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## 12 Shorelines

This chapter will be completed upon final adoption of the Shoreline Management Plan

# 1 Introduction



# 1 Introduction

## Purpose & Intent

This comprehensive plan anticipates community changes and strives to manage those changes in a deliberate manner, reflecting the desires and wishes of Ellensburg's residents. This plan lists goals and policies based on the City's aspirations set in the context of current and potential opportunities, concerns, and capabilities.

A comprehensive plan is a decision-making tool based on long-range goals. The plan looks beyond the conventions of law, exceeding minimum legal requirements to address what the community wants. It describes resident demographics, provides an overview of city history, documents existing land use, examines community roadways, studies local economics and systems of governance, and assesses the current physical and ecological environment. It is intended to serve as a type of policy "atlas" for city officials based on the community's real-life conditions, helping them make better-informed decisions.

The City of Ellensburg's comprehensive plan is based on locally established visions, goals, and policies derived from extensive public participation. The plan provides an abundance of information and guidance, but depends heavily on the appropriate exercise of individual discretion, interpretation and initiative to fulfill its goals, policies and programs.



**Figure 1.1** - Neighborhood art, near City Hall  
(Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

The plan conforms to the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A, as originally passed in 1990 and its subsequent amendments, and is consistent with Kittitas County's County-Wide Planning Policies (CWPP).

This comprehensive plan will shape the City's zoning and subdivision regulations, capital improvement programming and budgeting, and other legal and regulatory actions necessary to manage Ellensburg's physical, social, and environmental character. The full range of the City's implementation tools must be consistent with this plan.

This plan contains the **following elements**:

- Land Use \*
- Transportation \*
- Capital Facilities and Utilities \*
- Housing \*
- Natural Environment
- Economic Development
- Parks and Recreation
- Historic Preservation
- Essential Public Facilities \*

*\* Those elements that are required by the GMA. The public services and facilities element of this plan includes GMA-required capital facilities, utilities and essential public facilities elements.*

## **Planning Process**

Planning begins with an assessment of current needs and issues, examining previous plans through the lens of today's conditions. Next, a vision statement is created. Ellensburg's 2005 vision is rooted firmly in the prior (1995) vision, but provides clearer terms and articulates basic goals to help the community achieve its vision. Community participation was fundamental in the creation of the vision, and in fact led the creation of the entire plan. In developing this document, the City of Ellensburg elected to prepare alternative goal and policy scenarios, with each scenario representing different approaches towards the overall vision. Programs were then included to implement the various goal/policy choices, providing the City with guidance in the creation of individual tasks for inclusion in annual departmental budgets. Following consideration and comments from various commissions and from the general public, the City Council selected a preferred alternative in each of the areas provided in the draft document. This document is the result of that process. By design, it is a plan that allows the community to review its implementation, evaluate its progress and make revisions over time as necessary.

Effective comprehensive plans must have solid community involvement during preparation. This leads not only to better initial plan and policy choices, but lays groundwork for greater community support for those choices throughout the plan's implementation. Ellensburg directed an extensive public participation process; this included a series of five community workshops, informal polling at numerous public events, a questionnaire distributed to 16,000 residents, in-depth coverage in two quarterly City newsletters, periodic e-mail updates to participants, the creation of a Citizen's Advisory Committee, posting of information at the City library, and the creation of a project website containing nearly all documents, correspondence and media discourse related to the update process.

### **Washington Requirements and the Growth Management Act (GMA)**

The state legislature enacted the Growth Management Act (GMA) in response to its finding that uncoordinated growth and lack of common goals toward land conservation threatens the public's health, safety, and general welfare. The Act lists 14 planning goals for those counties and municipalities planning under the GMA's requirements. (*Table 1.1*)

### **Using this document**

This comprehensive plan is designed for use and reference by the community, the City Council, the planning commission, other agencies, and City staff. It presents policies and programs that will help the City achieve its long-term goals, embedding them in a document that helps express the community's character and aspirations. The structure of this plan's policy elements (Chapters 4 through 10) includes several sections: a discussion of current conditions relevant to each policy area, a discussion of current and anticipated issues that the element should address, and a series of goals, policies and programs to help Ellensburg achieve and maintain its vision. Some chapters even include a list of priority projects, drawing attention to several important activities that should be pursued soon after the plan's adoption.

In practice, this plan's identification of policies, programs, and, in some cases, projects, will give Ellensburg a veritable "punch list" of things to do, creating work programs for staff, the planning commission and City Council to accomplish as time progresses.

### **Adoption and Amendment History**

Initial adoption	March 19, 2007	Ordinance No. 4474
Annual Amendment	December 17, 2007	Ordinance No. 4502
Annual Amendment	December 15, 2008	Ordinance No. 4535

**Table 1.1** - Planning Goals of the Washington State Growth Management Act, RCW 36.70A.020

<b>Planning Goal</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Urban Growth</b>	<i>Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner</i>
<b>Reduce Sprawl</b>	<i>Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development</i>
<b>Transportation</b>	<i>Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans</i>
<b>Housing</b>	<i>Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage the preservation of existing housing stock</i>
<b>Economic Development</b>	<i>Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunity, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities</i>
<b>Property Rights</b>	<i>Property rights shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions</i>
<b>Permits</b>	<i>Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictably</i>
<b>Natural Resource Industries</b>	<i>Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses</i>
<b>Open Space &amp; Recreation</b>	<i>Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities</i>
<b>Environment</b>	<i>Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water</i>
<b>Citizen Participation &amp; Coordination</b>	<i>Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts</i>
<b>Public Facilities &amp; Services</b>	<i>Ensure that public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time development is available</i>

**Table 1.1** - Planning Goals of the Washington State Growth Management Act, RCW 36.70A.020

Planning Goal	Description
	<i>for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards</i>
<b>Historic Preservation</b>	<i>Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archeological significance</i>
<b>Shorelines</b>	<i>For shorelines of the State, the goals and policies of the Shoreline Management Act are added as one of the goals of...[the GMA]</i>

The Act also requires consistency between:

- Comprehensive plans and the planning goals identified in RCW 36.70A.020
- Municipal and county comprehensive plans
- Comprehensive plans of each municipality and county with those of neighboring municipalities and counties
- Elements within the comprehensive plan (internal consistency)
- Comprehensive plan and development regulations
- Comprehensive plan and capital budgets
- State agency actions and municipal and county comprehensive plans

A second tenet of the GMA is concurrency, meaning that public facilities and services must be developed concurrently with the new land uses they serve, ensuring achievement of adopted level-of-service standards. The concurrency requirement is especially forceful concerning transportation:

*“...local jurisdictions must adopt and enforce ordinances which prohibit development approval if the development causes the level-of-service...to decline below the standards adopted in the...comprehensive plan, unless transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made concurrent with the development.”*

The various requirements of the GMA suggest a strong relationship between urban growth and the public facilities and services required to serve that growth. This relationship is further enhanced by the concept of Urban Growth Areas (UGA), where land development and public infrastructure improvements are concurrently programmed. To fulfill these new planning requirements, the GMA expressly

authorizes the use of specific techniques, such as impact fees and planned unit developments.

The Growth Management Act recognizes that comprehensive plans are prepared by local jurisdictions and that, while the law dictates some specific requirements, the actual mechanisms the jurisdictions choose to employ and the relative priorities the jurisdictions assign to the Act's goals are up to the jurisdictions themselves. Cities and counties must reconcile a diversity of pressures and influences when writing comprehensive plans, and the strategic and tactical decisions these jurisdictions must make can really be defined only at the local level. For that reason, the Act states that jurisdictions have flexibility to prioritize the Act's goals, aiming to achieve some at a greater degree than others, as long as the principles and dictates of the Act are respected and met.



**Figure 1.2** - The 2006 update included input from a Citizen Advisory Panel, which held more than 20 meetings during the process. (*Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.*)

As Ellensburg considers this comprehensive plan, it must do so within the framework of the GMA and also within the framework of the community's hopes, values and aspirations. For this reason, some of the Act's 14 goals may be prioritized in a manner that facilitates the pursuit of a compact urban form over conservation of wetlands or habitat areas, or the pursuit of cost-effective public service delivery over the development interests of private property owners. In adopting this plan, the Ellensburg City Council has determined the strategic direction and tactical focus of this plan, sorting out the conflicting demands and setting the course ahead.

## **County Wide Planning**

The Act was amended in 1991 to require counties to adopt countywide planning policies in cooperation with their municipalities. These policies are written policy statements that establish a countywide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed, adopted, and implemented. This framework helps ensure county and city comprehensive plans are consistent with each other and with the intent of the GMA. Per RCW 36.70A.210(3), these policies, at a minimum, shall:

- Implement RCW 36.70A.110 (the section for establishing urban growth areas) and provide for joint county and city planning within UGAs
- Promote contiguous and orderly development and provisions of urban services to such development
- Provide for public capital facilities of regional or statewide importance
- Provide for countywide transportation facilities
- Consider the need for affordable housing
- Analyze fiscal impacts

## **Historic Planning**

Ellensburg has a long history of planning, beginning with its rebuilding of its downtown after a devastating July 4, 1889 fire. At the time of the fire, Ellensburg sought to become Washington's capitol city. The fire (one of three fires affecting Ellensburg, Spokane and Seattle that same summer) destroyed most of the city's commercial core. The community rebuilt, constructing 16 blocks of multi-story brick buildings within six months; many of these buildings remain standing today.

Ellensburg adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1975, assembling a long-range vision for the community building on earlier historic preservation efforts in and around the downtown area. That plan's policies were then reviewed and updated 20 years later as part of the community's first GMA-compliant comprehensive plan. The 1995 plan responded to the new GMA requirements and established the community-wide goals and policies that underpin many of those found in this plan.

In the spring of 2005, Ellensburg began work on this document, creating its second-generation GMA-compliant comprehensive plan. This plan conforms to the state's legal requirements, but it also goes much further, seeking to create policies and programs that will help the community become what it truly wishes to be. For that reason, the planning process has focused heavily on public participation, involving the community in a variety of ways to ensure the plan reflects its collective voice.

## **Study Area**

The City of Ellensburg (pop. 16,700) is situated in central Kittitas County just west of the intersection of Interstate 90 and Interstate 82 at an elevation of approximately 1,500 feet. Ellensburg's 8,850-acre planning area includes both the area within the city boundaries and the surrounding Urban Growth Area (UGA) in unincorporated Kittitas County.

## 2 Community Profile



## 2 Community Profile

Ellensburg's community characteristics and local natural environment contribute to make the town what it is. This chapter provides a brief community history and a description of Ellensburg's setting. It also provides demographic information, including a population forecast based on information provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management and by Kittitas County.



**Figure 2.1** - Hundreds of citizens helped shape this plans vision, priorities, and policies. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

### Ellensburg and Its History

The first inhabitants of Kittitas Valley were the *Psch-wan-wap-pams* (stony ground people), also known as the Kittitas band of the Yakama or Upper Yakama Tribe.

Interpretations of the meaning of the word Kittitas vary – some refer to the region's soil composition, i.e., "shale rock," "white chalk," and "white clay," while others hold it to be the combined names of the native bread "kit-tit" and "Tash," a native word generally interpreted as "place of existence." The Kittitas Valley was one of the few places in Washington where both camas and kouse (a root used to make kit-tit), grew. For this reason and others, the valley was an important gathering place for regional tribes, who congregated to harvest these foods, as well as to fish, socialize, and trade.

Though fur trading and Catholic missions had been established well beforehand, white settlers began moving into Kittitas valley in the early 1860's. By the end of that decade, a trading post known as "Robber's Roost" had been established near the present corner of

Third and Main Streets. In 1871, this post was purchased along with a 160-acre claim by John Alden Shoudy, who in 1875 platted the town streets and named the community “Ellensburgh” in honor of his wife, Mary Ellen. The “h” was dropped at the request of the United States Post Office in 1894.

During this platting period, land was donated to the Northern Pacific Railroad in hopes that the town would be a rail-based center for the area’s abundant farmland, forests, and mines. This offer created the reality of a rail siding for switching railcars. Ellensburg grew slowly until plans for rail access were completed, and the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1886 helped spur markets in cattle, dairy

products, timber, wool and hay. The town was the site of the state Admissions Convention in 1889, called for the purpose of petitioning Congress to admit Washington into the union. Community boosters hoped Ellensburg would be named the new state capitol due to its central location; such speculation even led to site-work for the capitol on the northwest edge of town, and construction of a mansion to house the future Governor.

A disastrous fire on July 4, 1889, changed the course of the community’s history. During that evening, a fire fanned by Ellensburg’s famous winds destroyed most of the business district and many homes. Although the community put forth a heroic effort and rebuilt its downtown within the year, Olympia was ultimately chosen as the state capitol.

