to business or industry; and uses that support highway travel. It is necessary that these types of facilities be located in proximity to major transportation routes. Since uses in this designation are large prominent facilities within the community and region, design guidelines ensure compatibility with the remainder of the community. Mixing of uses that encourages broad activity levels is encouraged. Any development within this designation should have a well-integrated transportation network that accommodates different modes of transportation and provides ready access within and to adjacent development.

Residential space should not be a primary function and should only be included as a use in combination with other compatible commercial uses if supportive residential services and spaces are within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the proposed development. Supportive residential uses include public parks or open space, grocery, school, and transit.

Industrial

The industrial land use designations provide for the creation of local jobs and other local economic activity in a manner consistent with the character of the community. Industrial land typically includes businesses that manufacture, process, or otherwise generate products sold to commercial businesses later. Industrial land needs good transportation access, preferably with access to truck routes, for transport of products as well as for workers. These areas provide a range of intensities including heavy and light industrial uses.

- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

This designation typically accommodates activities that include light manufacturing, research and development, office, technology centers, light assembly, storage, and support services to industry. Light industry includes a broad spectrum of land uses, some of which can be compatible with mixed-use developments, regional commercial services, and live/work developments.

- HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

This designation generally accommodates industries that process large volumes of raw materials into refined products and/or have significant external impacts. The uses in these areas tend to generate truck traffic and should have access to major transportation networks. Typically, these areas would not be compatible with residential uses.

Other land use designations

- PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL

This designation accommodates a variety of activities. Schools are a dominant use including Central Washington University. Other typical uses are libraries, fire stations, Kittitas Valley Event Center, and publicly operated facilities and utilities. A significant portion of Ellensburg's employment occurs within this category.

- PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

All publicly owned recreation lands, including parks, are included within this category, as well as certain private lands. These areas are generally open in character and may or may not be developed.

- OPEN SPACE

This designation is for land that is currently open space but is either private or non-city owned and may or may not be developed and is not publicly accessible.

The following table includes estimated acreages of proposed future land use designations within the City of Ellensburg and the Urban Growth Area.

Table 6. Future Land Use Designations

Future Land Use Designation	Acres	Percent
Residential Neighborhood	1,704	18.4%
Blended Residential Neighborhood	930	10.1%
Urban Neighborhood	939	10.1%
Neighborhood Mixed Use	100	1.1%
Urban Center	208	2.2%
Community Mixed Use	583	6.3%
Industrial Residential	139	1.5%
Neighborhood Commercial	100	1.1%
Mixed Business Park	206	2.2%
General Commercial and Services	406	4.4%
Light Industrial	1,960	21.2%
Heavy Industrial	235	2.5%
Public/Institutional	659	7.1%
Parks and Open Space	631	6.8%
Open space (private/non-city owned)	455	4.9%
Total	9,400*	100%

*Differences in total acres between existing uses (*Table 5. Inventory of Existing Uses*) and future uses are due to slight difference in mapping methods. Existing land use designations were mapped to exclude road right-of-ways. Future land use designations were mapped to include road right-of-ways, which is consistent with 2017 zoning maps.

Since the names and descriptions of the land use designations have changed it is useful to compare the broad categories of residential, mixed-use, commercial, industrial, public/institutional, and open space. See *Figure 1* for a comparison of the current land use designations with those proposed in this comprehensive plan update.

Figure 1. Comparison of Current and Future Land Use Designations

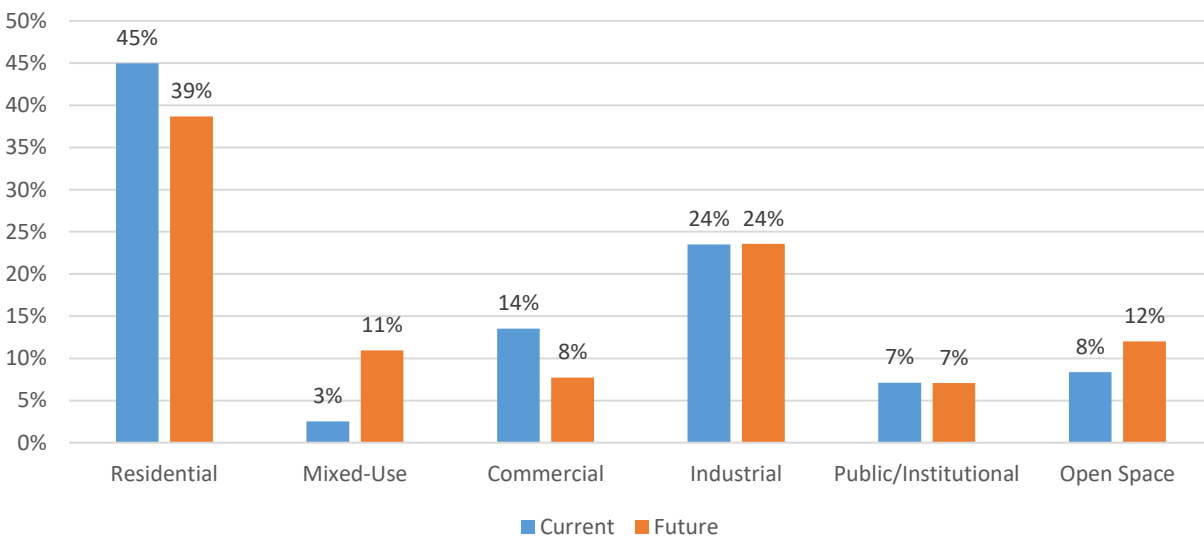


Figure 2. Future Land Use Map

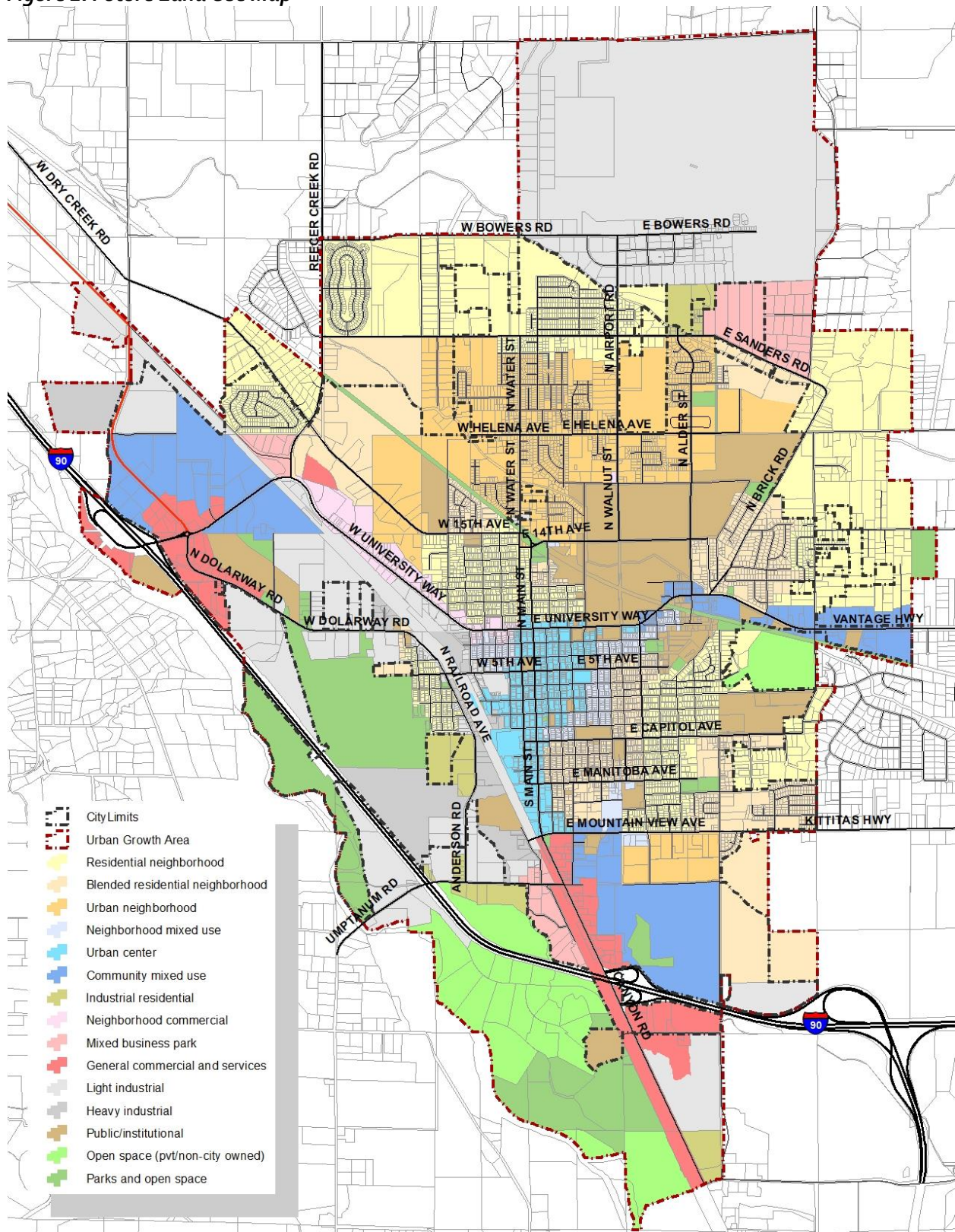


Table 7. Future Land Use- Zoning Conversion Table	
Future Land Use	Zoning Options
Residential Neighborhood	Residential Suburban (R-S)
	Residential Low (R-L)
	Residential Medium (R-M)
	Residential High (R-H)
	Residential Office (R-O)
	Commercial Neighborhood (C-N)
Blended Residential Neighborhood	Residential Low (R-L)
	Residential Medium (R-M)
	Residential High (R-H)
	Commercial Neighborhood (C-N)
Urban Neighborhood	Residential High (R-H)
	Residential Office (R-O)
	Commercial Neighborhood (C-N)
Neighborhood Mixed Use	Residential Medium (R-M)
	Residential High (R-H)
	Residential Office (R-O)
	Commercial Neighborhood (C-N)
Community Mixed Use	Residential Medium (R-M)
	Residential High (R-H)
	Residential Office (R-O)
	Neighborhood Center (NCMU)
	Regional Center Mixed Use (RCMU)
	Commercial Highway (C-H)
Neighborhood Commercial	Commercial Neighborhood (C-N)
	Residential Office (R-O)
Mixed Business Park	Industrial Light (I-L)
	Commercial Highway (C-H)
	Regional Center Mixed Use (RCMU)
Urban Center	Central Commercial (C-C)
	Central Commercial II (C-CII)
General Commercial and Services	Commercial Highway (C-H)
Light Industrial	Industrial Light (I-L)
Heavy Industrial	Industrial Heavy (I-H)
Industrial Residential	Industrial Light (I-L)
Public Institutional	Public Reserve (P-R)
Open Space (Private)	Public Reserve (P-R)
Parks and Open Space (Public)	Public Reserve (P-R)

GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

This chapter contains goals, policies, and programs necessary to support the City's responsibility for managing land uses and to implement regulations, guidelines, and programs. The Land Use policies contained in this chapter, along with the future land use map (*Figure 2*), identify the intensity of development and density recommended for each area of the city. These designations help to achieve the City's goals by providing for sustainable growth that encourages housing choice; locates population centers adjacent to transit and services; provides areas with the city to grow businesses, services, jobs, and entertainment; respects existing neighborhoods; provides for appropriate transitions between uses with differing intensities; safeguards the environment; and maintains Ellensburg's sense of community.

Goal LU-1: Encourage development that creates a variety of housing, shopping, entertainment, recreation, gathering spaces, employment, and services that are accessible to neighborhoods.

Policy A Encourage infill development and increased residential density in and around the downtown area.

Program 1 Review and revise the residential density bonus program to promote infill development in and around the downtown area.

Policy B Integrate new development with consideration to design and scale that complements existing neighborhoods and provides effective transitions between different uses and intensities.

Program 1 Incorporate Planned Unit Developments into the City's land development code.

Program 2 Encourage new neighborhood commercial uses in residential areas with particular attention to establishing pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods and regulating offsite impacts to adjoining residential areas.

Program 3 Allow healthy food purveyors, such as grocery stores, farmers markets, and community food gardens, in proximity to residential uses and transit facilities.

Program 4 Recognize the place making value of arts and cultural facilities and work to site them throughout the City as a means to enhance neighborhoods.

Program 5 Regularly review and update the City's zoning regulations, design standards, and review process as needed to allow design flexibility and creativity, address emerging issues, and foster compatibility of development with the character of surrounding areas.

Policy C Support development of compact, livable, and walkable mixed use centers.

Program 1 Support downtown's development with the mix of uses, amenities, and infrastructure that maintain it as a cultural, retail, and social destination.

Program 2 Assess the design and scale of commercial uses and other higher density uses when located in mixed use and predominantly residential areas.

Goal LU-2: Establish land use patterns that promote walking, biking, and using transit to access goods, services, education, employment, and recreation.**Policy A Enhance the character, quality, and function of existing residential neighborhoods while accommodating anticipated growth.**

Program 1 Encourage and promote rezoning requests that will allow for and permit the mixing of residential and commercial uses.

Program 2 Encourage compact form for urban development, particularly in newly developed areas and where infill is possible.

Program 3 Encourage large commercial or residential projects to include transit stop improvements when appropriate.

Program 4 Review parking requirements and costs and consider including regulatory provisions to reduce parking standards for those uses located within a quarter mile of public transit, or serving a population characterized by low rates of car ownership.

Program 5 Prepare corridor plans for Canyon Road, University Way, and Dolarway Road to ensure land use designations along them are consistent with overall development strategies.

Policy B Adopt and maintain policies, codes, and land use patterns that promote walking and biking in order to increase public health.

Program 1 Locate new community facilities near major transit routes and in areas convenient to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Goal LU-3: Encourage pedestrian-scale design in commercial and mixed-use areas.**Policy A Develop programs that address on and off-street parking in the downtown area.**

Program 1 Prepare a parking study to assess parking demand and supply in the downtown area.

Policy B **Facilitate development of vacant land in and around downtown into commercial, financial, government, high density residential, and cultural uses while respecting design, scale, and uses of surrounding neighborhoods.**

Program 1 Provide historic renovation training to contractors/developers interested in developing or renovating upper-story buildings.

Program 2 Encourage development of second floor housing and/or professional offices in the downtown area.

Program 3 Seek grant opportunities and partnerships to facilitate elevator placement in downtown buildings to foster ADA accessibility.

Goal LU-4: Support downtown’s development as an economic, tourist, and retail destination.

Policy A **Encourage development and activity which increases automobile and pedestrian traffic in the downtown area.**

Program 1 Support and encourage a mix of businesses in downtown.

Policy B **Maintain interconnectedness and high levels of access to downtown.**

Program 1 Identify critical rights of way and important pedestrian corridors that access downtown.

Program 2 Implement a program of trails, signs, and other strategies to connect downtown with the west and south interchanges, and the CWU campus.

Program C **Protect and take advantage of Ellensburg’s historic buildings, districts, objects, sites, and structures.**

Program 1 Integrate the train depot and other historically significant places into continued revitalization of downtown.

Program 2 Attract tourists to the City through regional promotion of the historic downtown.

Goal LU-5 Plan for commercial and industrial areas that serve the community, are attractive, and have long-term economic vitality.

Policy A **Provide a diversity of commercial and industrial lands to provide an array of businesses and development opportunities that serve the community.**

Program 1 Land designated or zoned industrial in the City and UGA should be reserved for industrial and appropriate accessory uses.

Program 2 Access high-traffic generating land uses from arterials whenever possible. If this is not possible, provide mitigation to address access impacts.

- Program 3* Encourage the master planning of multi-building and multi-parcel developments and large institutions to emphasize aesthetics and community compatibility. Include circulation, landscaping, open space, storm drainage, utilities, and building location and design in the master plan.
- Program 4* Review and regularly update the City’s commercial zoning regulations, design standards, and design review process as needed to allow design flexibility and creativity, address emerging issues, and foster compatibility of development with the character of surrounding areas.
- Program 5* Separate heavy industrial uses from incompatible land uses. Use transition zoning, buffers, and other techniques to protect industrial areas and nearby uses from conflicts.
- Program 6* Encourage live/work units in appropriate transitional zones, including light industrial zones.
- Goal LU-6 Collaborate with Kittitas County to provide coordinated services and facilities in a manner that will be best suited to geographic, economic, demographic, and other factors that influence development needs.**
- Policy A** Adopt an interlocal agreement with Kittitas County regarding land use designations, zoning districts, and public works standards for the UGA that are consistent between the City and County.

ACTION ITEMS

Density Bonus Program

Review, revise, and publicize the density bonus program to promote infill development in and around downtown.

Design Charrettes

Conduct community design charrettes to develop gateway designs for each entryway to the City.

Interlocal Agreement with Kittitas County

Adopt an interlocal agreement with Kittitas County regarding land use designations and public works standards for the UGA that are consistent between the City and County.

Parking Study and Review of Parking Requirements

Review parking requirements and assess parking costs and consider revising parking requirements in areas within a quarter mile of transit and residential uses that are characterized by low rates of car ownership. Prepare a parking study to assess parking demand and supply in the downtown.

Planned Unit Developments

Incorporate Planned Unit Developments into the City's land development code.

Review Zoning Districts

Review and revise zoning districts, and the allowable uses within each zoning district, as necessary to permit and encourage mixing of residential and commercial uses and ensure compatible land use patterns.

Review Land Use Regulations

Review land use regulations and revise as necessary to allow neighborhood commercial uses in residential areas with particular attention to establishing pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods and regulating offsite impacts to adjoining residential areas.

POLICY CONNECTIONS

The **Transportation** chapter contains a set of policies on active modes of transportation and ways to improve street and neighborhood connectivity.

The **Housing** chapter contains a set of goals and policies that provide a framework for increasing housing supply and diversity while protecting existing neighborhoods.

The **Capital Facilities and Utilities** chapter contains goals and policies to ensure that public services and infrastructure are available to meet growth and development demands.