



# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the City of Ellensburg's Comprehensive Plan. This 20-year plan articulates the community's vision and reflects community values. The goals, policies, and programs included in this Plan provide a basis for the City's regulations and guide future decision-making. This Plan also addresses anticipated population and employment growth, and how facilities and services will be maintained and improved to accommodate expected growth.

Ellensburg adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1975. This plan was later reviewed and updated in 1995, in response to the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA) (RCW 36.70A). This update builds off the 2006 Comprehensive Plan update, and responds to the GMA requirement for periodic review. This plan is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies, and is based on Community Values identified through a 2016/2017 Community Heart & Soul® planning exercise. During the 2020 comprehensive plan amendment process, City Council docketed two proposals to add a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion element to this Plan, with anticipated adoption in 2021.

## Structure of the Comprehensive Plan

The Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan is composed of the following sections:

**Section I – Introduction.** This section includes a description of the comprehensive planning process and the City's Community Values.

**Section II – Community Profile.** This section includes a brief history of Ellensburg, demographic information, and 20-year population and employment projections.

**Section III – Comprehensive Plan Elements.** This section includes the following elements: Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Capital Facilities and Utilities, Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, Environment, and Historic Preservation. Each element contains a Background and Context section that includes inventories and background data, needs assessments or analyses, and identification of issues followed by specific Goals, Policies, and Programs.

**Section IV – Definitions and Acronyms.** Definitions of terms used throughout the Comprehensive Plan and frequently used acronyms.

**Section V – Appendices.**

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan indicates how a community envisions its future, and sets forth strategies for achieving the desired vision. A comprehensive plan has three primary characteristics.

1. **It is comprehensive** - the plan includes all the geographic and functional elements that impact the community's physical development.
2. **It is general** - the plan summarizes the major policies and proposals of the City, but does not usually indicate specific locations or establish regulations.
3. **It is long range** - the plan looks beyond the current pressing issues confronting the community to identify long-term goals and policy direction for achieving them.

### Relationship to the Growth Management Act

The State of Washington adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990. This legislation requires comprehensive plans to include specific elements; it obligates incorporated areas to adopt implementing regulations, and counties to develop Countywide Planning Policies to address issues of a regional nature; and it establishes protocols and deadlines for these tasks.

The GMA sets out fourteen statutory goals that guide the development of comprehensive plans. For a plan to be valid, it must be consistent with the goals and specific requirements of the GMA. In this context, consistency means that a comprehensive plan must not be in conflict with the state statutory goals, countywide planning policies, or plans of adjacent jurisdictions.

The fourteen statutory goals identified in the state legislation are summarized as follows:

1. Guide urban growth to areas where urban services can be adequately provided;
2. Reduce urban sprawl;
3. Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems;
4. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population;
5. Encourage economic development throughout the state;

6. Assure private property is not taken for public use without just compensation;
7. Encourage predictable and timely permit processing;
8. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries;
9. Encourage retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities;
10. Protect the environment and enhance the state's quality of life;
11. Encourage the participation of citizens in the planning process;
12. Ensure adequate public facilities and services necessary to support development;
13. Identify and preserve lands and sites of historic and archaeological significance; and
14. Manage shorelines of the state.

## **Relationship to the Countywide Planning Policies**

As part of the comprehensive planning process, Kittitas County and its incorporated areas have developed Countywide Planning Policies. The intention of these policies is to help the four cities, one town, and the County address growth management in a coordinated manner. The Kittitas County Conference of Governments adopted the policies and they were subsequently ratified by the Kittitas County Board of County Commissioners.

The Countywide Planning Policies try to balance issues related to growth, economics, and the environment. Specific objectives include:

- Implement Urban Growth Areas and joint county and city planning within Urban Growth Areas;
- Promote contiguous and orderly development;
- Provide for siting of public capital facilities of regional or statewide significance;
- Provide for countywide transportation facilities;
- Consider affordable housing needs; and
- Ensure favorable employment and economic conditions in the County.

## Public Participation

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that the comprehensive plan encourage public participation in the planning process. The Community Values, what we refer to as Ellensburg's Heart & Soul, and each chapter was developed through extensive public, staff, and volunteer involvement. The following is a summary of the public participation that occurred throughout the comprehensive planning process.

### ***Community Network Analysis***

In fall 2016 City staff kicked off the comprehensive planning process by reaching out to community members that represented diverse sectors of the community to work on the Community Network Analysis. The Community Network Analysis is an interactive tool to better understand who lives, works, and plays in Ellensburg, and how best to reach them where they are. Participants examined who to connect with and how, and helped participants to identify segments of the population that are typically underrepresented in both formal and informal social networks. Participants in the Community Network Analysis included interested members of the public and representatives from the following groups:

- Bright Beginnings for Kittitas County
- Central Washington University
- City of Ellensburg Landmarks and Design Commission
- City of Ellensburg Library staff
- City of Ellensburg Parks and Recreation staff
- City of Ellensburg Planning Commission
- Clymer Museum
- Ellensburg Downtown Association
- Ellensburg School District Board
- Gallery One

## — Community — **Heart & Soul**

Community Heart & Soul® is a planning model for engaging a community in shaping the future.

The Community Heart & Soul approach is founded on three basic principles: Involve Everyone, Focus on What Matters, and Play the Long Game.

The Community Heart & Soul process provided a framework for how to collect input from residents and how to use the input in the comprehensive plan.



- Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce
- Kittitas County Community Network
- Kittitas County Realtors Association
- Kittitas County Republicans
- Kittitas County Democrats
- Kittitas County Youth Services
- People for People

### ***What Matters Most Survey***

The What Matters Most survey was the first step in implementing what we learned in the Community Network Analysis, and in starting to identify our core community values. The results of the What Matters Most survey were 812 responses to the following questions:

1. What do you love (or value) about Ellensburg, and why?
2. If you could improve something about Ellensburg, what would it be, and why?
3. What is your favorite place to go in Ellensburg, and why?
4. What is your connection with Ellensburg?
5. How long have you lived in Ellensburg or other area in Kittitas County?

The survey was available in both Spanish and English and was conducted over the course of several months by attending events held throughout the community and partnering with local schools. Events included:

- Bite of the Burg
- Buskers in the Burg
- First Friday Art Walk
- Hoedown in Downtown
- Kittitas County Farmers Market
- Kittitas Valley Junior Soccer Association picture days
- Resource Fair for Hispanic Families

The City partnered with Ellensburg High School and Morgan Middle School to gain input from Ellensburg youth. The *What Matters Most* survey was incorporated as an assignment for each student to interview 5 to 10 family members or friends. Bright Beginnings (head start

preschool) incorporated the *What Matters Most* survey into their fall home visits with parents or guardians of preschoolers. The survey was also marketed using social media and newspaper advertisements to direct community members to the online version of the survey on Eburg Talks, the City's online engagement tool.

### ***Community Values Workshop***

Seventy community members participated in the Community Values Workshop which was held in early 2017. City staff organized and coded all of the responses from the *What Matters Most?* survey into common themes. Participants used the common themes and responses to write community value statements for each theme. City staff used Eburg Talks to vet the community value statements, and edited the statements based on community feedback. The final draft community value statements were presented to the public at the Change Over Time Activity and on the City's webpage. The community value statements are Ellensburg's Heart & Soul and serve as the guiding principles for this Comprehensive Plan.

### ***Change Over Time Activity***

At the Change Over Time activity, 34 community members worked in groups to share their views on how each of the identified community values has changed over time in the community. They also discussed their desired condition for the future of each community value. Participants worked in small groups organized by each of the community values, and brainstormed ideas for how to achieve the desired condition for each community value. The brainstorm of ideas and public comments were used to inform the goals, policies, and programs for each relevant chapter of the comprehensive plan.

### ***Chapter Development***

Each of the draft chapters went through several stages of review and development that included applicable City staff, existing City volunteer commissioners, other stakeholders, community open houses, and online surveys for community members to provide feedback on each of the draft chapters. Each of the draft chapters was also reviewed through Planning Commission meetings and City Council study sessions. The number of meetings with City volunteer commissions was dependent on how long it took each group to share their input and reach agreement on the outcome.

Table 1 provides a summary of the City volunteer commissions and the draft chapters they assisted in developing.

**Table 1. City of Ellensburg Volunteer Commissions and Comprehensive Plan Chapters**

City Volunteer Commissions	Comprehensive Plan Chapter
Ellensburg Business Development Authority	Economic Development
Ellensburg Downtown Association	Economic Development
Environmental Commission	Environment
Landmarks and Design Commission	Historic Preservation
Lodging Tax Advisory Committee	Economic Development
Parks and Recreation Commission	Parks and Recreation
	Capital Facilities and Utilities
	Economic Development
	Environment
Planning Commission	Historic Preservation
	Housing
	Land Use
	Parks and Recreation
	Transportation
Public Transit Advisory Commission	Transportation
Utility Advisory Committee	Capital Facilities and Utilities

In addition, the land use designations found in the land use chapter were developed through input gathered at a land use mapping open house and online activity where community members shared their input on where different types of residential, commercial, and industrial uses should be located in Ellensburg and its Urban Growth Area.

The Housing chapter is based on the 2017 Ellensburg Housing Needs Assessment. The assessment included input from community stakeholders through two stakeholder workshops and a series of short interviews. The first workshop engaged developers and homebuilders active in the Ellensburg housing market. The second workshop engaged stakeholders from the public and non-profit housing sectors. Short interviews were conducted with property managers, landlords, and real estate professionals actively marketing housing for sale or lease in Ellensburg. In addition, interviews were also conducted with market rate and affordable housing developers working outside the Ellensburg market to better understand the factors that support new housing creation.

In response to the 2020 Comprehensive Plan docketing proposals to include a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion element, a Council subcommittee conducted a listening tour to understand the experiences of marginalized groups living in Ellensburg and their recommendations to help the Council better meet their needs. The groups included residents who identify as Indigenous, Black, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, LGBTQ, Muslim and other non-Christian religions, disabled, citizens over 65, and those with International backgrounds. At the conclusion of the listening tour, the subcommittee recommended potential changes to City policies, procedures, planning, and programming that will result in a more inclusive and welcoming community. City

Council will continue to work with the community through a robust and transparent engagement process for developing the new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion element, for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan during the 2021 amendment process.

## **Ellensburg's Community Heart & Soul – Community Values**

In the summer of 2016, the City initiated the Community Heart & Soul process to understand what matters most to our community with the goal of identifying value statements that will guide our 20-year plan and help maintain Ellensburg's quality of life. The following community value statements are the product of the 2016-17 Community Heart & Soul outreach process, as well as the 2020 Listening Tour sessions. These identified community values provide the guiding principles for this comprehensive plan.

**Small town feel and sense of community** is represented in our small town character and our friendly and supportive community.

- We value thoughtful growth management that maintains the small town community character, recognizes economic opportunities, and provides innovative ideas to improve our diverse neighborhoods for the benefit of current and future generations.
- We value a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community that is welcoming and supportive to everyone because it enriches our lives and enhances our individual and community well-being.

A community that **celebrates Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**, is welcoming and supportive of all residents and visitors. A community built upon the values of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is a community that enriches each individual's life and the community's wellbeing and vitality.

- We value a community that cares for one another, so that all people feel a sense of belonging in this community.
- We value the rich diversity of our neighbors in Ellensburg — be that age, skin color, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or disability — because that is what makes us stronger.
- We value a future in which all who live in Ellensburg today, and in the future, will have access to what they need to reach their full potential so that each person may contribute fully to community well-being.
- We value working together collaboratively with individuals and community groups and recognize for us to do better for all requires constant review of our work and an honest self-examination of our actions.

The **built environment** provides the setting for community activity, ranging from buildings to streets and parks; these are the areas we live, work, and play on a day-to-day basis.

- We value the preservation of existing infrastructure through effective and efficient maintenance programs that keep public services affordable and in good condition for all users.
- We value the physical infrastructure of our existing neighborhoods and downtown core which balance old and new, and which together reflect the historic and distinct feel of Ellensburg and contribute to our unique sense of place.
- We value a transportation system that provides safe and efficient use for all users, and promotes efficient use of resources, facilitates access to goods and services throughout our region, encourages healthy lifestyle choices, and reduces traffic.
- We treasure the incorporation of parks, open space, and gathering spaces within our community where everyone can play, meet our neighbors, and enjoy safe and well maintained facilities year round that build community and promote physical and mental health.

Our **downtown and our local economy** strengthens the economic vitality of our community and supports the vibrancy of our downtown.

- We value a diverse local business community that strives to provide inclusive products and services to all residents and visitors in our city, that contributes to our distinctive character, helps build a strong community, and strengthens our economy.
- We promote sustainable, living wage jobs that enable a suitable standard of living, contribute to our local economy, and allow community members to live and work in our area.
- We support our vibrant and lively downtown that serves as a valued destination for our local community and visitors through its diverse and inclusive retail businesses, restaurants, galleries, gathering and event spaces, non-profit organizations, and housing and lodging opportunities.

The **local government and community service organizations** provide goods, services, and amenities that are available to our community.

- We value accessible, diverse and inclusive local government that facilitates active participation and local input into decision-making, utilizes equitable and inclusive processes when hiring city staff, and welcomes a diversity of candidates to run for city council.
- We value collaboration between city and other local entities that promote community health and education, and better quality outcomes by creating consistent, equitable, inclusive and efficient planning efforts.
- We value quality, attainable housing for everyone that positively impacts the stability, health, and safety of our community.

- We value access to community recycling and composting opportunities that have a positive impact on the environment by reducing contributions to the landfill.

**Local arts, culture, and year round events** include performing and visual arts and cultural events that shape our local identity.

- We value family-friendly, ethnic and cultural events that promote a thriving and diverse community.
- We treasure and support our performing and visual art community that brings together people of diverse cultures and contributes to our unique sense of identity as a diverse and inclusive community.

Our **natural environment and central location** in the state recognizes our community's connection to the natural environment and the geographic diversity of our location.

- We value diverse recreation opportunities and programs that are affordable, accessible, inclusive and environmentally friendly, and that encourages community health, and promotes cross-cultural community interaction.
- We celebrate and protect our diverse natural environment that surrounds our urban areas, and which increases our quality of life.
- We value our central location in the state that provides recreation, social, and economic opportunities.

We recognize **Central Washington University** as an integral part of our community.

- We welcome CWU students, faculty, and staff as valued community members who encourage a spirit of cultural diversity and intellectual energy, creating opportunities for enhanced collaboration and partnerships that strengthen our community.