The capitol effort did help bring one important element to Ellensburg: in 1890, during the State Legislature’s first session, Washington State Normal School (a teacher’s college, now Central Washington University), was established. In 1891, doors opened for 86 students in spare classrooms at Washington Public School. Today, Central Washington University has an enrollment exceeding 8,000 students, occupies more than 300 acres, and is the county’s largest employer, with more than 1,300 employees. According to the Washington State Employment Security Department, CWU staff, students and faculty contribute an average of \$170 million annually to the local economy.

The timing and coordination of the downtown reconstruction also helped in another important way: it produced a downtown with a very unified and attractive appearance. Dominated by late Victorian architectural styles with a few early twentieth-century Neoclassic and Art Deco-styled buildings, the elegance of downtown – and the classic



**Figure 2.2** – In 1890, Washington State Normal School, now Central Washington University, was established. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

urban streetscape it encloses – has since defined the community and served as one of its strongest assets.

Over the years, some original buildings have been lost, while others have been heavily modified or diminished in ways that prohibit restoration. However, most of the downtown core remains as originally constructed, due in no small part to vigilant preservation efforts. In the late 1960's, vacancies and general disrepair undermined the viability of the historic core; this prompted one of the first community-wide efforts to restore and revive downtown. Led by the Chamber of Commerce, volunteers from the business community, Central Washington University and others began meeting weekly to brainstorm ideas. The City Council appointed a task force to formulate effective strategies. The City hired consultants to produce plans and drawings supporting the effort. By 1972, many of the improvements seen today were being implemented, including street lamps, diagonal parking, reduced-width pedestrian crossings, benches, street trees, paver-stone sidewalks, and mini-parks downtown. Improvements were typically paid for by the City and downtown landowners, with the landowners usually picking up the largest portion of the bill. Using the 1970 planning template, the City has made incremental improvements to the downtown core ever since.



**Figure 2.3** – Ellensburg's farmer's market draws residents of all ages downtown each spring and summer. (Image source: Donna Nylander, participant)

Keeping the downtown area as the heart of area financial, service, government and retail activities was made formal policy in the City's first comprehensive plan, adopted in 1975. In 1980, the City registered a specific 16-block portion of its downtown as a historic district on the National Historic Register. District boundaries were established and added to the City's zoning ordinance. A Downtown Task Force was established, and later a Design Review Board, with design review responsibility for all construction within the resultant Downtown Historic District. The importance and compact nature of Ellensburg's downtown was re-affirmed in the Vision and Goals Statement adopted under the 1995 Comprehensive Plan update process.

The community of Ellensburg has grown from its birth and established its position as a vital, rooted, and unique community. Residents consider Ellensburg a quiet, clean, comfortable, safe, and family oriented city (2004 Resident Survey). Historic Ellensburg is home to year-round recreational activities, numerous events, excellent shopping and dining, and a variety of performing and visual arts.

To the world outside Kittitas County, Ellensburg is most famous for its annual Fair and Rodeo. The Ellensburg Rodeo was founded in 1922 through the combined efforts of local ranchers and cowboys, the Kittitas County Fair organization, local businessmen, and the Yakama Indian tribe. Though the City had provided land, there was not enough money available to pay for the construction of the rodeo grounds. Valley residents were called upon to donate materials and labor for the project, and as many as 500 men and women turned out as volunteers to construct the rodeo grounds.



**Figure 2.4** – Plan consultants field-verify primary wetlands areas. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

The first Ellensburg Rodeo was held September 13-15, 1923, and was successful from the start. The event seemed to serve as a type of folk festival - a nostalgic celebration of the frontier lifestyle, where townspeople could join ranchers, farmers, and Indians in an annual gathering. The Fair and Rodeo proved a great way to foster business as well, and the event has helped promote Ellensburg's name and identity ever since. Today, it is recognized as one of the top rodeos in the nation. In 1999, the grounds were added to the National Register of Historic Places.

## **Environmental Characteristics**

Ellensburg is located on the western side of the Columbia Plateau, site of some of the most dramatic events in the Earth's history. Enormous basaltic lava flows 15 million years ago took place, with a series of giant glacial flooding after the ice age. These and related events shaped the landscape of eastern Washington, where the Earth's youngest basalt plateau was swept by the largest documented floods in geologic history.

### **Geological and Physical Setting**

Located in Kittitas County (*Figure 2.5*), Ellensburg is situated on a fertile plateau next to the Yakima River and just east of the Cascade mountain range at an elevation of 1,540 ft. The Ellensburg Plateau is composed of agricultural land with a good portion within the 100-year floodplain. The topography includes snow-capped mountains, irrigated valley land, desert terrain, and two major rivers, the Yakima and the Columbia. The ground is generally sloping, rising to an elevation between 1,500 and 1,580 feet above sea level. Located 110 miles east of Seattle and 170 miles west of Spokane Ellensburg lies at the heart of central Washington. Interstate 90, Interstate 82, US Highway 97, and highways 10 and 821, allow access in, out, and through the area into the Cascades to the west and

the farmland to the east. The city limits are approximately bounded by Bowers Road to the north, Look Road to the east, Wilson Creek and Berry Road to the south, and the Yakima River to the west. These boundaries create the city's footprint of approximately 4.6 square miles. The present Urban Growth Area (UGA) includes another 2.3 square miles, and consists of areas where future growth is encouraged.

**Climate**

Ellensburg has a climate that experiences both strong summers and winters. Temperature patterns vary considerably within the seasons. The mountains to the west effectively block much of the rain from the "wet side" of the state, producing a dry climate with less than ten inches of rainfall a year. There are four definite seasons and a strong breeze in the spring and summer months. The annual mean temperature ranges from 54.9° F to 60° F at the Weather Report Stations north, east, and south of Ellensburg. High summertime temperatures (June through September) average 79.7° F, and low temperatures average below freezing around 21° F in January.

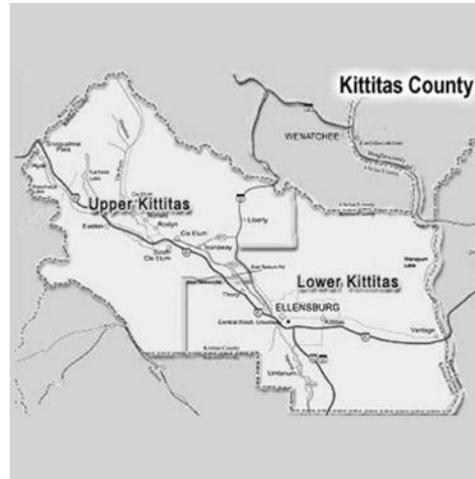
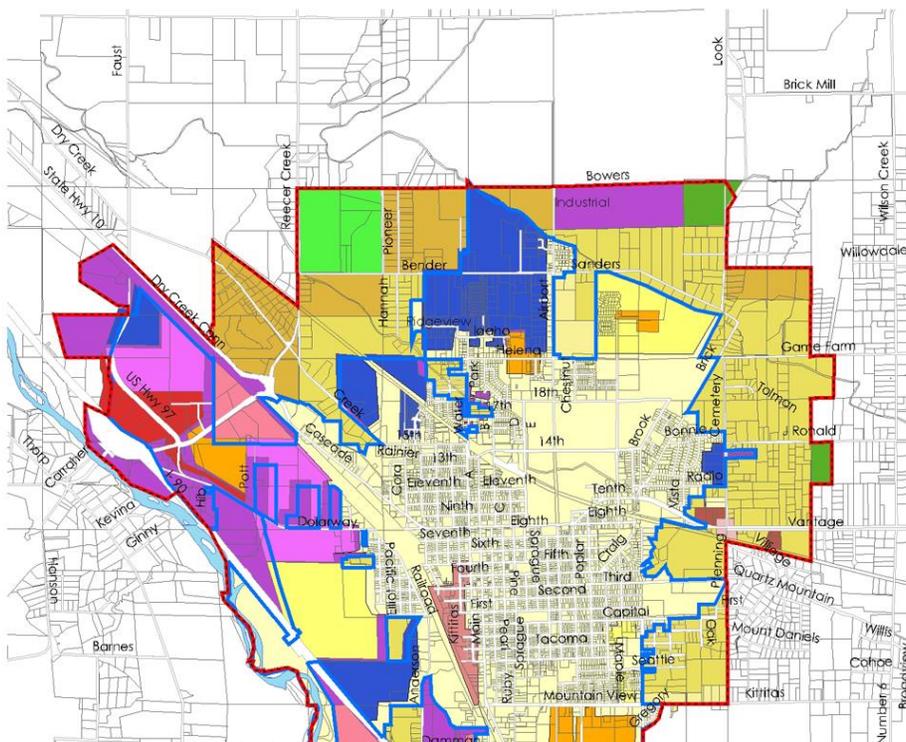


Figure 2.5 – Kittitas County (Image source: Reid Real Estate)

**Community Characteristics**

Ellensburg's population has been continuously increasing over the past 20 years with housing prices reflecting the increase in demand. (Figure 2.7) While the population has increased, it has not changed much in terms of race, income, employment or household composition. A large segment of the population lies in the 20 to 24 year age group.





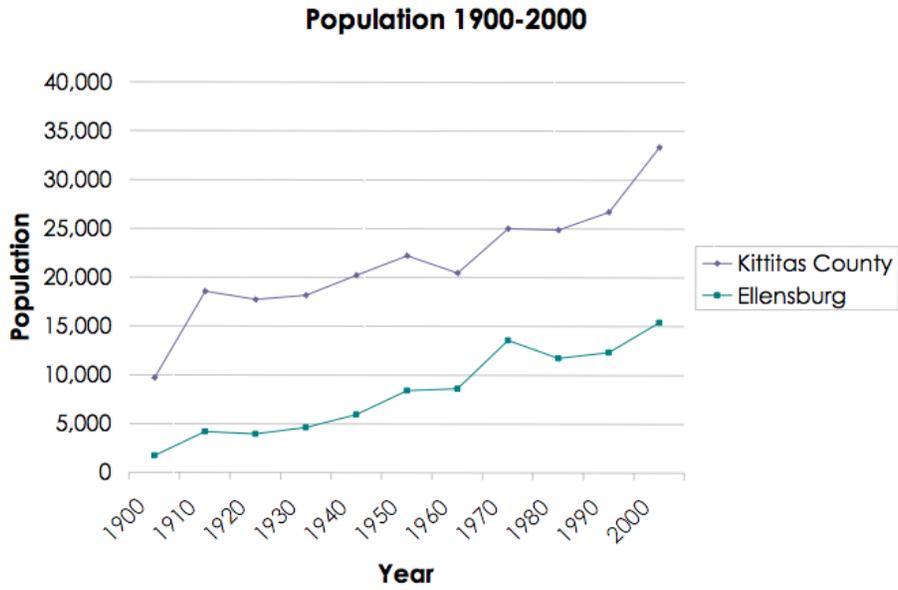


Figure 2.7 – Population 1900 – 2000 (Image source: OFM Historical Data Set)

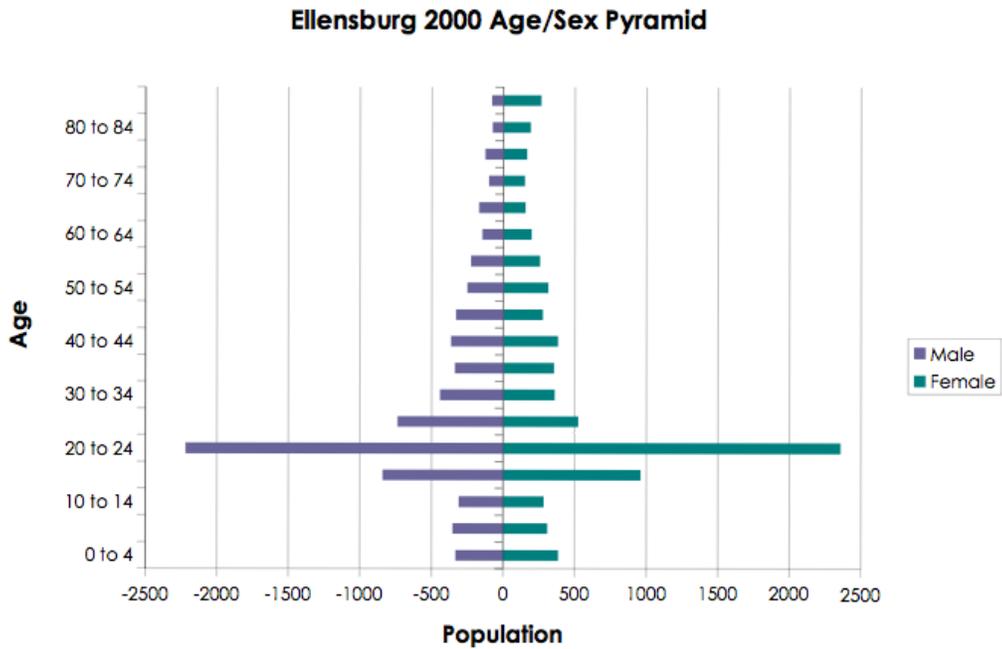


Figure 2.8 – Resident cohorts (Image source: 2000 Census)

Approximately 8,000 Ellensburg residents are four years of age or older and enrolled in school. Of this population, 39.2% are in college, which is much higher than the 20.0% found in Kittitas County. High school students comprise 5% of the enrolled population. Eighty-five percent of the general populace of Ellensburg graduated from high school, and 32% have a bachelor’s degree.

**Population**

Ellensburg has grown substantially since the turn of the century. More drastic growth has occurred in recent years, paced more substantially every other year. (Tables 2.1, 2.2) As of the year 2000, the city was growing at a rate faster than the State average. Historically, Kittitas County and Ellensburg have grown in proportion to one another, as indicated by census data compiled between 1900 and 2000.

The City of Ellensburg’s population of 16,700 is 45.6% of Kittitas County’s total 36,600 people (OFM). Eleven percent of Ellensburg inhabitants are 62 years or older, and 88% identify themselves as white.

**Table 2.1 – Percent Population Change**

1980-1990		1990-2000	
Washington	Ellensburg	Washington	Ellensburg
17.8%	5.1%	21.1%	24.7%

Source: OFM Historical Data Set Decennial Population Counts for the State, Counties, and Cities 1890 to 2000

**Table 2.2 – Population Estimates**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Kittitas County	34,000	34,800	35,200	35,800	36,600
% Change	1.9%	2.4%	1.1%	1.7%	2.2%
Ellensburg	15,460	15,860	15,940	16,390	16,700
% Change	0.3%	2.4%	0.7%	2.8%	1.9%

Source: OFM 2002 County Projections Supplemental Data Tables

**Household**

This section briefly describes the housing and household characteristics of Ellensburg. Additional housing information is located in Chapter 9.

Housing patterns followed population and household size trends with a rapid growth rate from 1990 to 2000. In 2000, the median value for housing units was \$110,700 in

Ellensburg, and \$134,100 in Kittitas County; these prices were 122% higher than 1990 figures for Ellensburg, and 98% higher than 1990 figures for Kittitas County. During that same timeframe, the total number of housing units increased by 35% for Ellensburg and 25% for Kittitas County. (Table 2.3)

As of 2000, the community had 6,249 households with an average household size of 2.72 for owners and 2.14 for renters. The number of households in the decade from 1990 to 2000 increased for Kittitas County, but it grew at a much greater rate in Ellensburg with a 35% increase. The vacancy rate for Ellensburg in this period was 7%, compared to Kittitas County’s 18.7%; this indicates a larger demand for housing as compared to Kittitas County.

**Employment and Income**

Ellensburg’s working population is scattered across the industry sectors. The largest sectors for employment are retail trade, services and Public Administration, followed by Manufacturing and Finance, Insurance and Real Estate. (Table 2.4) Disparities between Ellensburg and Kittitas County within employment sectors are numerous. Ellensburg contains about 54% of the Finance, Insurance and Real Estate establishments for the county, and 51% of the Retail Trade and Services. Of the Total Non-farm employment, Ellensburg contained 46% of the establishments with up to 55% of the employees for the county. This demonstrates the essential role played by Ellensburg in Kittitas County.

**Table 2.3 – 1990-2000 Housing Comparison**

Year 2000		
Total Housing Units		
	Kittitas County	Ellensburg
1990	13,215	5,015
2000	16,475	6,763
% Increase	0.25	0.35
Median Value Owner Occupied HU		
	Kittitas County	Ellensburg
1990	60,500	55,800
2000	134,100	110,700
% Increase	1.22	0.98

Source: 2000 Census SF3

Farming is another important factor in local employment. Second and third generation families with ties to early settlers operate many local farms and ranches. Ellensburg is noted for its production of beef cattle, and is one of the world's largest producers of Timothy hay. The export of these crops generates many millions of dollars in revenue. Fruit orchards provide are another important cash crop. New technologies are helping to develop resilient and flavorful new varieties of apples and pears. Export opportunities for all of these crops continue to rise, though the market is a competitive one.

The unemployment rate in Ellensburg was 7% in 2000, somewhat higher than Kittitas County’s 5% rate. According to the 2000 Census, the community’s workforce used private vehicles as their primary means of commuting (73.2%), with 15% walking and 5%

bicycling. Ellensburg’s use of the car for commuting is lower than the rest of Kittitas County (82.6%), no doubt due to the county’s more rural conditions.

**Table 2.4** – Employment by Sector in Ellensburg and Kittitas County, 2004

Sector	Ellensburg		Kittitas County		E'burg % of Kittitas	
	Establish.	Employees	Establish.	Employees	Establish.	Employees
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	10	37	59	369	17%	10%
Mining	0	0	1	32	0%	0%
Construction	40	238	224	1,174	18%	20%
Manufacturing	28	761	72	1,102	39%	69%
Transportation, Communication, Utilities	36	519	99	1,093	36%	47%
Wholesale Trade	35	422	78	919	45%	46%
Retail Trade	208	2,660	408	3,990	51%	67%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	116	625	216	1,371	54%	46%
Services	325	2,486	637	4,121	51%	60%
Public Administration	110	917	159	1,575	59%	58%
Non Classifiable Establishments	4	26	21	141	19%	18%
Total Non-farm Employment	912	8,691	1,974	15,887	46%	55%

Source: ECONorthwest, November 2005

## Population Forecast

Growth trends for Ellensburg between 1990 and 2000 were close to those of the rest of the state. During that timeframe, Washington’s population grew by approximately 10.7% while Ellensburg’s grew by 9.3%. Ellensburg’s population rise has been fairly constant since its incorporation, with a 29.9% population increase between 1900 and 2000. These

growth statistics expose a key concern for the community: that continued rapid growth threatens the “small town identity” that residents cherish.

Washington’s Office of Financial Management (OFM) provides population forecasts to assist agencies planning under the Growth Management Act. OFM’s projections provide for high, intermediate or low growth rate scenarios at a county-by-county level, with the incorporated communities and the counties deciding how to apportion that growth at a jurisdictional level. Kittitas County and Ellensburg agreed in 1997 that Ellensburg’s likely population would be approximately 15,996 by the year 2022. This is most consistent with the Low category in the OFM projections.

Additional population projections illustrate alternate methodologies for determining the rate and extent of Ellensburg’s growth. (*Table 2.5*) These projections vary from high to low using OFM forecasts for Kittitas County and introduce two ways of determining Ellensburg’s share of forecast growth. The ratio method establishes Ellensburg as having 45% of the County’s population. This share is consistent with population estimates over the past 20 years. The linear percentage method projects growth at a rate generally conforming to OFM’s countywide forecasts. The high scenario is forecast at a 2% annual rate, the intermediate scenario is forecast at a 1.5% annual rate, and the low scenario is forecast at a 1% annual rate. The ratio method works well if the community grows at a consistent rate.

**Table 2.5 - Ellensburg Population Forecasts**

<b>Population Projection: 2000 TO 2025 (Shift Share Ratio and Linear Percentage Method)</b>						
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>High</b>						
Kittitas County	33,362	36,759	40,545	44,806	48,794	52,810
Ratio (.45 of County Population)						
Ellensburg	15,013	16,542	18,245	20,163	21,957	23,765
Linear Percentage (2% per year)						
Ellensburg	15,313	15,619	15,932	16,250	16,575	16,576
<b>Intermediate</b>						
Kittitas County	33,362	34,314	36,742	39,451	41,776	43,999
Ratio (.45 of County Population)						
Ellensburg	15,013	15,44	16,534	17,753	18,799	19,800
Linear Percentage (1.5% per year)						
Ellensburg	15,313	15,543	15,776	16,013	16,253	16,254
<b>Low</b>						
Kittitas County	33,362	32,341	33,619	35,013	35,927	36,629
Ratio (.45 of County Population)						
Ellensburg	15,013	14,553	15,129	15,756	16,167	16,483
Linear Percentage (1% per year)						
Ellensburg	15,313	15,466	15,621	15,777	15,935	15,936

Source: OFM County Forecasting for the Growth Management Act

Trends indicate that Ellensburg’s population will continue to increase over the 20-year planning period and to increase at a sustained rate exceeding 2% per year. Kittitas County, with development of Suncadia and the increasing popularity of the upper county, will also likely experience rapid and sustained population growth. Ellensburg anticipates that OFM’s High Series will be the most accurate picture of population

growth in Kittitas County and that Ellensburg will continue to have 45% of the county’s residents. For this reason, this comprehensive plan is designed for Ellensburg’s projected 2025 population of approximately 23,000.

The plan process included consideration of four different land use scenarios, each of which could have accommodated, at a minimum, the forecast population of 23,000 within the urban growth area. If developed to their mean densities, all of the proposed land use scenarios more than fit 23,000 residents within Ellensburg’s UGA. (Table 2.6) Scenarios Three and Four, described in more detail in Chapter 4, emerged as the preferred scenarios and are the subject of this plan.

**Table 2.6 – Land Supply Summary by Land Use Scenario**

	Land Use	Acres	Density	Units	Pop./Unit	Total
Scenario One	High Density Residential	227.28	12 du*/ac	2,727	2.14	5,836
	Mixed Residential	4170.68	4.25 du*/ac	17,725	2.25	39,881
	Total Population					45,717
Scenario Two	High Density Residential	227.28	12 du*/ac	2,727	2.14	5,836
	Mixed Residential	4,109.74	4.25 du*/ac	17,466	2.25	39,298
	Total Population					45,134
Scenario Three (Preferred)	High Density Residential	225.37	12 du*/ac	2,704	2.14	5,787
	Mixed Residential	3,988.77	4.25 du*/ac	16,952	2.25	38,142
	Total Population					43,929
Scenario Four (Preferred)	High Density Residential	227.28	12 du*/ac	2,727	2.14	5,836
	Mixed Residential	3910.32	4.25 du*/ac	16,618	2.25	37,390
	Total Population					43,226
Scenario Three + Four (Preferred)	High Density Residential	235.94	12 du*/ac	2,831	2.14	6,059
	Mixed Residential	3588.47	4.25 du*/ac	15,251	2.25	34,314
	Total Population					40,374

\* du = Dwelling Unit, in this chart density measured by dwelling unit per acre

### 3 Vision



## 3 Vision

### Preface

Plans are always formulated to anticipate and influence change, but few times in Ellensburg's history have so many forces been present to effect change. Today's community faces enormous growth pressures – with all the related pressures that accompany it – as well as demands for new services brought on by changes on the national and global scale. Ellensburg is on the cusp of change, and this document is a reflection of the community's response to it.

If this Comprehensive Plan represents the primary framework for policy formulation and decision-making over its time cycle, the Vision Statement provides the framework for the plan. Intentionally broad-brush in nature, a vision statement should express the greater wishes of the community at-large; it should be indefinite enough to engender consensus, yet specific enough to retain its locality and relevance to the rest of the plan. This chapter articulates the adopted vision statement for the Ellensburg Comprehensive Plan, and outlines the background related to its content and development. Specific goals, presented alongside the vision in the 1995 plan, have been moved to their related chapters.

### Key Considerations

The single over-arching theme in views expressed by participants in this current update process – and a theme echoed in all previous plans – is the appreciation for and desire to retain Ellensburg's "small town feel." For the sake of this desire, this process has strongly



**Figure 3.1** - This decorative windmill located along Main Street is typical of period development that though charming, may be difficult to redevelop. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

encouraged the community to define for itself what this means. Arguably, the 1995 update, “Ellensburg’s Community of Choice” provides an indirect definition by articulating a vision and wide range of goals established through two years of debate and discussion. Of course, Ellensburg’s built environment reflects this vision as well, for every decision made part of an urban fabric mirrors the values and resources of the community in which it takes place. This process has in effect posed the question again and again: “What are Ellensburg’s essential qualities, and what energies must be spent to preserve, if not enhance them?”

It is perhaps a good sign that community input throughout this process closely matched input expressed in previous planning efforts. After all, one hallmark of small towns is their stability and sense of security - if only in contrast to the rapid change and pace of larger cities. That caring citizens - foregoing all other locales and electing to make their lives here - have so strongly repeated their love for “small town feel” and everything associated with stability, permanence, and community, affirms those qualities as genuine and lasting.

For this reason, this vision statement uses the 1995 version as its basis. It has been changed to move specific goals to related chapters, or refined to more accurately express original intent. It has been changed to provide more specificity where experience has shown it necessary to support chapter goals. Most importantly, it appears here as drafted and inspired by earlier efforts; as checked, affirmed and refined by thousands of comments, hundreds of hours, scores of letters, images and other expressions so thoughtfully contributed to this critical effort. Readers are strongly encouraged to review the documents and narrative related to the exceptional public participation informing this document; the community should take tremendous pride in the level of care demonstrated throughout this process.

### Primary Themes

If the overall theme of Ellensburg’s vision is its small town/rural nature, many other specific elements must also appear to define and support it. The vision expresses a desire to manage projected growth in a way that maintains Ellensburg as a small, compact, stable, traditional community with an attractive central business district and similarly-



**Figure 3.2** - Entrepreneurs have found Ellensburg’s historic, adaptable storefronts ideal for a large variety of specialty offerings. (Image source: Donna Nylander, participant)

developed residential areas. It expresses a desire for new development to be compatible with the existing urban framework; it envisions a continued role for the city as center of commercial, financial, governmental and cultural activities within Kittitas Valley, and it stresses downtown's place as the hub at the center of it all. In short, and as the 1995 plan put it: "...while projected growth is recognized by most residents as both welcome and inevitable, the community desires that future growth not change things too much."

## **Vision Statement**

### ***Preamble***

One element added to this vision statement is a preamble, suggested in exercises testing the relevance of the prior statement, refined through public submittals, and ultimately composed by members of the effort's Citizen Advisory Committee:

For the next ten years, Ellensburg citizens agree to use cooperative efforts toward building for our future. We acknowledge our shared fate for the well-being of Ellensburg. We remain committed to continuous participation with city government.

The town's responsibility is to create a base for our health and safety that fosters civic pride, civic involvement, and innovative business for our current generation as well as to our past and future generations.

Central Washington University will continue to be a prominent focus. We will continue to be the center for Kittitas County government. We want to be the social center that highlights the Rodeo/Fair and includes other destination events throughout the year for our citizens and for tourism.

We strive to maintain our unique, distinctive characteristics and associations by knowing our neighbors and being civically involved. The elements of agriculture, small business, education, industry, government, investment and financial services, retirement, housing, hospital and health care, tourism, environmental protection, non-profit organizations, leisure and recreation, and a vibrant sustainable downtown core are the spokes that provide a strong community for the citizens of Ellensburg. Together, we create our future.

### ***Vision Statement***

Ellensburg is a community where residents recognize and cherish the many unique qualities that have shaped its past and will guide its future. Included among these are Ellensburg's scenic, rural setting, its central location, its compact, walkable nature, its thriving and historic downtown, its university and related civic offerings, the presence of the County Seat, its rich agricultural

history and economy, its enterprising commercial sector and retail offerings, its clean environment, numerous and proximate recreational opportunities, and the connectedness and social wealth related to small-town life. Ellensburg residents recognize their role as stewards of their community, and through careful management, investment and hard work, are committed to supporting and enhancing these values so essential to the sustained health of their city.



**Figure 3.3** - Residents often included traditionally scaled and developed neighborhoods as places to emulate in planning for the future. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Ellensburg has always proactively managed its future. The recruitment of rail lines, the rapid reconstruction of downtown following the 1889 fire, the development of locally owned utilities, the 1975 Comprehensive Plan and revival of the Downtown Historic District, the 1995 Comprehensive Plan update, and many other examples establish Ellensburg as a community that values and works hard to maintain and enhance its traditional identity. As such, Ellensburg's growth will be accommodated within its Urban Growth Area, in a manner reflective of existing neighborhoods. Ellensburg's centrality and transportation access will be leveraged to maintain the City's traditional role as regional hub for trade.

The City of Ellensburg will be proactive in its economic environment by creating a stable, sustainable and diversified economy. The City will encourage business development and emphasize the creation of family wage jobs. The economic vision will enable the city and its citizens to achieve economic prosperity while preserving the environment and a high quality of life.

Ellensburg's downtown is the heart of the community's commercial, civic, social and cultural life. The historic core, composed of approximately 16 blocks of well-preserved and eclectic architecture, supports a wealth and diversity of uses, including specialty retail shops, professional services, general retail shops, housing, entertainment, dining and financial institutions. This role has been maintained through great sacrifice, and it will be actively preserved through a range of efforts, including investment to accommodate needed growth and infrastructure, residential occupation, and retail. Because downtown's historic buildings are key to the City's identity and cultural life, new buildings and

rehabilitation of existing buildings in the Downtown Historic District will complement the architecture and placement of the historic stock.

Ellensburg recognizes the importance of Central Washington University, and supports its role in providing advanced education. Indirect benefits offered by the University are also valued, including the student population's role in the City's cultural life, and the opportunities for citizens to join in cultural, educational, research and entertainment activities offered by the University. Opportunities to enhance ties between the City and the University will be pursued, including improved pedestrian links across University Way, coordination of planning between both agencies, and opportunities to spur housing investment in Downtown Ellensburg.

Ellensburg citizens are proud of the community's agricultural traditions, and consider the presence of open space and farmlands surrounding urban areas key to their quality of life. Due to this, and to the direct and indirect economic benefits associated with farmlands, Ellensburg will pursue opportunities to further connect City and countryside in the form of dedicated open space, bicycle and foot-paths, and will pursue opportunities to define growth on the urban edge in ways that protect the presence and viability of farmlands surrounding the community.

Ellensburg's economic diversity includes enterprising business, and small industrial and retail components; the community will foster the continued presence of these activities as part of its planning and regulatory considerations.

Ellensburg citizens cherish the characteristics of their existing neighborhoods, and wish to see those qualities continued in future residential growth. These qualities include walkability, connectivity with the existing street grid, street trees, sidewalks, affordability, and centrally-located, accessible neighborhood amenities such as parks, small retail, services and churches. All foster the sense of community, of "knowing one's neighbor," and relationships with the downtown core valued by Ellensburg citizens.

Ellensburg citizens also prize the many public facilities and cultural events available to them, and look forward each year to the Fair and Rodeo and to numerous other civic events. The public library system is a vital part of the community, as are the many parks, pools, and walking paths already available. Primary and secondary schools are considered of critical importance to the community's future. As such, present levels of municipal service in these elements shall be maintained on pace with, and to complement, growth.

Though residents generally value their existing quality of life, change is understood to be inevitable. To manage growth and leverage change for the betterment of its citizens, Ellensburg recognizes the need to work closely with the County government on matters related to long-range planning, including economic development, transportation, environmental issues, housing, and land use.

The health and continued existence of Ellensburg's many wetlands, open spaces, streams, ponds, wooded areas, and fish and wildlife habitat are also recognized as key to its identity, as well as to the physical health and livelihood of the community. As such, Ellensburg will work to uphold all regulations related to the protection of these vital resources, and will seek creative solutions that add value to these measures wherever possible. Conservation of water and energy resources is to be promoted.

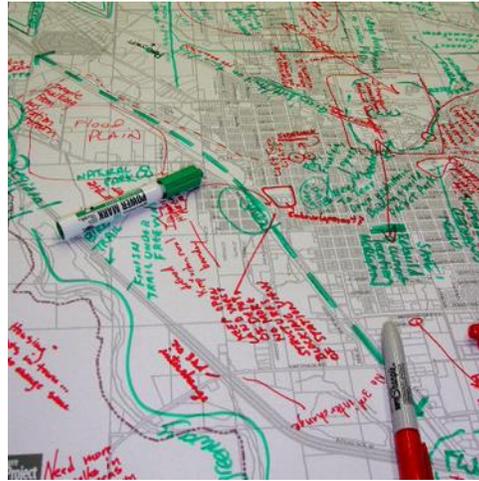
Healthy lifestyles, a healthful environment and productivity are synonymous. Effective health care shall be promoted for all Ellensburg citizens through preventive measures, and through the support of the local hospital, medical, and allied health care community. Ellensburg values the range of medical and associated services available within its boundaries, and recognizes their importance to surrounding communities. While not competing with advanced care provided by larger regional cities, Ellensburg supports the continued provision of health care, and expects area hospital and treatment capacity to grow on-pace with local demand.

We, the citizens of Ellensburg, in view of the many riches of our community, recognize that what surrounds us is a subtle form of wealth: it is well-being. We are committed to maintaining these priceless advantages.



**Figure 3.4** - Ellensburg's annual fair and rodeo exemplifies the City's heritage and much of what residents cherish today. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

## 4 Land Use



## 4 Land Use

This chapter outlines how to manage the City's land use to achieve the plan's goals. The community's urban form helps support its larger development objectives. This chapter's goals, policies and programs will help the City manage and, in some ways, transform its land uses to meet the community's needs. Like the 1995 plan, this chapter is separated into sections dealing with residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Unlike that plan, however, it also contains sections on mixed uses and institutional uses, recognizing that community development also depends upon those elements.

Ellensburg's principal land use challenge is shaping its urbanized development to meet the changing needs of its businesses and residents. This chapter provides the guidance for facilitating new development that preserves, maintains, and enhances Ellensburg's unique character while still recognizing the need for an urban environment that adapts to its users over time.

While the urban environment needs to adapt, so do areas near the urban edge. Ellensburg's predominant single-family development pattern has led - over the past 30 years - to an increasingly large city perimeter. Neighborhoods now abut active agricultural land. While this direct adjacency is something the Growth Management Act (GMA) encourages, it can also lead to conflict, including issues of air quality (pesticides,



**Figure 4.1** - Planning efforts began by engaging residents in identifying issues, opportunities and priorities using workshop exercises like this one. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

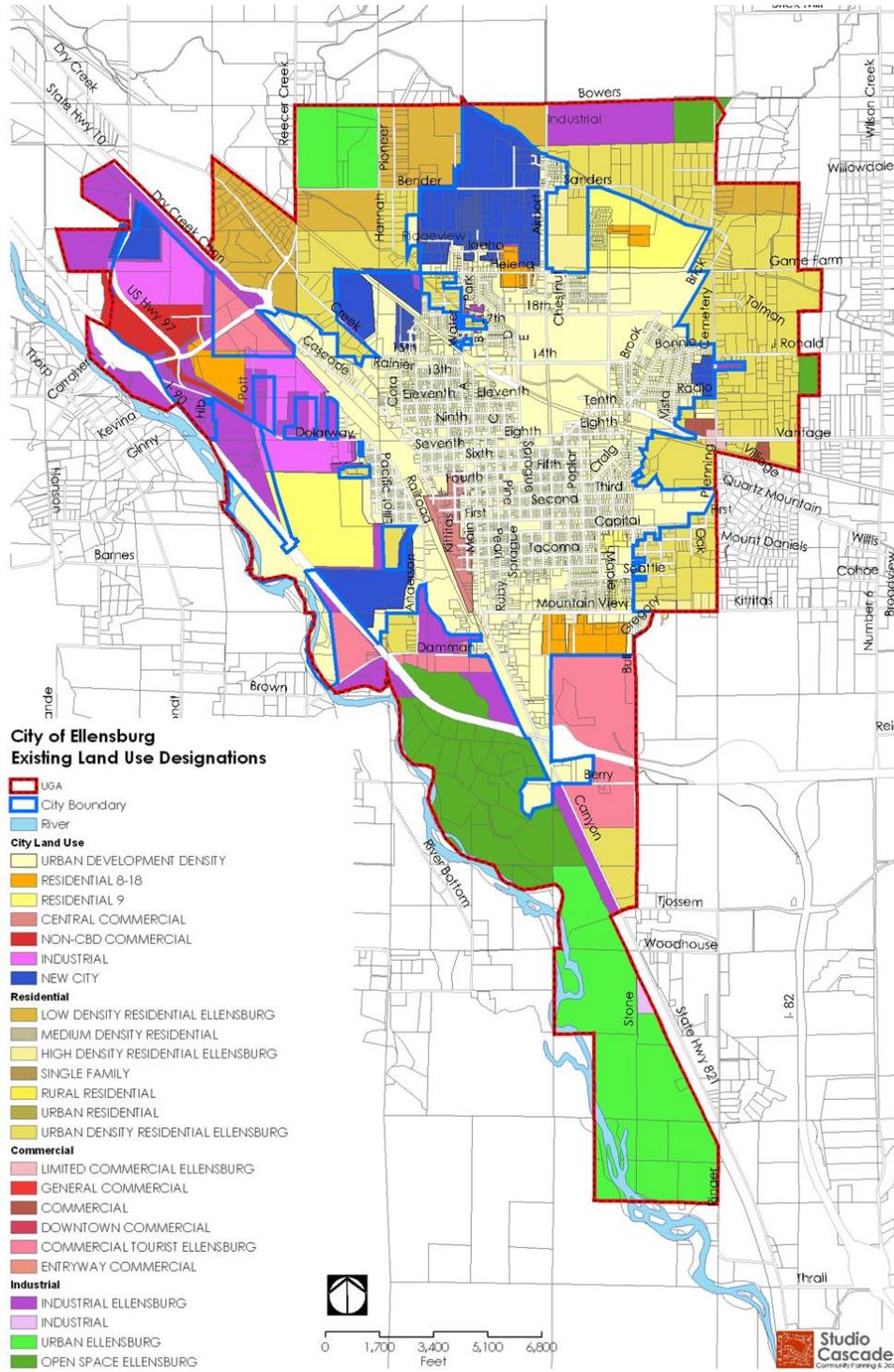


Figure 4.2 – Current 2006 comprehensive plan land use designations within the urban growth area. See Figure 4.9 for guide to the City’s land use designations after 2006 (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

odor), domestic pets, noise and lighting, to name a few.

## **Existing Land Use Patterns**

### ***Residential***

Almost one-half of land within the city limits and the urban growth area is designated residential. Most housing is single-family, but there are large areas devoted to high-density, multi-family dwellings. Most of these high-density residential areas are located near the CWU campus, and house large numbers of off-campus student residents. In addition, many single-family structures near the university are used as multi-family dwellings housing multiple students. Some have been formally converted into apartments, with multiple mailboxes, entrances and utility meters, while others have not.

Ellensburg's residential growth has resulted in the conversion of open land surrounding the community into neighborhoods, with growth generally moving outward to the north and east. Housing development has expanded beyond the CWU campus, establishing new single-family and multi-family residential districts north of the community's former northern boundary.

The 1975 comprehensive plan created four residential categories:

- Suburban single family for fringe areas without urban services
- Low density, for single family structures (although multi-family structures for up to eight units could be conditionally permitted)
- Medium density, composed of single-family and multi-family structures
- Residential/office adjacent to the Central Business District (CBD), as a transition area allowing for a mixture of offices, single family and multi-family uses.

The 1995 comp plan speaks to the outcomes of the 1975 residential land use designations. What was true in 1995 is also true today:

*“While the four primary residential land use categories were created in 1975, the intent was to guide certain densities of future residential development to certain areas of the city. However, since much of Ellensburg already contained well-established single-family neighborhoods, some intended results have not occurred. In particular, large portions of the residential/office zone have remained almost exclusively single family or low-density multi-family areas. Further, low-density single-family zones have begun to face numerous conversions to multi-family development through the conditional use process. This is especially true for the area west of the University.”*

### **Commercial**

In the late 1800's, Ellensburg's central business district thrived, serving the needs of the surrounding region. The July 4 fire of 1889 destroyed almost the entire downtown core; the community rallied to replace the majority of the destroyed structures by July of 1890. The resulting "new" downtown was unified in its brick construction and in the sense of sharing a common vintage and purpose. The downtown continued to be reconstructed through the 1920's, with Art Deco building styles being added to the Victorian and Neoclassical styles erected after the fire.

While some buildings have been razed or remodeled, most of the reconstructed fabric remains. Downtown's turn-of-the-century brick theme is one of Ellensburg's strongest assets. In 1980, the City of Ellensburg registered a significant portion of its downtown as the Downtown Ellensburg Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.

Ellensburg's downtown remains the main retail/commercial/nostalgic center of the City and the lower Kittitas Valley. Maintaining downtown's prominence and vitality has been an important goal for Ellensburg, reflected in the 1975 comprehensive plan and subsequent visioning and planning efforts. There currently are no regional retail shopping centers in Ellensburg. However, relatively recent development of retail along Mountain View Avenue and the new retail shopping center on Water Street indicate a strengthening trend for development of larger retail commercial projects that may not necessarily be of a scale consistent with the downtown area's nineteenth-century character.

Retail market studies have confirmed this trend. The study performed as part of this plan update confirmed that retail sales leakage is significant, indicating that local shoppers are traveling outside of Ellensburg to purchase daily goods and services. The nearest large commercial center is Yakima, 35 miles south, and it is a popular destination for retail shopping, particularly in the areas of clothing, electronics, major appliances and automobiles.

Interstate 90 runs south and then generally parallel to Ellensburg's western city limits. There are now two freeway interchanges providing access to Ellensburg, with a possible third planned for some undetermined time in the future. The south interchange at



**Figure 4.3** – Historic rendering of the 1889 Davidson Building, which remains a cornerstone of contemporary downtown Ellensburg. (Image source: Ellensburg Public Library)

Canyon Road is currently the more developed of the two existing interchange areas, offering lodging, dining, and gasoline sales. The west interchange provides similar services, but not now at the same intensity. Development at the west interchange also includes auto sales and truck stop services. The west interchange is also the intersection of US Highway 97 and Interstate 90.

Canyon Road, Main Street and University Way, previously parts of the state highway system, are the community's primary arterials. They connect to the two I-90 interchanges, access downtown and Central Washington University, and the Kittitas County Fairgrounds and Event Center. Consistent with current land use trends, retail, service, industrial and higher-intensity residential land uses have developed along these corridors, taking advantage of higher automotive traffic. Pressure continues to increase to permit retail development to spread along these main corridors and at the freeway interchanges, creating new development opportunities for these more intense uses away from the traditional downtown.

### **Industrial**

Ellensburg's industrial sector has not seen as much pressure as the retail commercial sector. The community's largest employers continue to be related to government, education, health care, or agriculture. Consumers of the industrial land, then, are generally packaging, processing or shipping agricultural goods. Given the community's proximity to I-90 and I-82, there has been increasing interest in developing transportation-related industry projects; but other than the truck stops at the west interchange, little has happened. While activity in the agricultural sector has been relatively constant, there has been little growth in other areas. The result is that there is not much more industrial land developed today than there was in 1995.

Ellensburg's early industrial development centered along the railroad tracks to the west of the existing Central Commercial zones. For the most part, current land use designations and zoning continues this pattern with the bulk of the community's industrial land located along a narrow strip paralleling the tracks, but industrial land has also expanded westward along Dolarway Road to connect to the west interchange area. More recent changes to locate industrial land away from central Ellensburg have been



**Figure 4.4** – While Ellensburg wishes to diversify its economy, lands easily suited to industrial or light-industrial use is at a premium. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

driven by the desire to remove trucks from residential areas near the Central Commercial zones, as well as to minimize other negative impacts industrial uses might have on retail and residential lands. The result is the current arrangement of industrial land along the Dolarway Road corridor and near the west freeway interchange.

***Institutional***

Ellensburg has a long-standing and important institutional fabric. It is home to Central Washington University, and it is the County seat. Ellensburg also hosts Kittitas County's central medical and hospital services. Institutions are by far the largest employers in Ellensburg.

Central Washington University is an important and vital force in the community. CWU's Ellensburg campus occupies more than 300 acres and employs more than 1,300 people. The university enrolls more than 7,000 students at the Ellensburg campus, with nearly 1,000 more enrolled at branch facilities. (Ellensburg's population is slightly greater than 16,000.) CWU is currently preparing a strategic plan to guide its capital improvements and master planning for the next 20 years. The CWU plan calls for continued and increased integration between the community and the university, with growing emphasis on linking university activities with downtown and the CBD.

Ellensburg also operates a parks system that encompasses more than 2,000 acres of parkland. The County Fairgrounds, run by the County, add another 60 acres to the recreational land total.

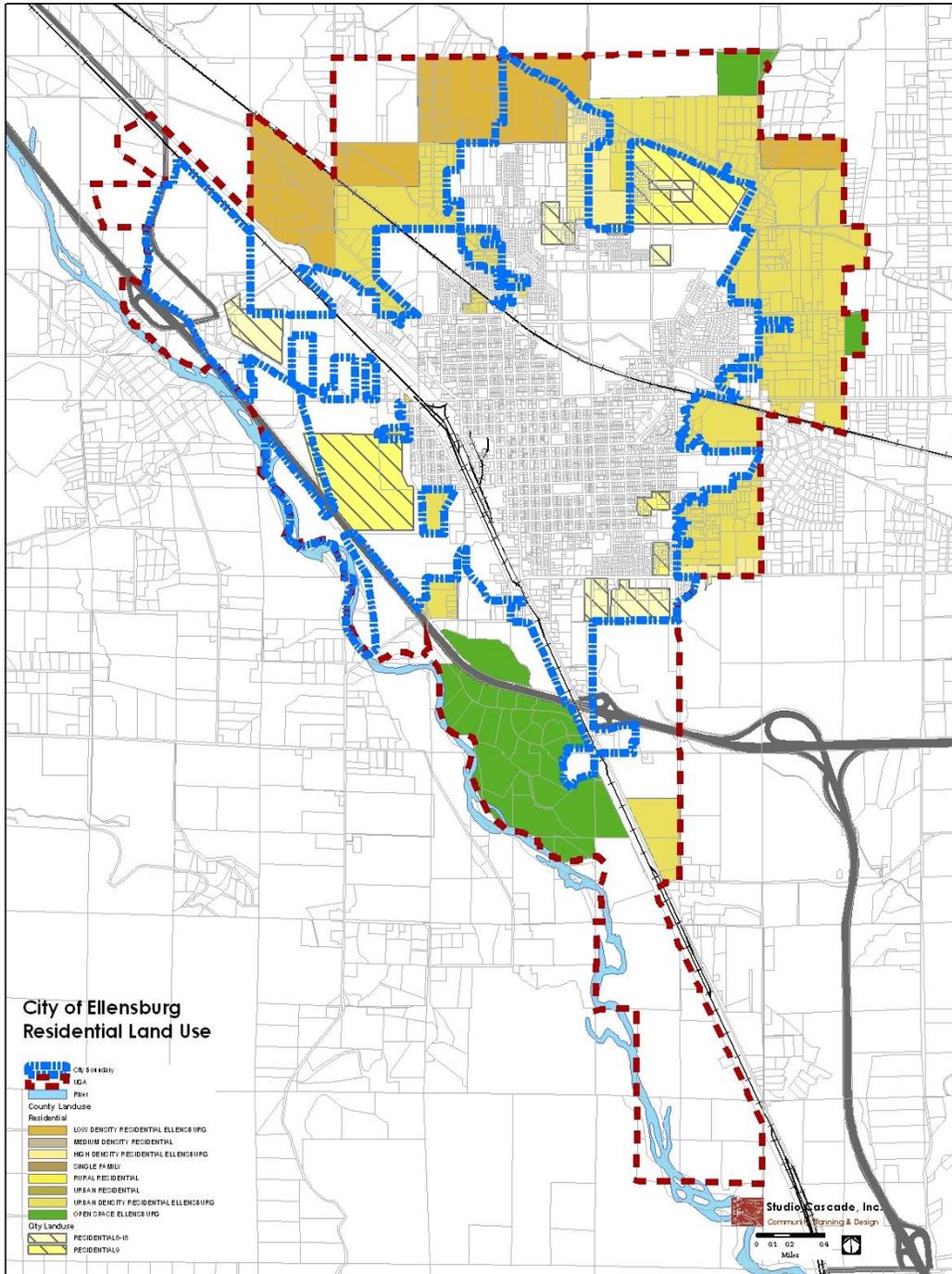


Figure 4.5 - 2006 residential land uses in the UGA. See Figure 4.9 for guide to the City’s land use designations after 2006 (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

There are also several administrative offices and public services in the community. County facilities include the courthouse, jail and various support yards and shops. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) maintains an operations yard in Ellensburg, and the United States Forest Service (USFS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and many other state and federal agencies maintain offices or facilities in town, including the Ellensburg School District and Kittitas County Public Health District No.1 that owns and operates the Kittitas Valley Community Hospital and several physician clinics.

### **Mixed Uses**

There are few areas where land uses mix in Ellensburg. The Downtown Historic District and the university are the two main places where use mixing has occurred. Other parts of the community are almost totally defined by single uses, with residential districts, industrial districts, and tourist commercial districts hosting only the types of uses those districts allow.

Recent trends favoring the mixing of uses indicate a growing desire to make urban spaces more dynamic and less auto reliant. These trends are currently taking place in Ellensburg, such as in the Downtown Historic District. Rapid growth in Ellensburg will require changes in other areas to accomplish mixed land uses.

Increasing mixed uses can be done by removing barriers, providing incentives, and locating public facilities where they are more accessible to neighborhoods. Mixed-use community centers that locate destinations within close proximity to residences increase opportunities for walking and bicycling.

### **Urban Growth Area**

The City of Ellensburg's municipal boundaries encompass 4,260 acres, and the Urban Growth Area (UGA) encompasses another 4,590 acres. Much of the land within the UGA but outside the city limits is now either undeveloped or sparsely developed, reflecting the community's interest in converting it from low-intensity use to urban use over time. Some developed areas are excluded from the UGA - notably to the east of town - because they were subdivided to near-urban intensity but are not likely to become any more intense than they now are. Residents in these areas have voiced little interest in becoming annexed into the City, and the City has little motivation now to entice them to do so.

In 2008, the UGA boundary was moved from the south below Tjossem Road to the north in the area of the airport. Much of the land south of the City borders the Yakima River making it environmentally sensitive, and is located below the wastewater treatment plant making system improvements to serve it expensive. The area to the north of the City near the airport is available for industrial development if supplied with utilities.

Kittitas County enlarged Ellensburg’s UGA in 2005, expanding it eastward to Bull Road, encompassing approximately 190 acres of vacant land adjacent to the north side of I-90. This expansion represents the first since the County adopted Ellensburg’s UGA in 1997.

### **Demand and Needs Assessment**

Ellensburg’s population is forecast to reach almost 23,000 residents by the year 2025 (*Chapter 2*). This growing residential population will increase demands on land and facilities, on local services and increase the potential for job and retail sales growth.

Tourist activities in the area are also expected to rise, driven by new developments in and around Ellensburg such as the Suncadia

resort. The City encourages increased density in specific areas in order to preserve and conserve ecologically sensitive land, and pace expansion into the UGA to match the City’s ability to provide services. Population growth will increase demands on schools, parks, open spaces, retail goods, services, institutions and industrial land. Although growth will consume land, the community has expressed the desire to maintain Ellensburg’s character by projecting that character onto future land development, preserving the compact urban pattern established within the city’s core while allowing for well-planned residential, commercial, industrial and institutional growth in appropriate areas that may lie outside the Central Commercial zones.

#### **Residential**

If Ellensburg expects to house its forecast population of 23,000, and if household size continues at 2.25 persons per household, the community will need approximately 3,100 more housing units constructed over the next 25 years. At a minimum density of four units per acre, Ellensburg will need to develop approximately 780 acres for new single-family neighborhoods. These land consumption figures can be altered by varying the number of persons per household, and/or by introducing new housing types. The differences in land demand can be quite striking (*Table 4.1*). Figure 4.5 illustrates the extent and density of Ellensburg’s current residential land use.

If Ellensburg continues to grow with new housing units predominantly as single-family structures, it will need to convert approximately 780 acres of open land into housing. If, however, Ellensburg were to concentrate its housing growth into more attached housing



**Figure 4.6** – Ellensburg has experienced strong growth in recent years, a trend that is expected to continue through the course of this plan. (*Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.*)

units and fewer single-family housing structures, it could accommodate its population growth by converting only 590 acres of open land into new housing.

**Table 4.1 - Demand for Residential Land – Population Increase = 7,000**

	Density	Growth Share	Pop	Pop/Unit	Units	Land Area
<b>Method 1</b>						
Single Family Detached	4 du*/ac	100%	7,000	2.25	3,111	778 ac
Townhouse/Cottage Housing	6 du*/ac	0%	0	2.25	0	0 ac
Stacked Units	12 du*/ac	0%	0	2.14	0	0 ac
Total Land Area						778 ac
<b>Method 2</b>						
Single Family Detached	4 du*/ac	70%	4,900	2.25	2,178	544 ac
Townhouse/Cottage Housing	6 du*/ac	15%	1,050	2.25	467	78 ac
Stacked Units	12 du*/ac	15%	1,050	2.14	490	41 ac
Total Land Area						663 ac
<b>Method 3</b>						
Single Family Detached	4 du*/ac	50%	3,500	2.25	1,555	390 ac
Townhouse/Cottage Housing	6 du*/ac	25%	1,750	2.25	778	130 ac
Stacked Units	12 du*/ac	25%	1,750	2.14	818	68 ac
Total Land Area						588 ac

\* du = Dwelling Unit, in this chart density measured by dwelling unit per acre

**Commercial**

Ellensburg citizens have a strong desire to retain the character of the Downtown Historic District. In spite of this, factors such as population growth, increased tourism and changing consumer habits have brought about significant retail sales “leakage” as residents leave the town to shop elsewhere. If Ellensburg is to meet the demands its

growing population is making for a full range of locally-available goods and services, (capturing the retail dollars of its residents and tourists), it may need to strengthen its Central Commercial zones and allow for increased retail development at other locations. As new neighborhoods are constructed further away from existing commercial districts, the City may want to provide for more neighborhood commercial or “urban satellite villages,” providing residents with an opportunity to obtain basic goods and services within walking distance of their homes.

### ***Industrial***

Ellensburg does not now have a comprehensive economic development strategy, but the community has expressed its desire to improve local employment opportunities. Community members have talked about attracting manufacturing, transportation and business park uses within the UGA. In the short term, areas most suited for these types of uses are located near the Ellensburg airport along Dolarway Road between the Central Commercial zones and the west interchange, and between the railroad and the freeway south of West Ellensburg Park.

Much of the land designated for industrial development near Interstate 90 is constrained by floodplain or by wetland areas. In addition, much of the land currently zoned for industrial uses is not served with the infrastructure needed to make it immediately available and attractive to prospective businesses.

If Ellensburg wishes to increase its supply of industrial land to facilitate industrial expansion, it may wish to make more industrial land available in less-constrained areas within the city limits and UGA; to expand the UGA to encompass attractive industrial development sites; and/or develop City-owned land south of West Ellensburg Park to help jump-start industrial projects.

### ***Institutional***

Central Washington University, Kittitas Valley Community Hospital, the Kittitas County facilities, Ellensburg’s parks, and the various schools and offices of the Ellensburg School District are some of the community’s most visible institutions. There are other institutions, however, that are also important in establishing and maintaining the sense of community Ellensburg residents treasure; these include the library, the food bank, houses of worship, the post office, and other non-profit or government-sponsored institutions. As Ellensburg grows, land and resources will need to be dedicated to each of these uses to ensure the new residents can enjoy the same level of service that current residents do. In addition, provisions need to be made in the City zoning code to enable these public/institutional properties to revert to non-public/institutional uses when the need arises.

## Issues

Further assessment of the community’s characteristics and the abundant comments received from the public and from the Advisory Committee during this process revealed the following list of land use issues. These summarize the comments submitted in those meetings and introduce some of the more challenging circumstances Ellensburg will face during this planning period. The “goal reference” column in the following chart indicates which land use goals address the topics introduced in “issues” column.

Issues	Goal References
To accommodate enrollment growth and an increased desire to house students on campus, the University may locate student housing units in the Downtown Historic District, occupying upper floors of existing buildings and constructing new residential buildings where necessary	LU-5
The City of Ellensburg and Kittitas County have not effectively coordinated their planning efforts, particularly with regard to managing the development of land within and just beyond the limits of the urban growth area	LU-6
Despite Ellensburg’s turn-of-the-century urban core, the community as a whole is not walkable, with new residential development and newer commercial uses dispersing across a wide area	LU-7
Housing prices are increasing in Ellensburg, with the year 2000 median home price of \$113,000 not affordable to households earning a median level income of \$20,000. Increases in home prices since 2000 appear to have outstripped increases in household income	LU-8
Single-family, suburban-style development is spreading into farmland on the northern and eastern edges of the community, creating a land use pattern strongly supported by current market demand but increasingly difficult and expensive to serve with utilities, roads, and public safety	LU-9
Consumer habits are changing to favor larger, discount retailers, with Ellensburg shoppers choosing to travel elsewhere for goods available through such stores	LU-3
Multiple property ownerships and parcel configurations in the Central Commercial zones act as barriers to large scale redevelopment or to reconfiguration of the commercial and industrial districts to accommodate large retail users	LU-2, LU-4
Hopes for infilling residential neighborhoods near the Central Commercial zones with increasingly dense housing have not come to fruition	LU-2
It is difficult to market industrial land in Ellensburg because of flood plain designations or other constraints	LU-1

## **Areas Warranting Special Handling**

There are several areas of interest within Ellensburg’s UGA that warrant special consideration as the community evolves:

**Developing neighborhoods (1)** – Ellensburg has experienced rapid residential development. The area’s history is agricultural, and the land ownership patterns reflect it. Parcel lines follow natural contours or the wishes of farmers who may have divided land for any number of purposes. Rarely do the parcel lines coincide with natural extensions of streets or trails as developed in the original Ellensburg plats. This presents difficulty as the city expands outward. Streets end at “T” intersections. Traffic that in the original city could filter through multiple streets becomes concentrated on major arterials in newly developed areas. The pattern of property ownership has caused the development of an entirely different land use and transportation system to serve these areas, and the differences have created a distinctly different development character surrounding the traditional city. It has also created ranks of residents who are automobile dependent for accessing goods and services.

**Downtown Historic District (2)** – The Downtown Historic District has been Ellensburg’s primary focus since the town’s founding. It is unique, and it is a source of tremendous community pride. The downtown’s rapid and enduring reconstruction after the 1889 fire has become an enduring symbol of Ellensburg’s collective will and sense of accomplishment. Like many other traditional downtown shopping districts, Ellensburg’s is in transition. Its importance as a regional retail, services, cultural and institutional center is shifting. Though it still retains the county courthouse, many museums, a library, and abundant general retail and office uses, its popularity among shoppers appears to be on the decline. The distance between new homes and existing commercial and institutional services is growing, leaving many residents car-dependent. Closely linked to the Downtown Historic District is the historic Northern Pacific Depot at the end of the Third Ave. corridor. It has the potential to become a retail and cultural center and qualifies as an inter/multi-modal transportation hub. The city may devise strategies to facilitate this development.

Managing this shift is one of the primary issues for this plan and for Ellensburg’s future. The City must develop, and actively implement, strategies that acknowledge and maintain the Downtown Historic District’s relative importance and historic position.

**West Interchange (3)** – Ellensburg’s western interchange with I-90 has largely been dedicated to tourist commercial land uses, typified by the restaurants, gas stations, hotels, and truck stops developed there over the past 20 years. More recent land use changes have permitted auto sales and an office complex to develop there. Much of this

comprehensive plan rewrite has been framed around land use issues arising from requests to modify designations at the west interchange to permit large-scale, regional retail and industrial uses.

The City will consider adoption of development regulations to address the manner in which new development will compliment existing development in the community, contribute to the success of the CBD, and serve an appropriate western gateway into the city.

**South Interchange (4)** - For many, the I-90 interchange with Canyon Road is all they see of Ellensburg. Several hotels, restaurants, and specialized retailers have established themselves there, catering to the needs of Interstate travelers, tourists and visitors. Canyon Road has become a continuous strip of commercial development stretching from the freeway to the Central Commercial zones. As with the west interchange, interest for more intense development at the south interchange is motivating requests for different land use designations that would allow more variety, including regional retail development.

The City will consider adoption of development regulations to address the manner in which new development will compliment existing development in the community, contribute to the success of the CBD, and serve as an appropriate southern gateway into the city.

**Industrial Corridor (5)** - Ellensburg needs more industrial land relatively free of constraints with good access to regional transportation facilities. While some of this industrial land may now be found at and around Bowers Field, the bulk of available industrial land lies along Dolarway Road between the Central Commercial zones and the west interchange. Dolarway is slated to develop as Ellensburg's primary industrial district, and the roadway and land uses lining it may need close attention to ensure its industrial future is appropriately planned. Ellensburg has an opportunity through city-owned land adjacent to I-90 south of West Ellensburg Park to increase its supply of industrial land.

**Heritage Corridor (6)** - State Highway 10 used to pass through Ellensburg on its way between Seattle and Spokane. Some of the buildings on University Way are authentic remnants of that past, similar to the types of structures that were developed along the famous Route 66 in the Southwest. While Ellensburg is much more than just a stop on a long-forgotten highway, the architectural styles of that period create a unique opportunity for Ellensburg; particularly as linking the Central Commercial zones to the west interchange becomes more important.

**Canyon Road Corridor (7)** - This commercial strip is now the most popular way to enter Ellensburg from I-90. The lodging, dining and retail establishments at the south end of

the corridor have become the heart of Ellensburg's hospitality sector. Connecting this area to the Central Commercial zones will become an important priority in the years ahead, especially if CWU continues its growth trends, and retail and tourism sectors continue to expand.

**Urban Growth Area (8)** - Coordination between the County and the City is vital if the City expects to successfully implement this comprehensive plan. The UGA encompasses that area into which the City will grow over the next 20 years, and for that reason, it must be managed in a way consistent with the City's long-range plans. This will require the County and the City to collaborate on planning for the UGA, on adopting rules governing annexations, and on land development and transportation systems that facilitate the transition into the city and respect community needs.

## Land Use Scenarios

During its planning process, Ellensburg considered four land use scenarios. The intent behind this approach was to find appropriate conceptual strategies to address pressing issues, making each alternative as feasible as possible. Two of the four land use concepts emerged as “preferred” strategies, following careful and deliberate consideration of the various alternatives, with components integrated from each to produce a strong and achievable direction.

This section of the plan discusses the various land use districts and overlays shown on the comprehensive plan land use map, the scenarios considered but not selected as a preferred alternative, and the preferred alternatives as selected by the City Council in July of 2006 and January of 2007.

This plan retains many of the land use designations from the earlier comprehensive plan, but adds a few twists to encourage a customized planning strategy for those areas that are unique or that in other ways need special handling.

### Land Use Districts

The proposed land use designations are based on the existing comprehensive plan and the zoning designations the City now has in place for land within the city limits. The 1995 comprehensive plan designated the majority of its land as Urban Development/Density, not differentiating between land uses in those areas that are already developed. This comprehensive plan takes a slightly different approach, designating land uses more specifically while still allowing flexibility on the precise zoning designations that should be applied within each category.

The land use districts described below apply to all land within the Ellensburg UGA. Kittitas County will be responsible for assigning actual land use designations to property within the UGA but outside Ellensburg’s city limits. Each land use district is also assigned implementing zoning districts. (Table 4.2)

**Table 4.2** – Implementing zoning districts for land use designations

Comp Plan Designation	Implementing Zone
Business Office Park	R-O
Central Commercial	C-C, C-CII
Corridor/Neighborhood Commercial	C-C II, C-H, C-N
Tourist Commercial	T-C, C-H
General Commercial	T-C, C-H,
Light Industrial	I-L
Heavy Industrial	I-H
Industrial Residential	R-S, R-O
Mixed Residential	R-S, R-L, R-M, R-O, MHP, MHS
High Density Residential	R-H, R-O,
Open Space	P-R
Public / Institutional	P-R or per Zoning Code.

**General Commercial (GC)** – The General Commercial land use designation is intended to permit large-scale projects of general retail commercial development, which projects are part of an integrated site development plan and occur on land with an underlying commercial zone. Such general commercial projects may incorporate office and mixed commercial/residential land uses in the site development plans. Development regulations for general commercial development shall be designed as to discourage the proliferation of separate un-coordinated projects such as found in strip development. General Commercial development regulations shall also provide for retail commercial construction of sufficient size and scale to meet the needs of the project and the goals and policies of the City’s comprehensive plan in the areas of effective site planning, coordination with other land uses and land parcels in the area, and necessary on and off-site physical infrastructure.

**Mixed Residential (MDR)** – The MDR land use designation is intended to provide for the development of housing at approximately four to 12 dwelling units per gross acre. This density range anticipates development of homes on individual lots or the development of duplexes or detached second units in specific areas. It also anticipates development of multiplexes, small-lot single-family units and townhomes. This designation is applied to areas developed into single-family neighborhoods and to areas expected to develop in lower-density or medium intensity residential patterns.

**High Density Residential (HDR)** – This land use designation accommodates the construction of townhouses, condominiums and other attached housing, providing a target density of eight to 18 units per acre. This designation includes areas already developed as apartments or other attached housing and areas expected to have multi-family development.

**Corridor and Neighborhood Commercial (CNC)** – The Corridor and Neighborhood Commercial land use designation applies to all land suitable for small-scale commercial development designed to serve the immediate neighborhoods surrounding it, as well as auto-oriented commercial development which has little interdependence or coordinated access with adjacent commercial development, and obtains maximum exposure to passing traffic on arterial streets and highways.

**Central Commercial (CC)** – The Central Commercial designation applies to the CBD and some of the land surrounding it, allowing uses like those already established in the CC and CC II zones to continue. The intent of this designation is to create and sustain a commercial district that caters to pedestrians and emphasizes street activity, a mix of retail and institutional uses, and an increasing amount of after-hours entertainment and leisure activities.

**Tourist Commercial (TC)** – Tourist Commercial land is intended to serve the needs of the traveling public, offering accommodation, dining, fuel and other related land uses. It also permits professional offices. It is not considered a general retail use and should not provide for retail land uses that directly compete with those permitted in other commercial districts.

**Light Industrial (LI)** – The industrial designation is intended to provide for the creation of local jobs in a manner consistent with the character of the community. The types of uses permitted in this district would be light industrial in nature, providing employment in a non-polluting manner and minimizing traffic, noise, air pollution and lighting impacts on nearby properties and the local circulation system.

**Heavy Industrial (HI)** – The industrial designation is intended to provide for the creation of local jobs and other local economic activity in a manner consistent with the character of the community. The types of uses permitted in this district would be general industrial in nature, providing employment in as non-polluting manner as feasible and minimizing traffic, noise, air pollution and lighting impacts on nearby properties and the local circulation system.

**Business Office Park (BOP)** – This designation is intended to accommodate a mix of office and light industry, characterized by low noise and air quality emissions. Uses in this district might include start-up manufacturing, research and development or small-scale warehousing.

**Industrial Residential (IR)** – This designation is intended to provide for well-designed, mixed-use projects that create small-scale business-park environments suitable for residential and light industrial uses.

**Public/Institutional (PI)** – Public and institutional uses, including hospitals, treatment centers, city offices, schools, parks, and churches populate this land use designation. The designation is applied to parcels of land now owned by public or private entities and are limited to open space or institutional use. It should be noted, however, that such Public/Institutional uses may over time cease on such properties and it is both expected and appropriate for such properties to be able to revert back to non-public/institutional uses in a manner that minimizes impacts to the surrounding neighborhood or development pattern.

**Open Space (OS)** – The open space designation applies to large tracts of undeveloped or undevelopable land dedicated to recreation or its natural condition. It should be noted, however, that over time there may be a need for such open space uses to cease on such properties and it is both expected and appropriate for such properties to be able to revert

back to non-open space uses in a manner that minimizes impacts to the surrounding neighborhood or development pattern.

**Airport Overlay** – This overlay district identifies areas where conflict might arise between the airport and adjoining areas. A zoning overlay to implement design standards mitigating noise impacts may include the requirement to install double-paned windows and self-closing doors in residential projects, and there may be requirements for subdivisions to notify potential purchasers of issues and support continued air operations.

**Possible Overlay Districts**

Overlay districts can be applied to areas when special circumstances within those areas warrant unique treatment. Overlay districts do not replace the underlying zoning requirements; instead, the overlay applies additional or modified standards regarding development design, building placement, or land use. Such districts have been employed by other jurisdictions on land near airports, in central business districts, along commercial corridors and in “heritage” areas.

**Central Business District Overlay** – This overlay district would draw special attention to projects proposed within the Central Commercial zones. A zoning overlay applied to this area should call for buildings to be constructed at the street line, reduce parking standards, allow for the mixing of residential and commercial uses, apply special design requirements for facades, encourage two or three-story construction and provide sign standards to enhance or ensure compatibility with area characteristics.

**University Way Overlay District** – University way provides the most popular link between the west interchange and the Central Commercial zones. Due to the City’s selection of the west interchange and south interchange development scenarios, this corridor will likely grow in importance, visibility and volume. The City may wish to designate an overlay along the corridor’s length to ensure that access management and land use designations along it are consistent with the community’s overall development strategies.

**Dolarway Road Overlay District** – It is likely that Ellensburg will look to the Dolarway Road corridor as its primary industrial area. A Dolarway Road Overlay District would help make sure that development along the corridor is consistent with its industrial intensification while still compatible with existing residential land uses in West Ellensburg.

**South Interchange Overlay District** – The City’s selection of the south interchange scenario as one of two primary development strategies will greatly influence the character of development at the south interchange. The City may wish to create an

overlay district at the south interchange that would manage access and land use patterns to ensure overall compatibility and economic punch.

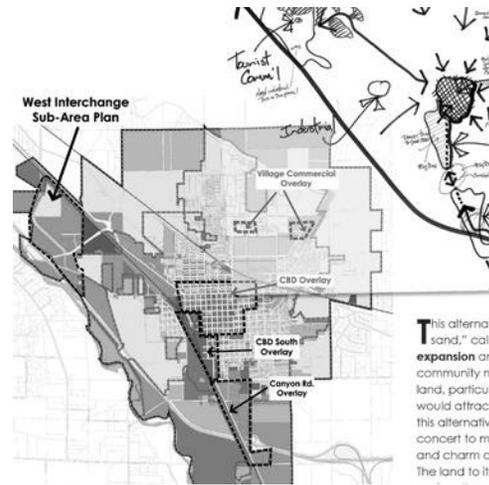
**Mixed-Use Overlay** – The Mixed-Use overlay would apply to land most suitable for development as a combination of commercial and residential uses. Such combinations may currently be found in or near the Downtown Historic District, at the western freeway interchange, and in northern Ellensburg. Mixed-use development may also occur in planned communities when a developer chooses to emphasize development as a neighborhood center. Allowable uses in this designation would include neighborhood commercial, service commercial and multi-family residential, catering to compatible vertical (where an apartment is located above a retail use) or horizontal (where housing occupies a portion of a parcel that also hosts a non-residential use) configurations.

#### **Downtown Retail Growth Scenario**

This alternative retained and enhanced the existing comprehensive plan's policies regarding commercial land use. These policies would have permitted continued growth of retail, even to the extent of big-box or regional retail if it were to locate in the central commercial area. Those policies called for increased public action to facilitate regional retail growth, with the City or some other agent acquiring parcels, improving roads, upgrading utility systems as necessary and finding solutions to increased parking demand. The key reasoning behind this alternative was to attempt to allow Ellensburg residents to have an opportunity to shop locally, while still concentrating retail activity downtown.

This scenario required the successful intermingling of downtown and the new regional retail uses expected to develop to the south and west of the Central Commercial zones. Traffic would increase, and parking would be in high demand. The scenario called for the provision of strong and clear pedestrian linkages and promoted interconnectedness between the two districts, helping both to work together as one.

As shown in the land use plan, this alternative called for overlay districts or subarea plans for the Central Commercial zones, the west interchange, Dolarway Road, Cascade Way, and the south interchange. The CBD overlay provided for the combination of smaller parcels, the vacation of certain rights of way, and other measures to make land in



**Figure 4.7** – Portion of presentation sketch, one of four land-use alternatives included in the public process. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

or near the Central Commercial zones more attractive for large-scale retail development. The two corridors leading from the west interchange to the Central Commercial zones would be emphasized, one as a commercial connector to the Central Commercial zones and the other as an industrial corridor. The Cascade Way corridor would emphasize its heritage as an early-era highway. The Dolarway industrial corridor would emphasize the need for increased truck traffic and access to industrial land. An overlay for the south interchange would establish a master development pattern for the mostly-vacant land there, ensuring its compatibility with the residential areas to the north and the commercial uses bounding it on the west.

This option closely resembled the 1995 plan, but directed aggressive City action to make Central Commercial land more attractive for large-scale retailers. It also called for the removal of the southernmost lobe of the UGA, concentrating industrial development efforts on the places easiest to serve with water and, more importantly, wastewater.

#### ***Limited Retail Growth Scenario***

This alternative drew a line in the sand, calling for an end to retail expansion and declaring that the community needed no more retail land, particularly in a condition that would attract regional retailers. This alternative included policies to restrict any re-designation of land to categories permitting regional retail, and modified those policies in the comprehensive plan that currently allow it near the Central Commercial zones. The reasoning behind this alternative was to retain the small-scale, specialized retail character the community has developed, keeping Ellensburg's Central Commercial zones as the undisputed center for local shopping – despite the growth of out-of-town and internet-based shopping.

In this alternative, all policies needed to work towards maintaining the integrity and charm of Ellensburg's core. The land to the immediate west and south of the Downtown Historic District would be redefined in a support role, providing parking that might otherwise consume Downtown Historic District land. Neighborhoods on the periphery would gradually intensify, and CWU could locate housing within the core, to enhance Central Commercial zone activity levels.

As shown in the land use plan, this alternative called for overlay districts or subarea plans for the Central Commercial zones, the west interchange and the south interchange. The major objectives here were to increase the developability of the Central Commercial zones for more small-scale retail while providing direction on how the interchange areas should develop. It also redesignated residential land around the west interchange as light industrial, providing for an increased supply of industrial land.

**Preferred Scenario: South Interchange Development**

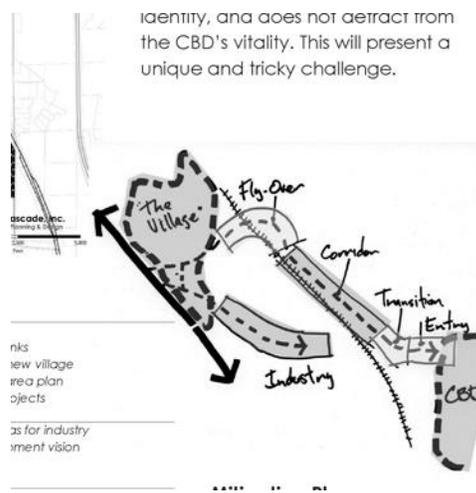
This scenario addresses increased development of land at the south interchange. It responds to requests for increased development opportunities from Mountain View Avenue south to I-90, east to Bull Road and west to Canyon Road, assigning land use designations that permit a range of regional retail, open space, and residential land uses. This alternative also includes policies and programs that attempt to link the area more closely with the Central Commercial zones, and encourage increased economic activity there.

This alternative presents one of two chosen options for locating regional retail, putting it at the interchange with Canyon Road on the City’s southern edge. This alternative includes policies to facilitate that type of development, while emphasizing the Canyon Road area’s connection to the Central Commercial zones and the rest of the community. The key reasoning behind this alternative is to provide land for increased regional retail activity where freeway visibility and land ownership are favorable, while also providing it at a location that can energize the community’s urban fabric within walkable proximity to central Ellensburg.

This scenario includes the same range of overlay districts as in the west interchange scenario. The CBD overlay district should concentrate on a land use scheme and development standards to increase its ability to complement and function as a counter-pole to retail development at the south interchange. The south interchange overlay puts in place special land use districts and development regulations to control its development as a regional retail center, ensuring compatibility with neighboring land uses and emphasizing non-automotive linkages to the Central Commercial zones.

**Preferred Scenario: West Interchange Development**

This scenario addresses increased development of land at the west interchange from a point at the intersection of the BNSF railroad right-of-way and the western city limits as of the date of Council approval of this comprehensive plan, proceeding south along the existing city limit line until it intersects with the right-of-way for Interstate Highway 90, then proceeding southeasterly until intersection with the southerly right-of-way boundary of the University Way right-of-way, then proceeding easterly to a point formed by the intersection of a line extending westerly from the south boundary of the Newhall



**Figure 4.8** – Portion of presentation sketch for what emerged as one of Ellensburg’s preferred land use alternatives. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

property, then continuing easterly until said line intersects with the BNSF railroad right-of-way, then continuing northwesterly along the southern edge of the BNSF railroad right-of-way to the point of beginning. Its land use designations and systems of overlays specifically implements policies that direct land use development. This land use scenario respects neighborhood character and encourages targeted intensification to enhance specific urban environments within the existing city limits.

This scenario presents a strategy set that permits increased regional retail and industrial development at the west interchange. The area designated for potential regional retail use encompasses several properties at the west interchange. It provides policies and programs designed to make this alternative work within the overall context of the comprehensive plan. These policies and programs include measures to mitigate direct environmental impact from the development at the interchange, as well as measures to help connect this project to the Central Commercial zones, to minimize reliance on the automobile, to revitalize the Downtown Historic District, and create an appropriate and attractive community entry at its western end.

This alternative incorporates policies facilitating development of this property for regional, big-box retail, including requirements designed to minimize any negative impacts the Central Commercial zones might experience through increased local retail competition or the community might experience because of the dispersion of local retail activity. The key reasoning behind this alternative is to offer land for regional retail development where large parcels of land are under a single ownership, where freeway access is convenient, and where barriers to large-parcel regional center development are few.

The development of regional, big-box retail at the I-90 interchanges could more than double the community's supply of retail square footage. It is crucial that such development be designed and built in a way that preserves the community's identity and does not detract from the downtown's vitality. Regional retail will continue to exist in the central commercial zones, but they will also serve as the locus for specialty retail, entertainment, and housing, offering shopping, museums, restaurants, theaters and other such uses to ensure their vitality.

**Key Factors:**

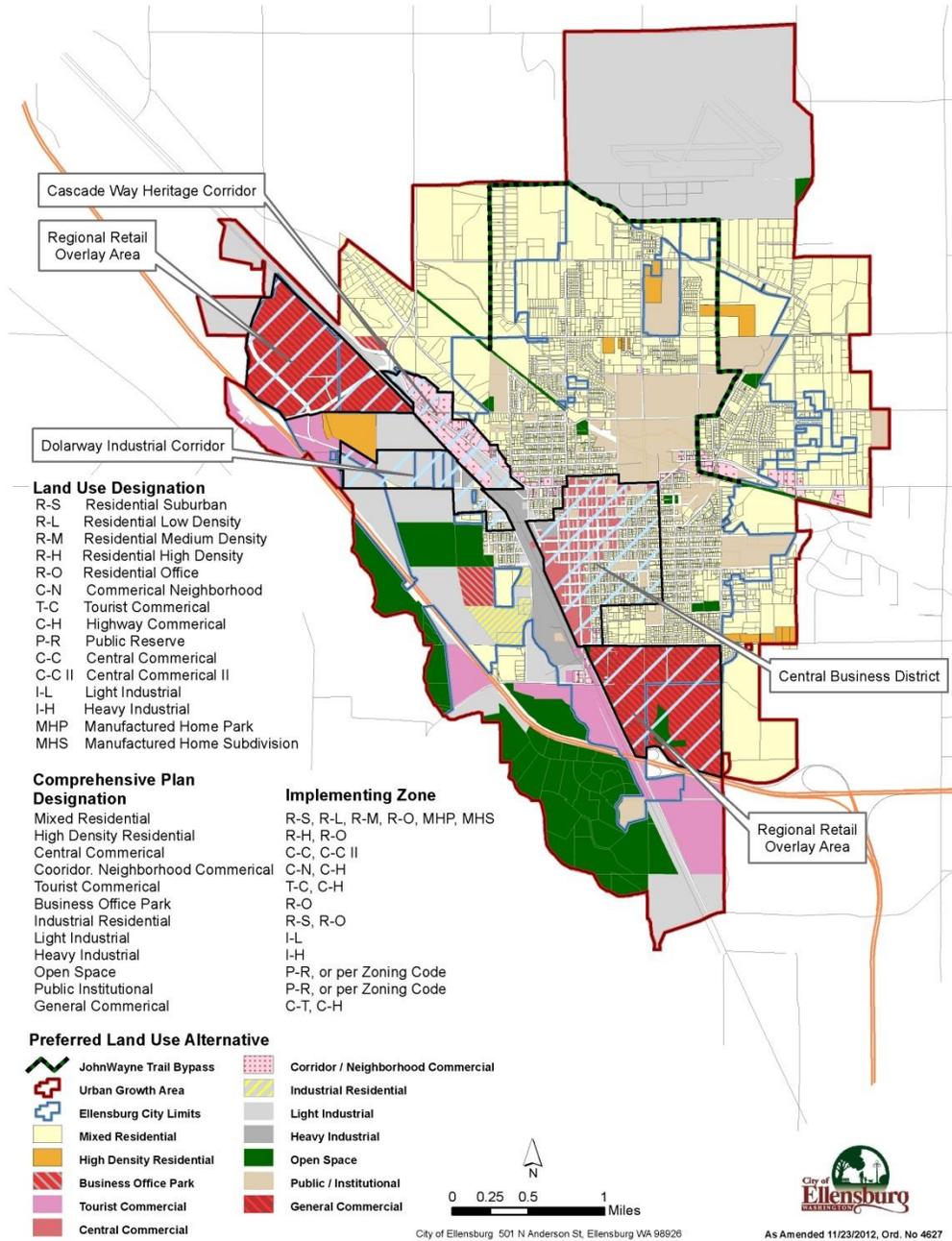
- New automobile and truck traffic can be easily managed at the interchange location
- Ample land is available, is in single ownership and is ready for development into a retail center
- Increased municipal revenues from retail development may allow the City to reinvest in other areas

- Retail development at the interchange will create pressure to develop compatible uses surrounding it
- Designating this land for retail use further limits availability of land for industrial development, particularly where development constraints are more easily overcome
- Designation of much of the land at the west interchange for retail may preclude industrial development in that area, and drive expansion of the UGA to allow for increased industrial use elsewhere
- The City currently has little control in determining the appearance or layout of retail development
- Retail land use at the interchange will compete with existing Central Commercial zone retail
- The west interchange is two miles away from the Central Commercial zones, separated by railroad tracks, open spaces, and disconnected, land-intensive commercial and storage land uses. There is little possibility of developing a pedestrian connection between the west interchange and the Central Commercial zones.

Table 4.3 shows the distribution of the various proposed land uses throughout Ellensburg. It illustrates how the entire 8,960-acre City and UGA is allocated among residential, commercial, industrial and other uses. The single greatest land use is in the “Mixed Residential” category, comprising approximately 40% of the City and UGA. While the industrial land use designations combine for almost 25% of the City and UGA, much of that land may be constrained by wetlands, floodplain, or awkward parcel configurations. The General Commercial designation, applied at both freeway interchanges, occupies 5.4% of the City and UGA, well in excess of the 1.5% occupied by the Central Commercial designation.

**Table 4.3 - Future Land Use**

Future Land Use	City		UGA		City/UGA	
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%
Business Office Park	207.41	4.7	9.52	0.2	216.93	2.4
Central Commercial	131.87	3.0	0	0.0	131.87	1.5
Corridor/Neighborhood Commercial	153.83	3.5	21.21	0.5	175.04	2.0
Tourist Commercial	151.52	3.4	261.99	5.7	413.51	4.6
General Commercial	261.94	6.0	223.82	4.9	485.76	5.4
Heavy Industrial	142.25	3.2	291.61	6.4	433.86	4.8
Industrial Residential	93.77	2.1	0	0.0	93.77	1.0
Light Industrial	668.61	15.2	1010.75	22.1	1679.36	18.7
Mixed Residential	1,492.87	34.0	2095.6	45.9	3,588.47	40.1
High Density Residential	194.47	4.4	41.47	0.9	235.94	2.6
Public/Institutional	495.02	11.3	70.43	1.5	565.45	6.3
Open Space	400.10	9.1	539.67	11.8	939.77	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,393.66</b>		<b>4,566.07</b>		<b>8,959.73</b>	



**Figure 4.9** – Preferred Land Use Designations (Image source: City of Ellensburg GIS.) This is the only official guide to the City’s land use designations after 2006.

## Goals, Policies and Programs

The following table provides the goals, policies and programs that will help the City implement its comprehensive plan objectives. The programs are intended to be specific and task-oriented, allowing the City Council and City Manager to assign responsibility to various staff members or commissions for completion. Systematic undertaking and completion of the various programs will ensure that policies are implemented and will help achieve plan goals.

### **Goal LU-1** - *Achieve a harmonious, compatible arrangement of all land uses*

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Prepare clear and consistent development review standards and processes	<b>1</b>	Prepare a Downtown Historic District urban design and land use plan to maintain and enhance the district’s intimate scale and character
		<b>2</b>	Review and revise Downtown Historic District design guidelines
		<b>3</b>	Create a regional retail zone and design guidelines
		<b>4</b>	Modify commercial neighborhood zoning to incorporate “urban satellite village” concepts to serve neighborhoods distant from commercial districts
		<b>5</b>	Create an office/business park zoning district or allow office/business parks within existing zones such as IL, IH, CT and CH and develop design standards
		<b>6</b>	Review alternative development regulations such as binding site plans, cluster subdivisions or other tools
<b>B</b>	Recognize importance of land use interrelationships	<b>1</b>	Revise zoning to permit and encourage the mixing of residential and commercial uses
		<b>2</b>	Study use of form-based zoning for application to the Central

**Goal LU-1** - Achieve a harmonious, compatible arrangement of all land uses

Policy	Program
	Commercial zones
3	The City will consider adoption of development regulations for the west and south interchange areas so that development results in appropriate site development standards and the opportunity to site regional commercial land uses.
4	Locate industrial land in the north portion of the west interchange area
5	Locate industrial land at the South Interchange area to the immediate south of Berry Road, east of Canyon Road and north of Tjossem Road
6	Concentrate industrial uses between Water Street and the railroad
7	Locate industrial land along Dolarway and the area between I-90 and the railroad south of west Ellensburg park
8	Locate compatible uses with the industrial property near the proposed third I-90 interchange at Umptanum Road
9	Adopt zoning regulations to discourage the siting of land uses incompatible with Bowers Field
10	Adopt zoning regulations that enable public/institutional zoned properties to convert to non-public/institutional zoning designations that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and development pattern or to non-public/institutional zoning designations that may be different

**Goal LU-1** - