

# AGENDA

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

### June 10, 2026

Hybrid Meeting In-person and via Zoom



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.
  - 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.

#### Rules for Public Comment:

Any person engaging in conduct that disrupts, disturbs, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting including but not limited to:

Unduly repetitive or irrelevant remarks;

Use of intimidating, threatening, or abusive language;

disobedience of an order to be seated or to discontinue further comments;

and/or engaging in violent behavior, will be deemed out of order and may be removed from the meeting and/or have his or her virtual microphone muted.

*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](mailto:ADAcordinator@ci.ellensburg.wa.us)*

**CITY OF ELLENSBURG**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION AGENDA**  
**Community Development Conference Room**  
501 North Anderson Street  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

[Environmental Commission Regular Zoom Meeting Link](#)

**Wednesday, June 10, 2026**

**5:15 PM - Regular Meeting**

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call**
  - 1.A Commission Members: Nancy Lillquist, Jordan Spradlin, Christina Wollman, Brenda DeVore, Kamran Hermann, Raven Harlin  
\_\_\_OPEN\_\_\_: EHS Env. Club President (Ex-officio Member)
- 2. Approval of Agenda (No Public Comment)**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
  - 3.A Approval of the Meeting Minutes from the 5-13-2026 Meeting
- 4. Public Comment**
- 5. New Business**
  - 5.A Urban Forestry Code Update
  - 5.B Comprehensive Plan - Climate & Environmental Elements Consultant Presentation
  - 5.C Water Quality Grant Application Review
- 6. Unfinished Business**
- 7. Staff Update/Discussion Items**
  - 7.A 13-Month Pumping Report
  - 7.B Updated Kick-Off Date - Summer Water Conservation (June 15, 2026)
- 8. Adjournment**



For more information on the Environmental Commission, contact Rebecca Springer, Public Works Water Resources Manager, at 509-925-8653



**CITY OF ELLENSBURG**

**Minutes of Environmental Commission, Regular Meeting**

**Date of Meeting**

**May 13, 2026**

**Time of Meeting**

**5:15 PM**

**Place of Meeting**

**Council Conference Room  
501 North Anderson Street  
Ellensburg, WA 98926**

[Environmental Commission Regular Zoom Meeting Link](#)

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Commissioner Wollman called the meeting to order at 5:24 p.m.

- 1.A Commission Members: Nancy Lillquist, Jordan Spradlin, Christina Wollman, Brenda DeVore, Kamran Hermann, Raven Harlin  
\_\_\_OPEN\_\_\_: EHS Env. Club President (Ex-officio Member)

Present: Nancy Lillquist, Jordan Spradlin, Christina Wollman, Raven Harlin.

Absent: Kamran Hermann, Brenda DeVore

Other Present: Rebecca Springer — Water Resource Manager; Heidi Behrends Cerniwey — City Manager; Arden Thomas — Kittitas County Water Resource Manager; Erin McGowan — Water/Storm Program Coordinator

**2. Approval of Agenda**

- 2.A Approval of the Agenda for May 13, 2026

*Commissioner Lillquist moved to approve the agenda as proposed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Spradlin. Motion passed 4-0.*

**3. Approval of Minutes**

- 3.A Approval of the Minutes from April 15, 2026

*Commissioner Spradlin moved to approve the Meeting Minutes from April 15, 2026. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harlin. Motion passed 4-0.*

**4. Public Comment**

Arden Thomas, Kittitas County Water Resource Manager, introduced herself and spoke about coordinating water conservation messaging in relation to Agenda Item 5.B, the 2026 Water Conservation Campaign Framework.

*No formal action was taken.*

## **5. New Business**

- 5.A 2026 Community Recycling Event - Recap and Debrief

*No formal action was taken.*

- 5.B 2026 Water Conservation Campaign Framework

*No formal action was taken.*

## **6. Unfinished Business**

- 6.A Climate & Environmental Planning (CEP) Task Force - Recap & Discussion

*No formal action was taken.*

- 6.B Bike Month Subcommittee Update

*No formal action was taken.*

## **7. Staff Update/Discussion Items**

- 7.A 13-Month Pumping Report

*No formal action was taken.*

- 7.B Council Actions on Recently Discussed Items:  
KCCD ILA - May 4th **APPROVED**  
Stormwater Management Plan - May 4th **APPROVED**  
General Sewer Plan - May 4th **APPROVED**  
Water/Sewer Rate Study - Going to Council May 18th

*No formal action was taken.*

- 7.C Move June Environmental Commission Meeting – Proposed Date: June 10, 2026

*No formal action was taken.*

## **8. Adjournment**

Commissioner Wollman adjourned the meeting at 6:27 p.m.

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ELLENSBURG, WASHINGTON, RELATING TO URBAN FORESTRY, REPEALING AND REPLACING CHAPTER 4.36 OF THE ELLENSBURG CITY CODE WITH A NEW CHAPTER ENTITLED “4.36 URBAN FORESTRY.”

WHEREAS, the Department of Natural Resources Urban & Community Forestry Program notified the City on February 28, 2024, of a successful grant application for the 2024 Community Forestry Assistance Grant to support development of an Urban Forest Management Plan and Ordinance Update; and

WHEREAS, on October 21, 2024, City Council authorized the City Manager to sign the 2024 Community Forestry Assistance Grant agreement; and

WHEREAS, on January 6, 2025, City Council authorized a Professional Services Agreement with Dudek for tree inventory, Urban Forest Management Plan development, and municipal tree ordinance services; and

WHEREAS, Dudek in collaboration with City staff conducted public outreach to obtain public input, including distribution of an Urban Forestry survey and facilitation of an Urban Forestry Working Group established by the City and composed of community members and local stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, public outreach results indicated a need for clearer standards and direction, including uncertainty regarding street tree maintenance responsibility and permit requirements, and identified strong community support for trees as critical infrastructure, with 72% of survey respondents indicating trees are equally as important as other infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, based on public input and staff evaluation, the City is updating its tree ordinance to clarify maintenance responsibilities, establish tree protection measures during construction, and is updating the associated Street Tree Section of the Public Works Development Standards to more clearly define permit processes; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Ellensburg, Washington do hereby ordain as follows:

**Section 1. Chapter 4.36 of the Ellensburg City Code entitled “Street Trees”, as last amended by ordinance 4955, is hereby repealed in its entirety.**

**Section 2. A new Ellensburg City Code Chapter 4.36 entitled “Urban Forestry” is hereby added to the Ellensburg City Code to read as follows:**

## CHAPTER 4.36 URBAN FORESTRY

### 4.36.010 Findings and Statement of Value and Purpose

### 4.36.020 Definitions

### 4.36.040 Prohibited Actions

### 4.36.050 Permits and Approvals

### 4.36.060 Tree Maintenance

### 4.36.070 Tree Protection

### 4.36.080 Tree Replacement and in-Lieu Fees

### 4.36.090 Recovery of Costs

### 4.36.110 Tree Permit Appeals

### 4.36.120 Enforcement and Penalties

### **4.36.010 Findings and Statement of Value and Purpose**

The City of Ellensburg finds that trees provide a broad range of environmental, social, and economic benefits. These include energy conservation through the provision of shade and wind buffering; air quality improvement from the production of oxygen, sequestration of carbon dioxide and filtration of airborne pollutants; mitigation of stormwater impacts through runoff reduction and soil stabilization; preservation and enhancement of neighborhood aesthetics and property values; and the provision of valuable wildlife habitat.

The purpose of this chapter is to create a clear system and framework for the management, maintenance, and ownership of trees; to promote the health of the tree canopy located on City property and within the public right-of-way; to reduce the adverse impacts of the built environment by providing relief from noise, heat, glare, dust, and debris; to encourage the planting of climate resilient tree species that promote species diversity; and to provide minimum standards for the protection, care, safety, health, conservation, and enhancement of trees.

### **4.36.020 Definitions**

ANSI A300 Standards: The American National Standards Institute's A300 standards for tree care operations and accepted practices for pruning, planting, soil management, and other aspects of arboriculture.

Certified Arborist: An International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist, or American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA) Registered Consulting Arborist (RCA).

Critical Root Zone (CRZ): The area around a tree that contains roots that are critical for health and stability. This area may extend beyond the dripline. Calculated as 1 foot per inch of trunk diameter measured at 4.5 feet above grade, unless otherwise approved by the City Arborist.

Diameter at Breast Height (DBH): Synonymous with Diameter at Standard Height (DSH). The diameter of a tree measured at 4.5 feet above grade. For trees that fork at or below 4.5 feet, the diameter should be measured at the narrowest part of the trunk below the fork.

Director: The City’s Public Works Director, or their designee.

Dripline: An imaginary line that extends vertically downward from the outer edges of a tree’s canopy.

Immediate Hazard: A tree or portion thereof that poses an imminent risk of failure likely to result in injury, property damage, or obstruction of the public right-of-way.

Private Tree: A tree located on private property.

Pruning: Selective removal of branches from a tree in accordance with ANSI A300 Standards, including thinning, crown reduction, crown cleaning, and crown raising. Tree pruning does not include topping or lion tailing. Pollarding is considered pruning only when performed in accordance with ANSI A300 Tree Care Standards.

Public Works Development Standards: The City of Ellensburg Public Works Development Standards, as adopted and amended.

Recommended Street Tree List: A City-approved list of tree species and cultivars identified as appropriate for planting within the public right-of-way.

Public Tree: Any tree growing in a public park, any tree growing on City property, or those trees in the Street Tree Inventory that are designated for City maintenance.

Street Tree: Any tree whose trunk is wholly or partially located within the public right-of-way.

Street Tree Inventory: A database or list of trees growing in the public right-of-way, that includes attributes such as species, size, tree condition, location, and maintenance responsibility, as maintained by the Public Works Department.

Tree: A woody perennial plant with a single or multiple trunks.

Tree Protection Zone (TPZ): A defined area intended to protect a tree’s trunk, canopy, roots, and surrounding soil, as defined in the approved Tree Protection Plan.

Tree Removal: The act of taking down or relocating a tree, including cutting, felling, uprooting, or transplanting, which may include stump grinding or chipping.

#### **4.36.040 Prohibited Actions**

A . Destruction or Damage of Trees: No person shall damage, mutilate, destroy, remove, or otherwise harm any public tree or street tree without acquiring a permit. This includes, but is not limited to the following actions:

- 1 . Removal of the bark around the circumference of the tree (girdling).
- 2 . Relocation or transportation of a tree.
- 3 . Attaching ropes, signs, or wires to a tree.
- 4 . Introducing harmful chemicals or poisons within the dripline or critical root zone (whichever is larger) of any tree.
- 5 . Introducing pests or pathogens that cause harm to trees.
- 6 . Topping (also known as heading cuts).
- 7 . Digging, excavating, or trenching within the area beneath the tree's canopy.
- 8 . Removing greater than 20% of a tree's live canopy within any 24-month period without a permit.
- 9 . Any other action that foreseeably results in the death of a tree or permanent damage to its health or structure.

If the Director, the City Arborist, or a consulting Arborist retained by the City determines that a tree has been damaged in any of the ways described above, such damage shall constitute a violation of this chapter.

B . Interference with City: It is unlawful for any person to prevent, delay or interfere with the City or any of its agents while planting, cultivating, mulching, pruning, spraying, or removing any tree, as authorized in this chapter.

C . Tree Planting, Pruning, and Removal: It is unlawful to plant, prune, or remove a street tree without a permit or to plant, prune, or remove a tree on City property without written approval. All planting, pruning, and removal shall comply with Section 14 of the Public Works Development Standards, this chapter, and any conditions established by the City Arborist.

#### **4.36.050 Permits and Approvals**

- A . Authorization Required for Public Trees: Any person seeking to plant, prune, or remove a public tree shall first obtain written approval from the Department Director responsible for the oversight of the City property or facility. Approval or denial of such a request shall be at the discretion of the City Arborist, the Department Director, and/or the City Manager.
- B . Street Tree Permits: A permit is required to:
- 1 . Plant a new street tree.
  - 2 . Prune more than 10% of a street tree's live canopy.
  - 3 . Remove a street tree.

Permit applications shall be submitted to the Public Works Department and shall comply with the processes and requirements set forth in Section 11 and Section 14 of the Public Works Development Standards.

#### **4.36.060 Tree Maintenance**

- A . Property Owners Responsibility: Maintenance of street trees and other vegetation in the public right-of-way shall be the responsibility of the adjacent property owner at their own expense, except for trees identified in the City's Street Tree Inventory as being designated for City maintenance. Maintenance shall be conducted in accordance with Sections 11 and 14 of the Public Works Development Standards. Maintenance responsibilities include:
- 1 . Keeping the public right-of-way clear from the debris generated from trees. Debris, including but not limited to branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit, must not be intentionally placed, swept, or blown into the street or left within the public right-of-way, including gutters, sidewalks, or planting strips.
  - 2 . Maintaining required clearance for trees within or overhanging the public right-of-way. A minimum of nine feet of vertical clearance must be maintained above sidewalks and twelve feet above streets. Tree limbs and foliage must not obstruct street lighting, traffic control devices, street signs, or visibility at intersections, and must maintain a minimum of ten feet of clearance from overhead utility lines.
  - 3 . Abating hazardous trees and branches within or overhanging the public right-of-way. Trees with dead, broken, or weakened branches that may fall into the public right-of-way shall be pruned to mitigate hazards. Trees that are dead, diseased, or otherwise pose a hazard, and where the hazard cannot be mitigated through pruning, shall be removed at the property owner's expense.

- B . Failure to Maintain Trees: When a tree or portion thereof is determined by the City to present an immediate hazard to public health, safety, property, infrastructure, or to obstruct the public right-of-way, the City may abate the hazard immediately without prior notice.
- C . City Liability: The City's right to trim, prune or remove private trees under this chapter shall not be interpreted as an obligation upon the City, and the City's failure to act shall not constitute a basis for any claim of liability against the City.

#### **4.36.070 Tree Protection**

All public trees and street trees shall be protected during adjacent construction, excavation, boring, or similar ground-disturbing activities.

- A . Tree Protection Plan: A Tree Protection Plan may be required when construction, excavation, boring, or similar work is proposed within the critical root zone of a public tree or street tree, as determined by the Public Works Department.
- B . Authority and Standards: The Tree Protection Plan shall be prepared by a Certified Arborist and shall comply with Tree Protection Plan standards and procedures in Section 14 of the Public Works Development Standards.
- C . Review: Tree Protection Plans shall be submitted to the Public Works Department for review and approval. The Public Works Department may consult with or require review by the City Arborist.
- D . Compliance Required: All approved Tree Protection Plans shall be implemented and maintained for the duration of the permitted activity.

#### **4.36.080 Tree Replacement and In-Lieu Fees**

Any street tree or public tree that is approved for removal, removed without a permit, or irreparably damaged must be replaced by the party responsible for the removal or damage, as determined by the City.

- A . Tree Replacement: When tree removal is approved or occurs in violation of this chapter, the City may require replacement of the tree in accordance with Section 14 of the Public Works Development Standards.
- B . In-Lieu Fees: When on-site replacement is not feasible or appropriate due to site constraints, existing tree canopy, or other factors, as determined by the Public Works Department, payment of an in-lieu fee may be required in-lieu of tree replacement. In-lieu fee requirements, calculations, and administration shall be governed by Section 11 of the Public Works Development Standards.

C . Use of Funds: In-lieu fees collected under this section shall be deposited into the Urban Forestry Reinvestment account and used for the planting, establishment, maintenance, and management of public trees and street trees.

#### **4.36.090 Recovery of Costs**

A . Authority to Recover Costs: Whenever the City performs pruning, tree removal, stump removal, clearance, hazard mitigation, or other corrective action to address a violation of this chapter or an emergency condition, the City may recover costs incurred from the responsible property owner. Recoverable costs include, but are not limited to, labor, equipment, materials, contractor costs, administrative costs, and overhead.

B . Emergency Tree Removal and Immediate Hazard Mitigation:

- 1 . When emergency tree removal or immediate hazard mitigation is required, the cost of the work shall be shared equally between the City and the adjacent property owner.
- 2 . If the emergency condition (including, but not limited to, clearance and/or hazardous tree pruning or removal) is associated with an active street tree permit or a code enforcement action related to the tree, the property owner shall be responsible for one hundred percent of the costs incurred.
- 3 . Following completion of the work, the City shall provide written notice to the property owner describing the hazard, the work performed, the total cost, and the portion of the cost charged to the property owner.

C . Damage to City-Owned Property: If a private tree causes damage to City-owned property, infrastructure, or facilities, the property owner shall be responsible for all costs associated with repair, restoration, or replacement, including tree restoration or replacement costs.

D . Stump Removal: When a street tree is removed, the party responsible shall remove the stump below ground surface within sixty days so that no portion of the stump projects above the surface of the ground. If the City performs stump removal due to noncompliance, the costs incurred shall be recovered pursuant to this section.

#### **4.36.110 Tree Permit Appeals**

A . Right to Appeal: Any person aggrieved by the approval, denial, revocation, or conditioning of a permit issued under this chapter may appeal the decision to the Hearing Examiner within ten business days of the date of decision. The date of decision shall be the date the City provides written notice of the decision to the applicant or affected party. Written notice may be provided by mail, email, hand delivery, or other documented method of communication. If the decision is mailed, the date of the decision shall be three days after mailing.

B. Filing of Appeal: The notice of appeal shall be delivered to the City Clerk within ten business days of the date of decision. The notice of appeal must be received by the City Clerk no later than the deadline and shall include:

1. The name and contact information of the appellant.
2. Identification of the permit, decision, or notice being appealed.
3. A statement of the grounds for the appeal.
4. The relief requested.

The City Clerk shall take reasonable steps to notify the appellant of the date, time, and place of the hearing.

C. Hearing Examiner Review: Appeals shall be heard by the Hearings Examiner pursuant to Chapter 1.70A ECC.

1. The decision or determination shall be upheld if supported by a preponderance of the evidence.
2. The Hearing Examiner may consider relevant and reliable information, including information that may not be admissible under the formal rules of evidence.
3. The Hearing Examiner shall review the appeal and may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision, or remand the matter for further consideration.

The Hearing's Examiner's decision is the final decision of the City and may be appealed to the Kittitas County superior court within 21 days of the decision being issued.

D. Effect of Appeal: Filing an appeal shall not stay emergency actions necessary to protect public health, safety, or property, unless expressly ordered by the Hearing Examiner.

#### **4.36.120 Enforcement and Penalties**

A. Enforcement: Violation(s) of this chapter may be enforced pursuant to the provisions of chapter 1.80 ECC and/or chapter 5.40 ECC.

B. Restitution and Mitigation: In addition to any criminal or civil penalty, a violator may be required to pay restitution as authorized by RCW 7.80.120(4), replace the tree, and/or pay an in-lieu fee as provided in Section 4.36.080, Tree Replacement and In-Lieu Fees, and Section 11 and Section 14 of the Public Works Development Standards.

C. Stop Work Orders: The City may issue a stop work order for any activity that violates this chapter or an approved Tree Protection Plan. All work subject to the order shall cease until the violation has been corrected and the City determines that work may resume.

D . Cumulative Remedies: The remedies and penalties provided in this chapter are cumulative and in addition to all other remedies provided or authorized by law, and may be imposed individually or in combination, at the discretion of the City.

**Section 3. Severability.** If any portion of this ordinance is declared invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portion(s) of this ordinance.

**Section 4. Corrections.** Upon the approval of the City Attorney, the City Clerk and the codifiers of this ordinance are authorized to make necessary corrections to this ordinance including, but not limited to, the correction of scrivener’s/clerical errors, references, ordinance numbering, section/subsection numbers and any references thereto.

**Section 5. Effective Date.** This ordinance shall take effect and be in force five (5) days after its passage, approval and publication.

The foregoing ordinance was passed and adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of June, 2026.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY CLERK

Approved as to form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY ATTORNEY

Publish:

I, Beth Leader, City Clerk of said City, do hereby certify that Ordinance No. \*\*\*\* is a true and correct copy of said Ordinance of like number as the same was passed by said Council, and that Ordinance No. \*\*\*\* was published as required by law.

\_\_\_\_\_  
BETH LEADER





# Ellensburg Tree Code Update

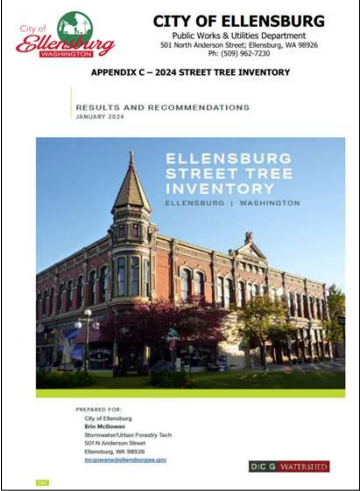
Environmental Commission Meeting

JUNE 10, 2026

1

## Tree Code Background

- Grant from the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program
- Administered through the Washington State DNR Urban and Community Forestry Program



**CITY OF ELLENSBURG**  
Public Works & Utilities Department  
501 North Anderson Street, Ellensburg, WA 98926  
PH: (509) 962-7230


**APPENDIX C - 2024 STREET TREE INVENTORY**

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
JANUARY 2024

**ELLENSBURG STREET TREE INVENTORY**  
ELLENSBURG | WASHINGTON

PREPARED FOR:  
City of Ellensburg  
Sara McManus  
Sustainable/Urban Forestry Tech  
501 N. Anderson Street  
Ellensburg, WA 98926  
sara@cityofellensburg.gov

**D.C.G. WATERSTEIN**



**CITY OF ELLENSBURG**  
Public Works & Utilities Department  
501 North Anderson Street, Ellensburg, WA 98926  
PH: (509) 962-7230

**APPENDIX D - 2024 URBAN TREE CANOPY ASSESSMENT**

URBAN TREE CANOPY  
**ASSESSMENT**

ELLENSBURG, WASHINGTON  
FEBRUARY | 2024

Funded by the project was provided by the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program administered through the State of Washington Department of Natural Resources Urban and Community Forestry Program. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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## Tree Code Background

### **Chapter 4.36 Street Trees of the Ellensburg City Code**

- Defines City and public responsibilities to manage street trees in the public right-of-way.
- Includes maintenance expectations.
- Permit requirements for public to plant, prune, remove street trees.
- Penalties for violation.

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## Tree Code Background

- Goal was to simplify language and definitions, organize sections for clarity, and modernize the Code to align with current urban forestry and International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) best practices.
- Process included several review/revision cycles, legal review, feedback from the UFMP Working Group and community.

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## Tree Code: Street Trees to Urban Forestry

- Expands scope to include all public trees, not just those in the right-of-way
- Recognizes trees as critical infrastructure
- Adds a clear purpose and value statement

5

5

## Tree Code Definitions Updated

- Public Tree: Any tree growing in a public park, any tree growing on City property, or those trees in the Street Tree Inventory that are **designated for City maintenance**.
- Private Tree: A tree growing on private property.
- Street Tree: Any tree whose trunk is wholly or partially located within the public right-of-way.
- Critical Root Zone (CRZ): The area around a tree that contains roots that are critical for health and stability. This area may extend beyond the dripline. Calculated as 1 foot per inch of trunk diameter measured at 4.5 feet above grade, unless otherwise approved by the City Arborist.

6

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## Tree Code Additional Updates

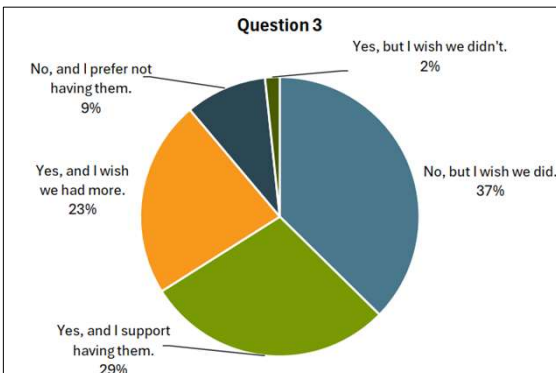
- Added specificity for street tree permits, tree protection, prohibited actions, penalties, tree maintenance, and cost recovery.
- Consolidated three sections (4.36.300, 4.36.380, 4.36.720)
- Combined all sections (6) related to tree maintenance into section 4.36.080 Tree Maintenance
- Created an in-lieu fee option when required tree replacements can't go back on-site

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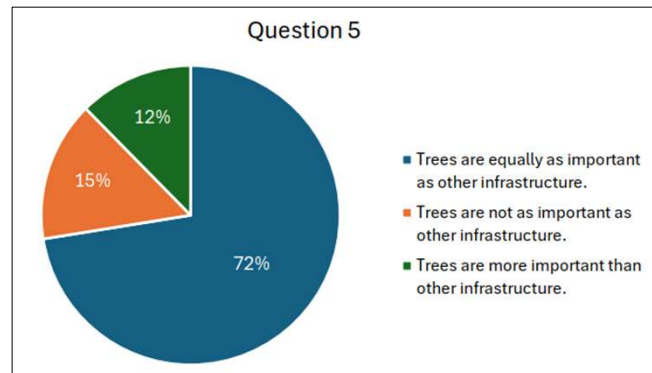
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## Tree Code Development - Community Engagement

Does your neighborhood have street trees?  
- 91% Support street trees or wish they had more



How important are trees compared to other infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, utilities, etc.)

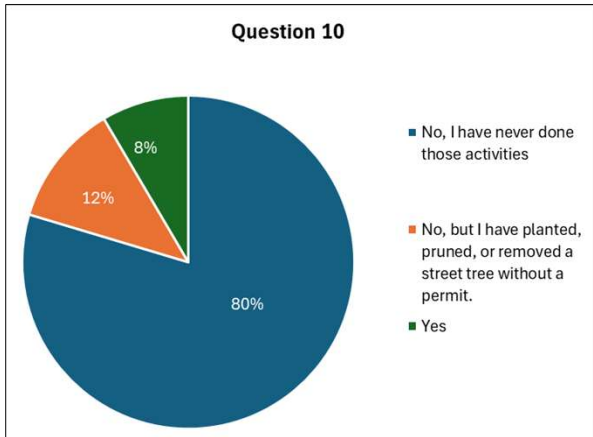


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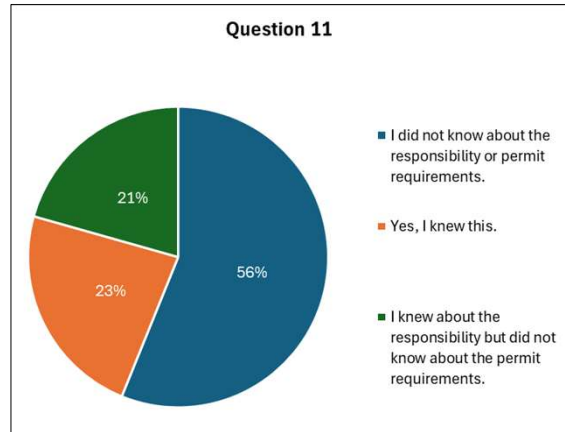
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# Tree Code Development - Community Engagement

Have you ever applied for a permit to plant, prune, or remove a street tree?



Did you know that trees in the right of way that have NOT been planted by the City are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner, but a permit is required before planting, pruning, or removing them?



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# Tree Code – Outreach Brochures

**811 Call Before You Dig!**

**Call 811 Before You Dig!**

**TRIE SELECTION**

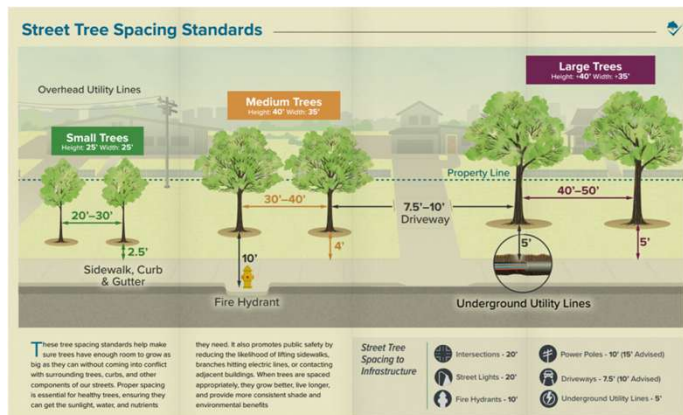
**Right Tree, Right Place**

**Assess Your Planting Site**

**Look Up**

**Look Down**

**Get A Permit**



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# *Questions?*

11

City of Ellensburg

# Ellensburg 2046: Comprehensive Plan Update DRAFT

June 2026

 **SCJ ALLIANCE**  
CONSULTING SERVICES

 **CASCADIA**  
CONSULTING GROUP



**ELLENSBURG 2046**  
Hometown Heart — Bright Future

 **LELAND**  
CONSULTING  
GROUP

**FEHR & PEERS**

# Chapter 7 Climate and Environment

## Overview

### WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- Information about how climate change is impacting the health and function of Ellensburg’s ecosystems, community, and infrastructure.
- Policies and programs that seek to protect and restore natural resources, enhance community resiliency to climate change impacts, and support environmental justice outcomes.
- Policies that provide a framework for greenhouse gas emissions reductions by reducing vehicle dependency, promoting green building practices, and reducing waste.

Ellensburg is a vibrant community in central Washington, serving as the center of commerce and government for Kittitas County. Surrounded by natural resources and recreational opportunities, Ellensburg offers a high quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors. Views of the Stuart Mountain range, the Yakima River, and access to nature are just some aspects of the surrounding environment that the Ellensburg community values.

However, the qualities that make Ellensburg a wonderful place to live, work, and play are not guaranteed in perpetuity. Environmental pressures, changing development patterns, and the impacts of climate change present challenges that must be addressed to preserve and enhance the community’s environmental, economic, and social well-being. Through thoughtful planning and coordinated action, Ellensburg can minimize adverse impacts associated with development, redevelopment, previous land-use practices, and climate change hazards such as drought or flooding.

The goals, policies, and programs in the Climate and Environment chapter of the Comprehensive Plan seek to increase Ellensburg’s resilience to climate change impacts and support a healthy and thriving community and surrounding environment. Such coordinated actions can improve sustainability efforts and increase community resilience to adverse climate impacts and hazards. As growth and development occurs, Ellensburg is preparing for a healthier, greener, and more viable future for generations to come.

## Background & Context

### Growth Management Act

The Growth Management Act (GMA) was amended in 2023 under House Bill 1181, requiring cities and counties to integrate climate goals and policies into their comprehensive plan updates. Under RCW

36.70A.070, Ellensburg is required to include a Resiliency Sub-element. The GMA sets the following requirements for jurisdictions developing their Climate Elements:

Resiliency Sub-element (*RCW36.70A.070(9)(e)*):

- Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster resiliency to climate impacts, as well as areas of vital habitat for safe passage and species migration.
- Identify, protect, and enhance community resiliency to climate change impacts, including social, economic, and built environment factors, that support adaptation to climate impacts consistent with environmental justice.
- Address natural hazards created or aggravated by climate change, including sea level rise, landslides, flooding, drought, heat, smoke, wildfire, and other effects of changes to temperature and precipitation patterns.

## Regional Efforts

Ellensburg’s Climate and Environmental chapter emphasizes the need for collaboration and alignment with countywide, regional, and statewide efforts as a critical need to bolster the city’s resilience to climate exacerbated impacts and sustainability efforts. The following sections provide information on existing regional efforts that strengthen resilience across the landscape.

### Kittitas County Climate and Resiliency Element

Kittitas County developed its first Climate and Resiliency Element in 2026. It includes goals and policies to build resilience to drought, heat, precipitation, flooding, and wildfire impacts. The element identifies statewide, regional, and countywide planning efforts related to maintaining resilient working landscapes throughout the county. As the State, County, and key partners such as the Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD) continue to implement these initiatives, Ellensburg will seek alignment and participation when appropriate. Initiatives include:

- The Washington State Climate Resilience Strategy
- Climate Resilience Plan for Washington Agriculture
- Washington Habitat Connectivity Action Plan (WAHCAP)
- Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan
- Yakima Nation Climate Action Plan (CAP)
- Kittitas County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)
- Yakama Tributary Access & Habitat Program (YTAHP)
- Wildland Fire/Fuels Reduction Programs
- Kittitas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan<sup>1</sup>

The County’s Climate and Resiliency Element also identified Ellensburg as an *overburdened community* in the county, noting that this determination came from the Washington Department of Ecology due to

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<sup>1</sup> The Kittitas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan was not identified in the County’s Climate Element but is a key document for building resilience to wildfire risk.



higher exposure to air pollution and other pollutants in areas of the city. The County's element further notes that Ellensburg will be a key collaborator to achieve environmental justice outcomes—a requirement for Climate Elements under the GMA.

## Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)

The development of the Climate and Environment Element included review of the 2025 Kittitas County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and the City's Annex chapter to understand identified or in-progress mitigation efforts supporting the resilience to climate exacerbated hazards. Key strategies included in the HMP that are consistent with this Climate and Environment chapter include:

- Development of the Ellensburg community fieldhouse project with features that would allow it to serve as an indoor air quality shelter.
- Development measures that minimize impact to natural resources and encourage hazard mitigation.
- Use of the best available science to understand the location and potential impact of natural hazards.
- Assessment and potential relocation of critical city assets out of high hazard zones.
- Enhancement of outreach and education around preparedness in the community.

## Connection to Existing City Work

Ellensburg has long embraced and maintained environmental and sustainability policies, such as promoting and accommodating a variety of transportation methods, clean industries and development, innovative stormwater and building practices that promote low impact development, land uses that encourage commercial development and provide jobs and services to neighborhoods, and protecting and retaining natural systems. The Climate and Environment Chapter builds from existing city plans and programs to shape Ellensburg's future environmental, resilience, and sustainability policy.

### City Plans

- **2012 Energy Efficiency & Conservation Strategy.** Guides City projects and initiatives to utilize renewable energy. The strategy earned Ellensburg the Governor's 2012 Smart Communities Award.
- **2020 City of Ellensburg Active Transportation Plan.** Guides bicycle and pedestrian project implementation in Ellensburg, prioritizing community safety.
- **2021 Comprehensive Plan.** Includes various goals, policies, and programs that promote resilience and sustainability in Ellensburg.
- **2023 Zero Emission Transition Plan.** Outlines Central Transit's fleet transition to zero emissions vehicles.
- **2024 Water System Plan.** Report that evaluates the city's existing water demand data, project future water demands, and identifies water system improvements in accordance with WAC 246-290-100.



- **2022-2025 Clean Energy Implementation Plan.** Outlines Ellensburg transition to 100% renewable energy production in line with RCW 19.405.060.
- **2023-2028 Strategic Vision.** Provides guiding pillars for Ellensburg that promote housing affordability, economic vitality, safe and inclusive community, energy and resource management, and sustainable infrastructure.
- **2024 Ellensburg Sustainable Energy Plan.** Provides strategic framework to guide City greenhouse gas emissions reductions through actions in alignment with state and federal climate regulations.
- **2026 Parks & Recreation System Comprehensive Plan Update.** Provides guidance on the management and development of Ellensburg’s recreation and open spaces.
- **2026 (In progress) Urban Forest Management Plan.** A long-term strategy to protect, maintain, and grow Ellensburg’s tree canopy, focused on equity, climate adaptation, and community goals.

## City Programs

- Maintaining a Tree City USA designation since 1983. Ellensburg was the first community in Washington to become a Tree City and now has over 5,600 street trees.
- Promoting robust community solar projects. The city has supported solar energy projects since 2000. In 2006, Ellensburg installed a 36-kilowatt (kW) community solar system—the first of its kind in the United States.
- Adopting outdoor lighting regulations that reduce light pollution as part of the 2013 Land Development Code.
- Designating Ellensburg as a Silver-Level Bicycle Friendly Community. The League of American Bicyclists (LAB) designation is a result of an extensive bike lane system, covering 47% of arterial streets. The city set a goal of becoming a Gold-Level Bicycle Friendly Community through bicycling infrastructure and programs like community events, improved wayfinding systems and proactive street-level hazard mitigation.
- Fully sourcing Ellensburg’s electricity from zero-emission energy. Through the Sustainable Energy Plan and the Clean Energy Implementation Plan, Ellensburg’s electric utility is moving toward 100% zero-emission electricity in line with state mandates.
- Offering density bonus incentives and promoting green building practices. The city provides density bonuses for energy efficient construction that achieves LEED, Built Green, or other similar environmental certifications.
- Zero Emission Transition Plan to meet state and federal requirements, as well as advance the City’s environmental goals. Central Transit plans to electrify its bus fleet by 2032.
- The City of Ellensburg’s Water Use Efficiency Program has set a goal to keep distribution system leakage at or below 10% over the 2020–2040 planning period. The City is also working to reduce overall water use by 5% per equivalent residential unit over the next 10 years, and then maintain that level for the following 10 years.



- The City also supports an Annual Public Works Recycling Event, an Energy Audit and Weatherization Program, the Renewable Energy Park and Net Metering Policy, and participates in ongoing collaboration with local and county water resource managers and irrigation districts.

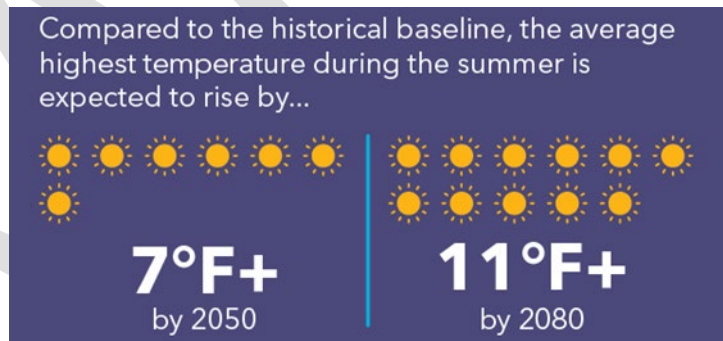
## Climate Impacts and Hazards

Ellensburg is shaped by its location in the Kittitas Valley, surrounded by open landscapes, river systems, and foothills rising to the Cascade Mountains in the west. The adjacent Yakima River supports local recreation, agriculture, and wildlife, creating a strong connection between the community and natural systems. Ellensburg’s environment is changing, and weather patterns are becoming more extreme. These changes are amplifying current and long-term risks to the places and resources most important to the community’s health, prosperity, and quality of life.

In Ellensburg, these changes affect daily life and local resources in tangible ways. The city is experiencing reduced water availability, declining fish habitat and stream health, worsening air quality that impacts community health, stress on forests and natural ecosystems, and increased wear on roads, utilities, and other infrastructure. *To learn more, view the detailed [Climate Impacts and Hazards Assessment](#) report for Ellensburg, or explore the City’s interactive [Ellensburg Climate Impacts Summary](#) Story Map for an overview of the findings.*

### Extreme Heat

Yearly average temperatures will continue to rise in the city, and summers will become longer and hotter, with more frequent—and hotter—heat waves. Ellensburg’s communities, animals, plants, and infrastructure will experience more heat-related impacts as temperatures increase due to climate change.



### Drought and Snowpack

In the last century, the region has experienced more frequent and intense drought conditions due to lower snowpack, faster snowmelt, and warmer summers. In the Cascade Mountains, snowpack levels have been shrinking as winter and spring rains become more common than snow. This is a concern because Ellensburg relies on melting snowpack from the Cascades for both the city’s summer water supply and its streams and wildlife habitat. Ellensburg has been under a



drought declaration for four out of the past five years, and climate projections anticipate that seven out of every 10 years will see snow droughts, on average.<sup>2</sup>

## Wildfire and Smoke Hazards

Wildfires are a natural occurrence within the landscape around Ellensburg.

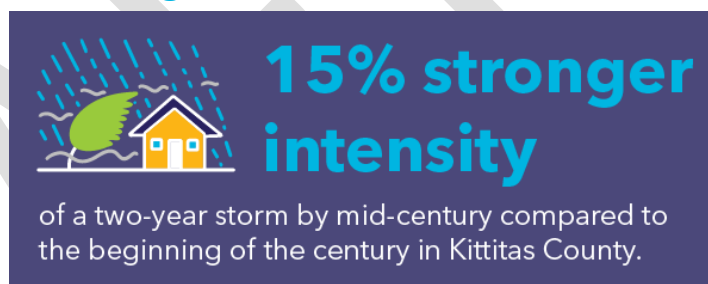
However, as the weather gets hotter and drier, fires are becoming more frequent. In the past 50 years, 74 fires burned more than 352,692 acres across Kittitas County<sup>3</sup>. Wildfires are expected

to begin earlier in the year and continue later into the year as a result of declining snowpack, reduced rainfall, and hotter summers. Poor air quality days caused by smoke from regional fires have already become more frequent.



## Extreme Precipitation and Flooding

Extreme precipitation events, including rain on snow events, are becoming more common and more intense in Kittitas County. The city has also experienced flooding events in recent decades, such as the 2011 floods when rapid snowmelt from warm temperatures and heavy rain led to submerged roads and homes, a declaration of a state of emergency, and overflow of the Yakima River. Goals, policies, and programs included in this chapter will support efforts to reduce flood risk to communities and properties.



Source: Raymond, C., & Rogers, M. (2022). *Climate Mapping for a Resilient Washington*. Retrieved from <https://ciq.uw.edu/resources/analysis-tools/climate-mapping-for-a-resilient-washington/>

Source: Saldanha, A. (2021, September 2021). *Dangerous Air: We Mapped The Rise In Wildfire Smoke Across America. Here's How We Did It*. Retrieved from Capital Public Radio: <https://www.capradio.org/articles/2021/09/28/dangerous-air-we-mapped-the-rise-in-wildfire-smoke-across-america-heres-how-we-did-it/>

*In addition to priority climate hazards, Ellensburg also experiences regional weather hazards, like wind and severe storms, that can add to the intensity of climate impacts. Ellensburg's unique geography, topography, and proximity to the Cascade Mountains and Yakima River Canyon lead to strong winds all year. Wind and precipitation can also combine to form severe weather storms during the winter.*

<sup>2</sup> Department of Ecology. (2026). Drought Response. (Retrieved from: <https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/water-supply/water-availability/statewide-conditions/drought-response>)

<sup>3</sup> Washington State Department of Natural Resources. (2018). Washington Large Fires 1973 – 2023. Retrieved from <https://geo.wa.gov/datasets/wadnr::washington-large-fires-1973-2023/about>



# City Resources and Assets

Ecosystems within and surrounding the city, social and economic systems, and city infrastructure are all interconnected, meaning impacts to one system may cause cascading or compounding effects across others. Impacts, such as climate change, can exacerbate risks across various sectors. For example, prolonged periods of drought dry out soil and reduce its ability to absorb and retain water. If extreme precipitation or rapid snowmelt occurs during or following drought conditions, the risk of surface runoff and localized flooding may increase while groundwater recharge is reduced, impacting drinking water supplies. Drought can also stress vegetation and agricultural lands, increase wildfire risk, and place additional demands on limited water supplies.

The following sections provide information on key systems within the city, including ecosystems, water resources, social and economic systems, and city infrastructure, and identify potential vulnerabilities and impacts affecting each.

## Ecosystems and Water Resources

Ellensburg contains a variety of ecosystems, including unique stream corridors, wetlands, riparian areas, shrub-steppe habitat and other features that provide valuable ecological functions and contribute to community resilience. Although streams that flow through the city have been confined, channelized, and culverted over time, they continue to support fish and other naturally-occurring aquatic life. Maintaining water quality is important in sustaining the community's aquatic resources, and a great effort by the City has taken place to enforce stormwater regulations, build and maintain stormwater facilities, and provide public education programs.

Climate change and other environmental pressures pose increasing risks to local ecosystems and water resources. Extreme heat and rising annual temperatures, combined with drought conditions, increase thermal stress on cold-water aquatic life, negatively impacting local waterways and the species therein, such as salmon or steelhead populations. Riparian areas and urban greenspaces including shorelines along the Yakima River, Carey Lake, Mattoon Lake, Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park, and Reecer Creek, may be particularly at risk. As development pressures and natural hazards continue to put strain on Ellensburg's natural resources, it is increasingly important to seek opportunities to protect and enhance natural areas while fostering resiliency to potential impacts.

## Water Conservation

Water availability and quality are high priority concerns for Ellensburg and the greater Kittitas County area. Increasing drought frequency, altered snowpack and streamflows, and increased water demand are leading to increased impacts to agricultural productivity, aquatic species and habitats, hydropower generation, outdoor recreation and tourism, and more. At the same time, water quality degradation is at an increased risk due to more intense precipitation events and flooding that can increase erosion, transport pollutants into waterways, and elevate the risk of water resource contamination.

To address these challenges, Ellensburg continues to implement best management practices such as those found in the state's Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington. The Washington State Department of Ecology continues to revise the list of best management practices to improve their



effectiveness in protecting water quality in order to meet state standards with recent emphasis on low impact development.

Ellensburg and surrounding partners are committed to promoting water security amid changing conditions and are actively working towards this goal. The Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan serves as a regional guide for water security and ecosystem health in the region, with efforts to make operational changes, structural improvements, and conservation measures to account for climate variability. The City also participates in the Ground Water Storage Subcommittee and the Municipal Water Supply Subgroup, supporting aquifer storage and recovery projects and collaboration efforts with local, regional, and state groups on water conservation efforts. Ellensburg also will be developing a Water Resources Strategic Plan, which will further water resource management initiatives and support implementation of water conservation policy.

## Low Impact Development

Low impact development is a stormwater management strategy that emphasizes the use of existing natural features integrated with small-scale stormwater controls to more closely mimic natural hydrologic patterns with a focus on infiltration. Low impact development techniques include preserving native vegetation, designing development to fit site characteristics, minimizing impervious surfaces, and infiltrating stormwater on site.

## Critical Areas

Ellensburg's critical areas provide a variety of functions and values that are important to Ellensburg's quality of life through the use of critical areas regulations which establish a regulatory framework for critical areas and their buffers. Ellensburg's critical areas regulations extend protection to the following critical areas: wetlands, frequently flooded areas, fish and habitat conservation areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, and geologic hazard areas.

Ellensburg's critical areas provide valuable habitat, protect and enhance water quality, facilitate stormwater conveyance, enhance local aesthetics, and offer recreation, cultural resources, and education opportunities. Ellensburg recognizes the importance of preserving and protecting the functions and values of various environmental features, and recognizes that once destroyed such functions are difficult to replicate or replace. Critical areas that are within shoreline jurisdiction are regulated by the Shoreline Master Program; those that are not in shoreline jurisdiction are regulated by the City's critical areas regulations. These regulations are periodically reviewed and updated in accordance with state mandates.

- **Wetlands:** Wetland systems are integral to Ellensburg's urban landscape and the local hydrologic cycle. They reduce floods, contribute to stream flows, and improve water quality. Each wetland provides various beneficial functions, but not all wetlands perform all functions, nor do they perform all functions equally well. Large wetlands and wetlands hydrologically associated with lakes and streams, have a relatively more important function in the watershed than small, isolated wetlands. Urbanization in the watershed diminishes the function of individual wetlands by increasing stormwater volume, reducing runoff quality, isolating wetlands from other habitats, and decreasing vegetation. Undeveloped land adjacent to a



wetland provides a buffer to help minimize the impacts of urbanization. The long-term success and function of the wetland is dependent on land development strategies that protect and restore wetland buffers. Science indicates that an undeveloped vegetated buffer is equally important as the wetland itself as it contributes to the function of the wetland by providing wildlife habitat, retaining stormwater, filtering sediment and pollution, and moderating water temperature. Most of the wetlands in Ellensburg are privately owned and regulated by the city's critical areas regulations or shoreline master program.

- **Frequently flooded areas:** *Frequently Flooded Areas* are discussed in the *Built Environment* section of this chapter.

- **Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas:**

The management of land for maintaining species in suitable habitats within their natural geographic distribution so that isolated subpopulations are not created. Habitat resources identified in Ellensburg include the Yakima River floodplain, streams and riparian habitats, lakes and ponds, agricultural areas, shrub-steppe habitat, and critical habitat for steelhead and bull trout. A habitat inventory conducted in 2005 indicated the greatest impacts on areas of wildlife habitat in and around the City have been from agricultural practices and urban development. The majority of the remaining native habitat is generally limited to streams, wetlands, and steep slopes. Seasonal flooding of wetlands in agricultural areas provide temporal habitat for some species such as water fowl. Remnant patches of shrub-steppe habitat are present on steep slopes.

The only river frontage within the City and the largest contiguous tract of native habitat in Ellensburg is found along the Yakima River in Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park. This property is planned to remain undeveloped, park property. The Yakima River floodplain provides significant habitat linkage with other riparian habitats beyond Ellensburg and its UGA.

- **Critical aquifer recharge areas:** Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water. Critical aquifer recharge areas have prevailing geographic conditions associated with infiltration rates that create a high potential for contamination of ground water resources

➤ Floodplains and riparian corridors play a critical role in reducing flood risk, supporting groundwater recharge, and maintaining habitat along the Yakima River and its tributaries. When connected and functioning properly, these systems can absorb and slow floodwaters, improving overall watershed resilience. Development and channel modification can limit these functions. Protecting and restoring floodplain connectivity and riparian vegetation can reduce flood hazards while enhancing ecological health and water quality.

➤ Shrub-steppe ecosystems are a defining feature of the Ellensburg landscape and are well adapted to arid conditions, making them critical for long-term climate resilience. These habitats support native biodiversity, stabilize soils, and reduce erosion. However, they are increasingly threatened by development, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and altered wildfire regimes. Protecting and restoring shrub-steppe areas can help maintain ecological function, reduce wildfire risk, and preserve ecosystem services under a changing climate.



or contribute significantly to the replenishment of ground water. The overall groundwater flow patterns of the aquifer system underlying Ellensburg are generally well established. This framework consists of groundwater recharge in the uplands around the edge of the Kittitas Valley, deep groundwater flows, and paths that discharge to the Yakima River. While this system is regionally important, there are no naturally occurring aquifer recharge areas identified in Ellensburg that provide water to municipal supply wells.

- **Geologically hazardous areas:** The Growth Management Act defines geologically hazardous areas as land that is not suited for commercial, residential, or industrial development because the lands are susceptible to erosion, sliding, earthquakes, or other geologic events. Geologic hazard areas are regulated mostly to protect public safety and properties. The City of Ellensburg is located on gently sloping topography with very few slopes that qualify as steep slope hazards or landslide hazards under the GMA guidelines. Exceptions to this include slopes immediately west of Brick Road, the slope immediately south of the Kittitas County Fairgrounds extending around the base of the city water tower, and the slope immediately south of the intersection of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Cora Street.

In addition to critical areas, Ellensburg has long maintained its Tree City USA designation.

- **Urban Tree Canopy:** Urban tree canopy helps reduce extreme heat, attenuate extreme precipitation impacts, and improve air quality. Tree canopy management efforts should be strategically targeted to both preserve existing high-canopy areas and expand coverage where it is most needed. Priority for expansion should focus on overburdened areas, including neighborhoods with lower incomes and those located near major roadways, where residents may face greater exposure to heat and air pollution.

## Shorelines of the state

In Ellensburg, the City of Ellensburg Shoreline Master Program (SMP) regulates shoreline jurisdiction. The Ellensburg Shoreline Master Program contains goals, policies, and regulations that operate as a comprehensive plan as well as regulatory document for shorelines in Ellensburg. Ellensburg contains only two water bodies that are considered shorelines of the state: Yakima River and Lake Mattoon. Critical areas that are in the shoreline jurisdiction of these areas are also regulated by Ellensburg's SMP.

The purpose and intent of the Ellensburg SMP is to:

- Promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community by providing long range, comprehensive policies and effective, reasonable regulations for development and use of shorelines within Ellensburg;
- Manage shorelines in a positive, effective, and equitable manner;
- Assume and carry out the City's responsibilities established by the Shoreline Management Act; and

### Shoreline Jurisdiction

In Ellensburg, shoreline jurisdiction includes all shorelines of the state, upland areas within 200 feet of the ordinary high water mark of those waters; associated wetlands and river deltas; and floodways and contiguous floodplain areas landward 200 feet from such floodways.



- Implement the Shoreline Management Act for shorelines of the state in the City of Ellensburg.

*The goals and objectives in the most current adopted Ellensburg Shoreline Master Program are hereby adopted by reference in this Comprehensive Plan.*

## Social and Economic Systems

Social and economic systems include community members as well as the institutions and services that support them, such as schools, healthcare facilities, local businesses, and city operations and programs. Ellensburg residents face growing risks to their overall wellbeing from increasing environmental and climate impacts such as extreme heat, drought, flooding, water quality degradation, poor air quality, wildfire, and wildfire smoke. These risks may be compounded as the city’s network of critical facilities, community services, and local employers face service disruptions and increased demand for services during climate events. For example, extreme heat and wildfire smoke disrupt student life, outdoor work, and recreation, while wildfire, and heat emergencies increase strain on the county’s sole hospital, Kittitas Valley Healthcare.

### Overburdened Communities

Climate impacts and hazards do not affect residents equally, with some populations experiencing greater health, safety, and financial impacts than others. Climate and environmental impacts may disproportionately effect those that are already vulnerable due to existing health conditions, age, income, and housing status. Vulnerable populations identified in Ellensburg are provided in Table 1, below.

*Table 1. Key demographics of vulnerable populations in the City of Ellensburg.*

Vulnerable Populations	Population Estimates
Low-Income Families & Rent-Burdened Households	21% poverty rate; among the highest rent-burdened rates in Washington, more than double the state rate: 10.3%
Students (Central Washington University)	Large share of population; majority of those in poverty are ages 18–24.
Older Adults (65+)	14.6% of population vs. 16.2% statewide
People with Disabilities	14.4% of population vs. 13.4% statewide
Unhoused Residents	Exact estimate for the city not available; Kittitas County, 2025 Point-in-Time (PIT) identified 26 individuals experience homelessness.

*Source: American Community Survey, 2023; City of Ellensburg, 2023; City of Ellensburg, 2024.*

Policies and programs can protect community wellbeing by reducing disproportionate impacts and supporting equitable access to resources, services, and safe environments.

Additionally, the Department of Ecology has identified Ellensburg as an overburdened community highly impacted by air pollution, with fine particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) being the most frequently elevated criteria air pollutant. Wildfires are the dominant source of PM2.5 emissions statewide, with impacts to



ambient PM2.5 concentrations varying year-to-year based on wildfire season outcomes. Between 2022-2024, Ellensburg experienced an annual average of 3 days with unhealthy air. In comparison, between 2020-2022, the annual average was 5.7 days. Wildfire smoke was the predominant cause of these exceedances, and as wildfire probability increases due to changes in climate, Ellensburg can expect increased wildfire smoke impacts and PM2.5 concentrations.

## Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)

PM2.5 are tiny particles in the air that reduce visibility and are a concern for people's health when levels in the air are high. Outdoor PM2.5 levels are most likely to be elevated on days with little or no wind or air mixing. Outside fine particles come from vehicle emissions, burning of fuels, and natural sources such as forest or grass fires.

## Built Environment

The built environment encompasses physical systems that support daily life in Ellensburg, including buildings, energy systems, transportation networks, parks, and essential public utilities such as water and wastewater facilities. Much of this infrastructure was designed and constructed without accounting for the long-term impacts of climate change. As a result, many assets are increasingly vulnerable to hazards such as more frequent and severe flooding and heightened wildfire risk.

## Frequently Flooded Areas

An increased intensity and frequency of flooding events may sustain damage to homes and infrastructure in the city. Flooding is caused by excess surface water runoff and is exacerbated when eroded soil from cleared land or unstable slopes reduces the waterway's natural capacity to carry water. Construction and development activity within the floodplain reduces floodplain storage capacity. Flooding can cause significant public safety problems, extensive property damage, and potential habitat destruction.

The Growth Management Act states that frequently flooded areas should include at a minimum 100-year floodplain designation from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and National Flood Insurance Program. The primary floodplain areas with defined base flood elevations are along Wilson Creek and the Yakima River, while other creeks, canals, and irrigation ditch areas are characterized by shallow flooding or have undefined flood depths. Figure 1 shows the City of Ellensburg's flood zones and where the 100-year and 500-year floodplain are located in the city.

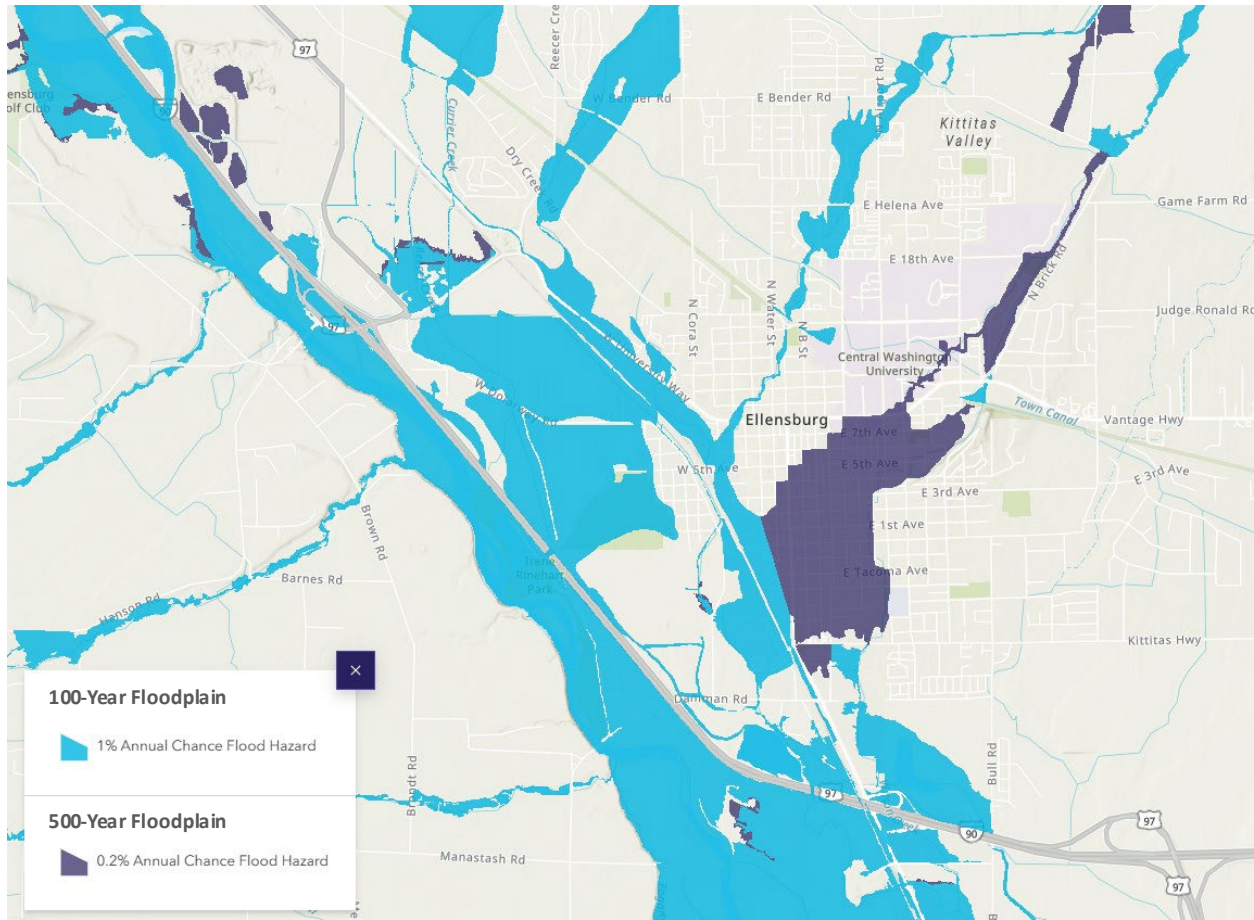
## 100- and 500-Year Floodplain

A 100- and 500-year floodplain is a flood event that has a 1% or 0.2% probability of occurring in any given year, respectively.

The flat topography of the city's floodplains can make accurate prediction of flood hazards a challenge, and the floodplain can also be sensitive to relatively small changes resulting from development activities.



Figure 1. City of Ellensburg special flood hazard areas.



## Wildfire Risk

The wildland urban interface (WUI) is the area where homes are built near or on lands prone to wildland fire. In Ellensburg, WUI interface and intermix zones are a significant part of the developed land (Figure 2), meaning that structures and other development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.<sup>4</sup> In these areas, there is a greater exposure to wildfire risk, and mitigation actions can prevent damage or loss on property.

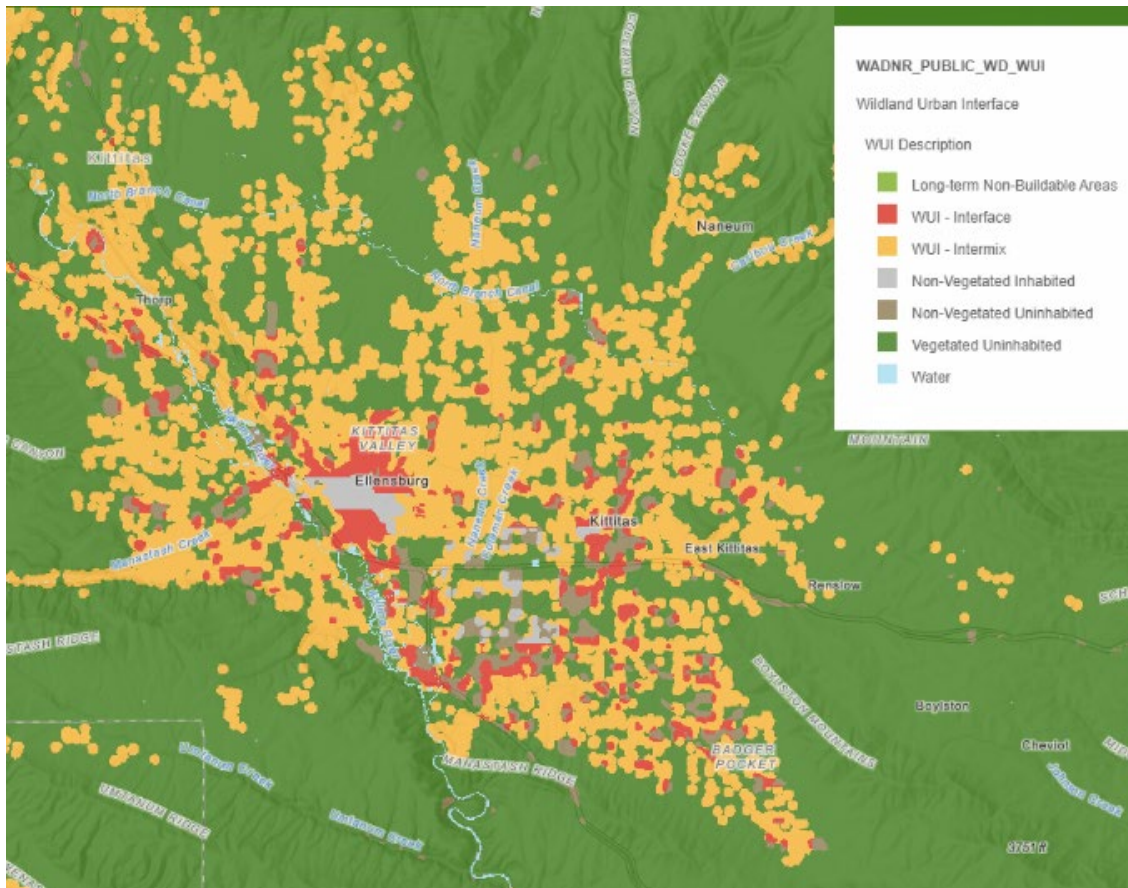
### Wildland-urban interface

The line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. Describes an area within or adjacent to private and public property where mitigation actions can prevent damage or loss from wildland fire.

<sup>4</sup> Washington Department of Natural Resources. (2019). Washington State Wildland Fire Protection 10-Year Strategic Plan. (Accessed: [https://dnr.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-03/rp\\_wildfire\\_strategic\\_plan.pdf](https://dnr.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-03/rp_wildfire_strategic_plan.pdf)).



Figure 2. City of Ellensburg Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), where wildlands with significant burnable vegetation intersect with developed areas.



## Sustainability and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Ellensburg is not required to develop a Greenhouse Gas Emissions reductions subelement under the GMA. However, reducing greenhouse gas emissions is critical in safeguarding the community against future climate impacts and the Climate and Environment Chapter builds from existing sustainability and GHG emissions reduction work, including from the Sustainability and Energy Plan (2024).

The SEP establishes a framework for the city to continue expanding renewable energy efforts and decarbonizing both municipal assets and operations as well as community-wide infrastructure and activities. In developing the SEP, Ellensburg conducted a GHG emissions inventory for both municipal emissions, covering emissions generated from municipal assets, operations, and activities, and a community-wide inventory, covering emissions from residential, commercial, and industrial buildings and activities. The largest GHG emissions contributors include mobile combustion (fuel use), stationary combustion (natural gas use), and procured electricity.



Ellensburg is committed to further strengthening its commitments to climate and the environment and reducing its GHG emissions that exacerbate the impacts of climate change. Reducing GHG emissions in Ellensburg not only protects environmental systems and resources but can improve residential quality of life and safeguard community members against adverse impacts such as air pollution.

The Climate and Environment Chapter expands existing sustainability goals by promoting policies and programs that place greater emphasis on multimodal transportation options, reducing community reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, green building practices that promote renewable energy, and increasing community resiliency to poor air quality.

## Goals, Policies, and Programs

The current comprehensive planning process offers the opportunity to take a coordinated, long-term approach to planning that incorporates the best available science to address current and future climate and environmental hazards to city resources and assets, while ensuring policies result in equitable benefits throughout the community and support environmental justice. These climate and environment goals, policies, and programs help the city to protect and restore natural resources, enhance community resiliency to climate change impacts, promote clean air and community wellbeing, and support environmental justice outcomes.

### **Goal CE-1. Participate in regional resilience planning efforts with jurisdictions, state agencies, Tribal nations, businesses, and local organizations to encourage coordination, data sharing, and strategic investments.**

#### **Policy CE-1-A. Participate in regional planning efforts related to drought, flooding, wildfire, and extreme heat to ensure consistency in preparedness and response.**

- Program CE-1-A.1. Pursue joint funding opportunities for resilience projects, including infrastructure, habitat restoration, and community programs.
- Program CE-1-A.2. Strengthen and expand City staffing, resources, and funding to effectively participate in regional and local implementation of climate action and resilience measures.
- Program CE-1-A.3. Support data sharing and the use of best available science across jurisdictions to inform climate-related planning, including hazard mapping and infrastructure design.
- Program CE-1-A.4. Support regional education and outreach efforts that improve public understanding of climate risks, including water availability, wildfire smoke, and extreme heat.
- Program CE-1-A.5. Participate in regional efforts, such as Resource Conservation and Development community resilience programs.

#### **Policy CE-1-B. Collaborate with the County, municipalities, local and regional irrigation districts, water providers, and agricultural stakeholders to align programs for**



**better consistency across cities and counties and support water conservation and drought resilience.**

Program CE-1-B.1. Work with irrigation districts and water providers to explore programs for water conservation and reuse.

Program CE-1-B.2. Coordinate with the Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD) to support the continued implementation of initiatives and programs, such as the Drought Response Program, in the city UGA.

**Goal CE-2. Protect and restore streams, riparian zones, wetlands, urban forests, and floodplains to prevent cumulative adverse environmental impacts to water quality and fish and wildlife habitat.**

**Policy CE-2-A. Restore, expand, and manage critical areas and green space areas to maximize and protect the environmental climate resilience benefits they provide.**

Program CE-2-A.1. Ensure no net loss of ecosystem composition, structure, and functions, especially in Priority Habitats and Critical Areas, and strive for net ecological gain to enhance climate resilience. Mitigation should avoid gross loss, recognizing offsets can be limited and ecosystems are not fully replaceable.

Program CE-2-A.2. Protect and restore riparian vegetation to reduce erosion, provide shade, and support other functions that improve the climate resilience of streams and provide vital wildlife habitat.

Program CE-2-A.3. Integrate climate change, including extreme precipitation, increased winter streamflow, and other impacts, in floodplain management planning. Where feasible, restore floodplains and connectivity to improve the resilience of streams and rivers, reduce flood risk, and promote safe wildlife passage and species migration.

Program CE-2-A.4. Increase aquatic habitat resilience to low summer flows by increasing water residence time, storing water on the landscape, managing aquifer recharge programs, conserving water, protecting groundwater, keeping waters cool, and protecting water quality.

**Policy CE-2-B. Implement the Urban Forest Master Plan and implementing ordinances to maintain and expand tree canopy cover, improve tree and watershed health and build climate resilience.**

Program CE-2-B.1. Maintain Tree City USA status and minimize the loss of tree canopy and natural areas due to transportation and infrastructure projects and mitigate for losses where impacts are unavoidable.

Program CE-2-B.2. Implement a phased maintenance and replacement program to maintain climate appropriate tree canopy.



- Program CE-2-B.3. Ensure the urban forestry management plan includes climate-smart forestry strategies to increase the resilience of forests and carbon storage of forests.
- Program CE-2-B.4. Support public education for tree maintenance and tree health on private property.

**Goal CE-3. Protect members of the public and public resources and facilities from injury, loss of life, or property damage due to flooding, wildfires, drought, extreme heat, and other climate-driven hazards.**

**Policy CE-3-A. Regularly update and strengthen development regulations, building codes, and design standards using best available science to enhance resilience to climate-driven hazards.**

- Program CE-3-A.1. Incentivize low impact development techniques in new development and redevelopment projects to reduce runoff from streets, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces and improve water quality.
- Program CE-3-A.2. Update floodplain development standards in the city to reduce risk, such as requiring higher building standards, establishing elevation requirements, or limiting development in flood-prone areas.
- Program CE-3-A.3. Examine and incorporate future conditions flood maps and land use tables into long-range planning and development regulations.
- Program CE-3-A.4. Evaluate heat resilience urban design and greening strategies for inclusion in development standards. This could include cool roofs, incorporation of tree canopy and shading structures, or using heat-reducing building materials.
- Program CE-3-A.5. Incorporate green design in surface parking lots such as tree canopy coverage, permeable pavement, xeriscaping, and vegetated strips.
- Program CE-3-A.6. Adopt fire-resilience standards for new and redeveloped sites and support reducing residential development pressure in the wildland-urban interface to decrease wildfire risk and damage.
- Program CE-3-A.7. Update landscaping codes to promote development with drought resilient vegetation and reduce high water-use landscaping.
- Program CE-3-A.8. Encourage gray water systems in new development.
- Program CE-3-A.9. Incorporate hydrologic climate impacts into the design of water-crossing structures, such as climate-smart culverts and bridges, for fish passage and habitat quality.
- Program CE-3-A.10. Direct activities not dependent on critical areas resources to less ecologically sensitive sites and mitigate unavoidable impacts to critical areas by regulating alterations in and adjacent to critical areas.



Program CE-3-A.11. Maintain and update a critical areas ordinance that incorporates climate change considerations.

**Policy CE-3-B. Develop a comprehensive drought resilience strategy that factors in projected climate impacts and sets action levels for different drought stages.**

Program CE-3-B.1. Adopt a water usage ordinance to have a system ready to implement during different drought stages, as needed.

Program CE-3-B.2. Manage water resources sustainably in the face of climate change through plant selection, landscape management, use of low-flow water fixtures, and wastewater or reclaimed water reuse systems.

Program CE-3-B.3. Evaluate restrictions on outdoor water usage in existing and new development.

**Goal CE-4. Comply with the Eastern Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit managed by the Washington State Department of Ecology and EPA.**

**Policy CE-4-A. Operate, maintain, and enhance the stormwater system to protect water quality, help preserve and enhance critical areas, and help reduce flooding by maintaining the storm drainage system.**

Program CE-4-A.1. Conduct stormwater plan review and construction inspection for redevelopment and new development projects.

Program CE-4-A.2. Continue to invest and seek funding opportunities for capital improvement projects.

Program CE-4-A.3. Monitor and assess the storm drainage system and operation and maintenance programs to ensure compliance with the municipal stormwater permit.

**Goal CE-5. Create a more resilient community through enhanced emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts to mitigate climate risks and impacts.**

**Policy CE-5-A. Strengthen community resilience to climate-related hazards, including wildfire, wildfire smoke, flooding, extreme heat, and severe weather, through coordinated planning, emergency preparedness, education, and partnerships with local residents, emergency management officials, regional agencies, and other stakeholders.**

Program CE-5-A.1. Participate in updates of the Kittitas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) through involvement in the CWPP Subcommittee.

Program CE-5-A.2. Participate in the Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities Coalition, whose mission is to increase community resiliency to wildfire by providing education, planning and technical assistance for implementing activities with the people that live, work and recreate in Kittitas County.



- Program CE-5-A.3. Incentivize infrastructure updates (e.g., HVAC updates and MERV 13 filters for air intake) for facilities that serve high-risk populations. Support and promote programs that install HVAC and weatherization for the most vulnerable residents.
- Program CE-5-A.4. Ensure the Ellensburg Fieldhouse recreation center can serve as smoke refuge, providing a space for the community to recreate on poor air quality days.
- Program CE-5-A.5. Prioritize education, outreach, resources, and assistance for vulnerable populations to reduce disproportionate impacts from wildfire smoke, flooding, extreme heat, and other environmental hazards before, during, and after hazard events.
- Program CE-5-A.6. Develop and implement notification alerts within the community to the reduce risk exposure to climate and natural hazards. wildfire smoke and particulate matter.
- Program CE-5-A.7. Create evacuation plans and outreach materials to help residents plan and practice actions that make evacuation quicker and safer.

**Policy CE-5-B. Promote energy resilience, energy conservation, and renewable energy production.**

- Program CE-5-B.1. Work with energy utilities to improve the safety and reliability of infrastructure vulnerable to climate change.
- Program CE-5-B.2. Collaborate with county energy production for new and existing projects
- Program CE-5-B.3. Streamline current city energy, utility programs, and incentives.

**Policy CE-5-C. Work with partners to promote community responsibility and engagement through public education and involvement programs that raise awareness about environmental issues.**

- Program CE-5-C.1. Provide education to support the implementation of low impact development practices, integrated site planning, and green building practices, focusing on early consideration of these in the site development process.
- Program CE-5-C.2. Develop outreach programs for residents and businesses that promote sustainable practices related to land use, water conservation, energy use, and landscaping.
- Program CE-5-C.3. Improve public understanding of local land use policies, climate impacts, and resilience strategies through accessible educational materials, workshops, and community partnerships.

**Goal CE-6. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by prioritizing the adaptive reuse of buildings, using sustainable materials, and promoting energy efficiency.**



**Policy CE-6-A. Promote and invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy resources and technology as an alternative to non-renewable resources in new development and retrofits.**

Program CE-6-A.1. Work with partners, such as HopeSource, to assist residents with upgrading energy efficiency in homes and businesses through weatherization and improvements to mechanical and lighting systems.

Program CE-6-A.2. Prioritize the preservation and weatherization of existing housing in higher-density neighborhoods, particularly housing serving low-income households, older adults, and other vulnerable populations, to reduce emissions and increase resilience.

Program CE-6-A.3. Develop and maintain a program to distribute cooling units and install heat pumps, prioritizing households with residents most vulnerable to extreme temperature events.

Program CE-6-A.4. Include informational handouts and tips for energy efficient practices with utility bills.

Program CE-6-A.5. Promote the use of solar and other renewable energy technology within the community through educational materials, outreach, and code updates.

Program CE-6-A.6. Require all new city owned buildings to be solar-ready and/or install photovoltaic solar panels.

**Policy CE-6-B. Encourage residential and city buildings and facilities to use sustainable building methods and materials.**

Program CE-6-B.1. Incentivize recycling of construction and demolition debris.

Program CE-6-B.2. Consider incentivizing purchase of low carbon and recyclable material for building construction.

Program CE-6-B.3. Create incentives to encourage the use of sustainable building methods and materials (such as those specified under certification systems like LEED and Built Green) that may reduce impacts on the built and natural environment.

**Goal CE-7. Increase the number of residents who choose to walk, bicycle, or ride the bus in lieu of driving to reduce auto demand on local and arterial streets, promote air quality, and increase overall community health.**

**Policy CE-7-A. Create a safe, well-connected, and attractive bicycle and pedestrian transportation network to encourage active transportation.**

Program CE-7-A.1. Expand open spaces and parks to support connectivity and non-motorized travel between residential areas, schools, and businesses across the community.



- Program CE-7-A.2. Prioritize, develop, and maintain mobility hubs in transportation-efficient locations, especially in overburdened communities experiencing a scarcity of alternative transportation.
- Program CE-7-A.3. Conduct equity mapping for transportation projects and improvements to ensure benefits in overburdened communities.

**Goal CE-8. Foster higher-intensity land uses in mixed-use urban villages and transit corridors. Maintain compact UGA to limit sprawl impacts on working/natural lands.**

**Policy CE-8-A. Promote higher density commercial, mixed-use and residential development within commercial nodes along transportation corridors, consistent with Transit Oriented Development guidance.**

- Program CE-8-A.1. Promote compact growth and infill development in areas that are already developed in order to preserve open space and ecological functions and encourage residential access to services.
- Program CE-8-A.2. Prioritize high density, mixed use, walkable neighborhoods, prioritizing new buildings on old footprints instead of breaking ground causing urban sprawl.
- Program CE-8-A.3. Ensure public transit stops and stations are located at or near (such as within 600 ft.) dense residential, commercial, and employment areas. Consider distribution in different community hubs and commercial nodes.
- Program CE-8-A.4. Reduce parking requirements where there are multimodal options available.
- Program CE-8-A.5. Create a financial program to assist developers make building up most cost effective.
- Program CE-8-A.6. Assess the capacity for transfer of development rights (TDR) and open space or agricultural land preservation programs in the context increasing residential density.

## Action Items

*In development.* Action items identified in the previous Environment Chapter are below.

### Coordination and collaboration

Work with state and local agencies and organizations to provide educational materials on wood burning stoves, burn restrictions, and other air quality programs.

### Critical areas regulations

Review and update critical areas regulations in compliance with RCW 36.70A.172, best available science, and most recent state guidance.



### **Educational materials**

Provide educational materials on energy efficient practices with utility bills. Provide education to support the implementation of low impact development practice and green building practices.

### **Incentives for sustainable building methods**

Create an incentive program to encourage the use of sustainable building methods and materials that may reduce impacts on the built and natural environment.

### **Land development code review**

Review land development code to ensure zoning and land development code regulations provide for and encourage compact growth, infill development, and mixing of residential and commercial uses.

## **Policy Connections**

***In development.** Policy connections identified in the previous Environment Chapter are below.*

The **Environment** chapter sets goals and policies to ensure that the natural beauty and environmental resources of Ellensburg are preserved for future generations. Other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan include goals, policies, and programs that address energy conservation, efficient land use, and active transportation.

Policies that address energy efficiency and conservation, reduction of household waste, and environmental considerations for the development of capital facilities can be found in the **Capital Facilities and Utilities** Element.

The **Transportation** element contains a set of policies on active modes of transportation, public transportation, and environmental considerations for the development of transportation facilities.

Policies about the stewardship of city-managed open spaces are in the **Parks, Recreation and Open Space** Element.

The **Land Use** and **Housing** Elements address compact growth, infill development, and managing growth.



**City of Ellensburg**

# **Climate & Environment Chapter**

**Environmental Commission**

**June 10, 2026**

# Presentation Agenda

- ▶ GMA Requirements
- ▶ Compliance Pathway
- ▶ Climate and Environment Chapter
  - Narrative Overview
  - Goals, Policies, and Programs

## Climate Element Requirements

- **Goal 14, Climate Change and Resiliency (RCW 36.70A.020)**
- **Mandatory Element (RCW36.70A.070)**
  - Climate Change and Resiliency Element (Climate Element)
    - Resiliency Sub-element (*required*)
    - Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Sub-element (*not required for the City of Ellensburg*)
- Commerce grant funding awarded for the development



# Resiliency Sub-element Requirements

Resiliency Sub-element (*RCW36.70A.070(9)(e)*):

1. Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster resiliency to climate impacts, as well as areas of vital habitat for safe passage and species migration.
2. Identify, protect, and enhance community resiliency to climate change impacts, including social, economic, and built environment factors, that support adaptation to climate impacts consistent with environmental justice.
3. Address natural hazards created or aggravated by climate change, including sea level rise, landslides, flooding, drought, heat, smoke, wildfire, and other effects of changes to temperature and precipitation patterns.

# Resiliency Sub-element Pathway

**Step 1**  
Explore  
Climate  
Impacts



*Completed  
the Climate  
Impacts and  
Hazards  
Assessment  
in Q4 2025*

**Step 2**  
Audit Plan  
and Policies



*Completed  
Q4 2025*

**Step 3 Optional**  
Assess  
Vulnerability  
and Risk



*We determined a full  
Vulnerability  
Assessment was not  
needed; however, we  
assessed risks to  
climate impacts  
broadly under Step 1.*

**Step 4**  
Pursue Pathways

**Pathway 1**

Select and/or adapt **existing**  
goals and policies

**Pathway 2**

Develop **new** goals and policies

**Pathway 3**

Update and adopt **hazard  
mitigation plan**



*First Draft Completed Q2 2026  
In Progress*

**Step 5**  
Integrate  
Goals and  
Policies



*In Progress*

## Additional Inputs

- Formed the Climate and Environment Planning Task Force to advise/guide development of the chapter.
- Interviewed City and County staff; interviewed partners.
- Conducted public outreach (open house, tabling, surveys).



# Climate and Environment Chapter Draft

## Narrative Overview

- It was determined that we would integrate climate policy that fulfills GMA requirements into the existing Environment Chapter.
  - ▶ Renamed as the “Climate and Environment Chapter”
- Rationale
  - ▶ The existing chapter emphasized climate change as a key factor impacting the environment.
  - ▶ Already included adaptation, sustainability, GHG emission reduction policies.
- Worked from the Environment Chapter content and expanded information to include findings from the Climate Impacts and Hazards Assessment and Policy Audit.

# Chapter Draft: Outline

- **Overview:** High level summary of what is included in the chapter.
- **Background and Context**
  - ▶ Growth Management Act: Provides details on what the goals and policies within the chapter must address to be compliant.
  - ▶ Regional Efforts: Connects climate and environmental policy within this chapter to countywide, state, and regional efforts identified in the Kittitas Climate Element and the Hazard Mitigation Plan.
  - ▶ Connection to Existing City Work: Provides a catalogue of relevant city plans and programs that support climate and environmental policy and initiatives.
  - ▶ Climate Impacts and Hazards: Summarizes high priority climate hazards in Ellensburg.

# Chapter Draft: Outline

- **City Resources and Assets**
  - ▶ Ecosystems and Water Resources: Includes much of the content from the previous Environment Chapter. Provides information on water conservation, critical areas, and shorelines of the state.
  - ▶ Social and Economic Systems: Provides a high-level overview of social and economic risks due to climate and environmental impacts. Defines overburdened communities in Ellensburg.
  - ▶ Built Environment: Provides information on climate hazards that can impact city infrastructure.
- **Sustainability and Greenhouse Gas Emissions**: Summarizes the Sustainability and Energy Plan.
- **Goals, Policies, and Programs**
- **Action Items (*In Progress*)**
- **Policy Connections (*In Progress*)**

An aerial photograph of a town during autumn. In the foreground, a large, light-colored water tower stands on a hillside. Below it, a paved road curves through a residential area with trees showing yellow and orange foliage. In the background, a town with various buildings and more trees is visible, with mountains in the distance under a clear sky.

# Climate and Environment Chapter Draft

Goal, Policy, and Program Overview

# Goals, Policies, and Programs

- To develop the goals, policies, and program to be included in the chapter, we:
  - ▶ Reviewed existing chapter policies.
  - ▶ Identified relevant and high priority Department of Commerce recommended policies.
  - ▶ Reviewed supportive materials such as the Climate Impacts and Hazards Assessment, Policy Audit, and Kittitas Climate and Resiliency Element draft.

A key input into draft policy included gathering policy priorities from the public and partners.

# Goals, Policies, and Programs

- The original Environment Chapter included:
  - ▶ Eight goals
  - ▶ Seven policies
  - ▶ 18 programs
- Goals E-1, 2, and 3 and the policies and programs therein were directly linked to climate or sustainability policy.
- Goal E-4 was explicitly regarding compliance with the Stormwater Permit.
- Goals E-5, 6, 7, and 8 were specific to critical areas.

## Goal Priorities



# Climate and Environment Planning Task Force

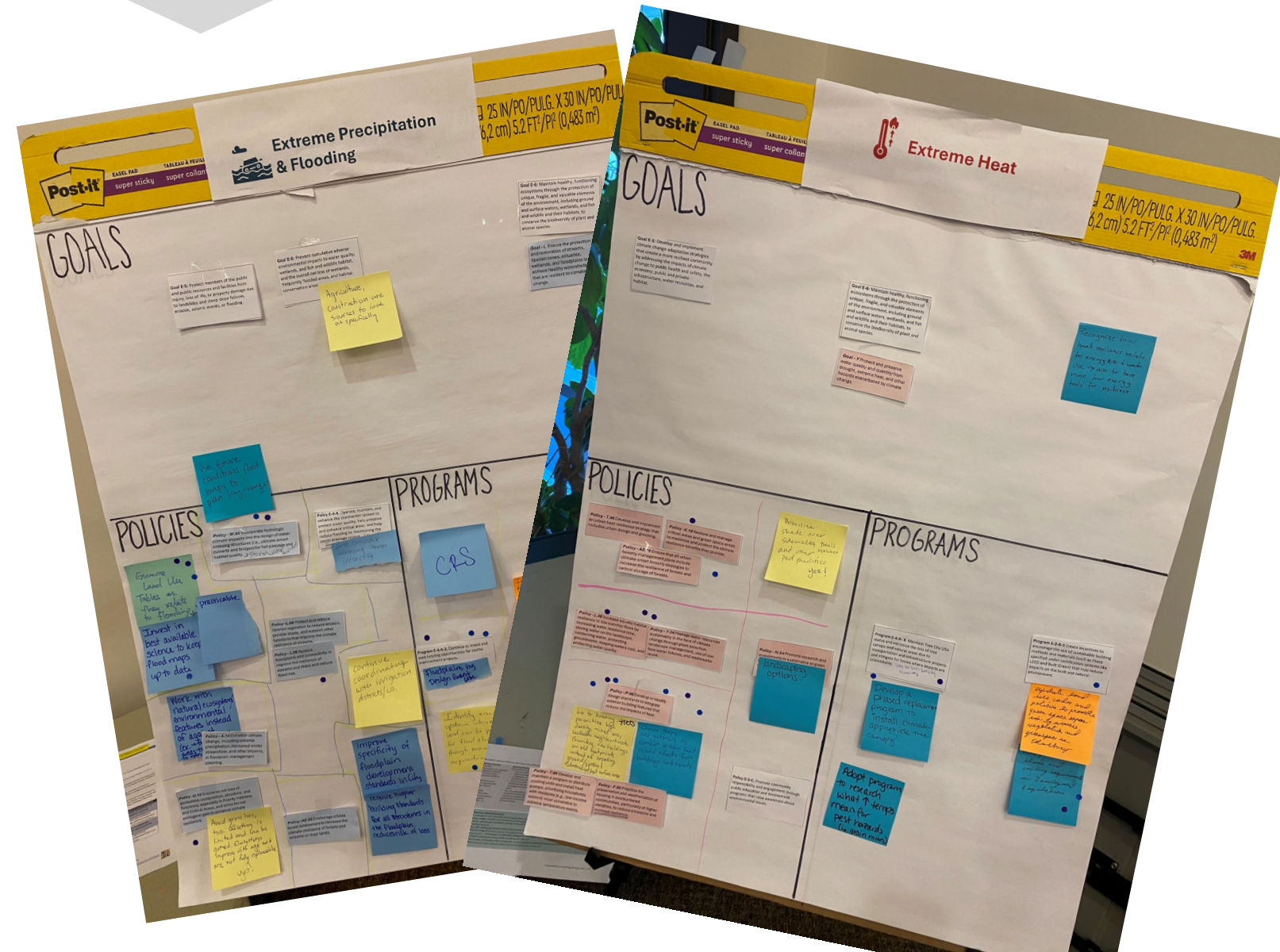
Objective  
Generate ideas for goals, policies, and programs that improve climate resilience and support sustainable systems.

**Activity Format:** Task Force members went to different stations, each focused on a priority climate hazard or GHG emissions reduction/sustainability strategy.



# CEP Task Force Work Session

Reviewed the ideas and feedback provided. Pulled out themes that emerged across hazards and sectors.



# Goals, Policies, and Programs

- The updated Climate and Environment Chapter includes:
  - ▶ Eight goals
  - ▶ 14 policies
  - ▶ 63 programs

# Goals, Policies, and Programs

From the Comprehensive Plan: The goals, policies, and programs included in this Plan provide a basis for the City's regulations and guide future decision-making.

## Goals

- Broad statement meant to capture the related policies and programs under it.
- Defines the “what” and provides the broadest organizational structure.
- Each goal has at least one related policies.

## Policies

- More action oriented, may relate to a specific action or target.
- Each policy has several related programs.

## Programs

- The mechanisms that translate goals and policies into concrete actions.
- The most specific, can be thought of as an implementation step to the related policy.

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by prioritizing the adaptive reuse of buildings, using sustainable materials, and promoting energy efficiency..



Promote and invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy resources and technology as an alternative to non-renewable resources in new development and retrofits



Work with partners, such as HopeSource, to assist residents with upgrading energy efficiency in homes and businesses through weatherization and improvements to mechanical and lighting systems.

# Goals, Policies, and Programs

- Goal 1: Participate in regional resilience planning efforts with jurisdictions, state agencies, Tribal nations, businesses, and local organizations to encourage coordination, data sharing, and strategic investments.
  - ▶ Addresses multiple Resilience sub-element requirements.
  - ▶ Focuses on the importance of local, county, regional, and state collaboration.
  - ▶ Reinforces existing efforts and bolsters additional coordination needs.

# Goals, Policies, and Programs

- Goal 2: Protect and restore streams, riparian zones, wetlands, urban forests, and floodplains to prevent cumulative adverse environmental impacts to water quality and fish and wildlife habitat.
  - ▶ Addresses the requirement to “Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas to foster resiliency to climate impacts, as well as areas of vital habitat for safe passage and species migration.”
  - ▶ Reinforces the implementation of the new Urban Forest Master Plan.

# Goals, Policies, and Programs

- Goal 3: Protect members of the public and public resources and facilities from injury, loss of life, or property damage due to flooding, wildfires, drought, extreme heat, and other climate-driven hazards.
  - ▶ Addresses multiple Resilience sub-element requirements.
  - ▶ Focuses on updating and strengthening development regulations, building codes, and design standards increase resilience.
  - ▶ Identifies action to develop a Drought Resilience Strategy.

# Goals, Policies, and Programs

- Goal 4: Comply with the Eastern Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit managed by the Washington State Department of Ecology and EPA.
  - ▶ From the previous Environment Chapter.
  - ▶ Reinforces stormwater compliance requirements.

# Goals, Policies, and Programs

- Goal 5: Create a more resilient community through enhanced emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts to mitigate climate risks and impacts.
  - ▶ Addresses the requirement to “Identify, protect, and enhance community resiliency to climate change impacts, including social, economic, and built environment factors, that support adaptation to climate impacts consistent with environmental justice.”
  - ▶ Identifies opportunities to strengthen emergency planning, energy resilience, and community engagement.

# Goals, Policies, and Programs

- Goal 6: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by prioritizing the adaptive reuse of buildings, using sustainable materials, and promoting energy efficiency.
  - ▶ Consistent with policy from the previous Environment Chapter and the Sustainability and Energy Plan.
  - ▶ Reinforces policy to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, and the use of sustainable building materials.

# Goals, Policies, and Programs

- Goal 7: Increase the number of residents who choose to walk, bicycle, or ride the bus in lieu of driving to reduce auto demand on local and arterial streets, promote air quality, and increase overall community health.
  - ▶ Consistent with goals from the previous Environment Chapter.
  - ▶ Bolsters policy to encourage active transportation.

# Goals, Policies, and Programs

- Goal 8: Foster higher-intensity land uses in mixed-use urban villages and transit corridors. Maintain compact UGA to limit sprawl impacts on working/natural lands.
  - ▶ Consistent with goals from the previous Environment Chapter.
  - ▶ Bolsters land use policy that promotes higher density development, infill, and creating walkable communities that leads to reduction in GHG emissions and preserves natural areas.

# Thank you!



## **Ellensburg Community Grant Program 2027 Water Quality**

**PURPOSE:** The Ellensburg Community Grant Program offers a water-quality-focused grant to encourage community-based projects that improve or protect the quality of our surface waters. Funded by the Stormwater Utility, the water quality grant provides funding for community groups to provide outreach, education, assessments, planning, implementation, prevention and control focused on our city's storm-and-surface water. Water quality is commonly defined by its physical, chemical, biological, and aesthetic (appearance and smell) characteristics. A healthy environment is one in which water quality supports a rich and varied community of organisms and protects public health.

Grant funds are invested in projects that include one or more of the following priorities:

- Demonstrate improvements in quality of surface waters. (REQUIRED)
- Educate a large and/or varied segments of Ellensburg's population on what water quality is, and what actions they can take to improve or protect it. (Preferred)
- Educate the community about best practices to reduce/eliminate adverse impacts to water quality. (Preferred)

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Eligible volunteer groups, such as youth, seniors, non-profit organizations, and educational organizations, may apply for funding. Business and governmental partnerships are encouraged; however, neither businesses nor government agencies may be the applicant. Projects must clearly demonstrate a benefit to water quality within the City limits (i.e., public outreach and education, yard care, litter pickup, etc.). Projects must be within the city limits. If the project is on publicly owned property, an agreement will need to be signed by both parties addressing the use of minors as volunteers, hold harmless, etc. Grant funds may not be used for projects that involve or promote the use of alcohol. All projects will be subject to City of Ellensburg permit requirements.

### **GRANT FUNDS**

A total of \$10,000 is available for this grant cycle. Applicants can request any amount of needed funds up to that maximum. The Environmental Commission may award multiple applications. Please consider this when completing the grant application. Applications should demonstrate economical use of funds that are appropriate to the scale of the project. Grants are awarded to organizations that show capacity to manage grant funds and projects; funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis.

### **PROCESS**

**Applications must be submitted by Monday, 5:00 p.m. on August 31, 2026.**

Applications shall be submitted to the City Manager's Office, located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of City Hall, 501 North Anderson Street, Ellensburg, WA 98926, or via email to [delafordg@ellensburgwa.gov](mailto:delafordg@ellensburgwa.gov).

Once the application deadline has passed, the applications will be reviewed by city staff to determine eligibility. Those applications deemed eligible will be forwarded to the Ellensburg Environmental Commission, which will hear brief presentations from qualified applicants. The applicants will be notified of the meeting date. This meeting will be open to the public. The applications and presentations will be reviewed by the Ellensburg Environmental Commission using the criteria outlined in the Reviewer Evaluation rubric included with the application. The commission will determine which applicants will receive awards and the amount of the award. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Ellensburg City Council for final approval. After City Council

approval, the applicant will be notified after which a grant agreement between the City of Ellensburg and the applicant will be executed. This agreement will specify the reporting timeframes and award conditions.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Grant work is to be completed within the City of Ellensburg's 2027 fiscal year, January 2027 to December 2027. All successful applicants are required to submit a mid-project report by August 15, 2027, and a final project report to the Ellensburg Environmental Commission by October 31, 2027. These reports should reflect the work described in the applicant's initial grant application, any diversions from the original project, lessons learned and show evidence of specific water quality improvements. Reports and any requests for reimbursement must include all receipts of expenditure, timesheets, volunteer sign-ins, and any other supporting documents that pertain to reimbursement requests.

For more information, contact Water Resources at (509) 925-8691, or email [springerr@ellensburgwa.gov](mailto:springerr@ellensburgwa.gov).

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## APPLICATION FORM

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### Ellensburg Community Grant Program

Focus area: **2027 Water Quality**

Project Title:

#### Applicant information

Name of applicant (first, last)

Applicant's address

Mailing address, if different

Email

Phone (cell) \_\_\_\_\_ (home) \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions (be concise but include all requested information):

- 1) Describe your project and the steps you will take to accomplish it. What are your goals?
- 2) How will your project improve water and/or stormwater quality in Ellensburg?
- 3) Do you have any partners in this project? If so, what are their roles or levels of involvement?
- 4) Who are your other contributors, either in-kind or providing funds?
- 5) Who will benefit directly from this project? Where applicable, describe the demographics and number of people impacted. How visible will the results of the project be for the general public?
- 6) Where will the project occur? Provide the specific location(s) of your project.
- 7) How will you evaluate the success of this project? What does success look like?
- 8) Describe how the project impacts will be sustained after your project is completed.
- 9) How will the community know that the City of Ellensburg supported this request?

PROJECT BUDGET -

The applicant must use the format provided. Include all costs for the project (even if not requesting entire amount). Eligible expenses include professional services, supplies and materials, construction costs, and personnel. Some ineligible expenses include City of Ellensburg permit fees and operational administrative costs such as bookkeeping or payroll. The following items are considered matching funds: cash, volunteer hours, and donated materials, equipment use, or professional services. Volunteer hours must be documented and submitted with the mid-year and year-end reports. Volunteer labor is valued at the standard IRS hourly rate ([Value of Volunteer Time – Independent Sector](#)) equipment use donations are valued at the hourly rate the equipment would be rented for, and donated professional services are valued at the ‘reasonable and customary’ rate for the services.

<b>Cost category</b>						
<b>PERSONNEL</b>	<b>Hour</b>	<b>#/Hour</b>	<b>\$/Hour</b>	<b>Grant</b>	<b>In Kind</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>MATERIALS &amp; SUPPLIES</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>#/Unit</b>	<b>\$/Unit</b>	<b>Grant</b>	<b>In Kind</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES</b>	<b>Hour</b>	<b>#/Hour</b>	<b>\$/Hour</b>	<b>Grant</b>	<b>In Kind</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>#/Unit</b>	<b>\$/Unit</b>	<b>Grant</b>	<b>In Kind</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>OTHER</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>#/Unit</b>	<b>\$/Unit</b>	<b>Grant</b>	<b>In Kind</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET</b>						
<b>REQUEST SUPPORT FROM ELLENSBURG ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION</b>						

**REVIEWER EVALUATION**

Ellensburg Community Grant Program

Focus area: Water Quality

Criteria	Score
<p>Degree to which the project outputs or deliverables have the potential to promote water quality in Ellensburg (25 points total)</p> <p><i>A project may incorporate either <b>direct</b> or <b>indirect</b> water quality improvement efforts, or both. While both direct and indirect efforts would support the City’s WQ improvement goals, a combination of both types would provide maximum benefit and should be awarded the greatest number of points.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Direct WQ benefit projects</b> - Actions taken on the ground to physically remove or reduce sources of contamination, remove barriers to stormwater flow, or improve the functionality of the existing stormwater system.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Project removes a SOURCE of WQ contamination</b> – this reduces the amount of pollutants available to contribute contamination to runoff, protecting WQ.</li> <li>○ <b>Project removes a FLOW BARRIER from stormwater infrastructure</b> – this improves conveyance of stormwater and can help prevent flooding and wash-over of potentially contaminated surfaces, protecting WQ.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Indirect WQ benefit projects</b> - Water Quality is improved faster when all contributors are on board and understand the goal. Education and Public Outreach help align community efforts with the City’s WQ goals and objectives.</li> </ul> <p><i>If a project includes <b>either</b> direct or indirect WQ benefits, award between 1 and 20 points, based on thoroughness and quality of application. If the project incorporates <b>BOTH</b> direct and indirect WQ benefits, such as source removal with associated public outreach, add an additional 5 points for maximized benefit.</i></p> <p><i>Reviewer Comments:</i></p>	
<p>Sustainability of the work after the grant is complete (25 points total)</p> <p><i>A well-designed project should consider the longevity of the project, which is dependent both on the estimated <b>effectiveness period</b> of the action AND on a well thought out plan for <b>maintenance or ongoing work</b>, if applicable.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>What is the project’s estimated effectiveness period?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No mention of effectiveness period: 0 points</li> <li>○ One year or less: 1-5 points</li> <li>○ 2-5 years: 6-10 points</li> <li>○ 5+ years: 10-15 points</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<p><i>Award points for estimated project longevity using the bulleted suggestions above.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Does the application demonstrate that considerations for sustained benefit or maintenance have been considered?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Questions to consider:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Who is responsible for making sure that this project remains effective?</li> <li>▪ Does the applicant intend to continue with this work or intend to build upon the work in subsequent years?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Award between 1 and 10 points, based on the thoroughness of this component in the application.</i></p> <p><i>Reviewer Comments:</i></p>	
<p><i>Size and diversity of the group directly involved with the project (10 points)</i>  <i>Does the applicant's proposed project team have sufficient people to accomplish their project goals?</i></p> <p><i>Reviewer Comments:</i></p>	
<p><i>Other sources of funding or support, both in-kind and cash. How will the project leverage other funds, partners or resources? (10 points)</i></p> <p><i>Will a funding award (plus any additional proposed funds on the applicant's side) be sufficient to accomplish the project goals? If awarding partial funding, can this project still be accomplished with a partial award?</i></p> <p><i>Reviewer Comments:</i></p>	
<p><i>Visibility of the project to the general public and community education. How will this project be used to connect/engage with or educate the community? (10 points)</i></p> <p><i>Reviewer Comments:</i></p>	
<p><i>Budget (10 points)</i>  <i>Is the budget well outlined and realistic? Is it detailed enough to understand how the project will be funded overall? Will all funding requested from the City serve a water quality purpose?</i></p> <p><i>Reviewer Comments:</i></p>	

Reviewer Discretionary Points ( <i>10 points</i> )	
Reviewer Comments ( <i>required</i> ):	
A high reviewer score is desired by an applicant. TOTAL SCORE: ( <i>max 100 pts.</i> )	

### 13 Month Pumping Report (May 25 - May 26)

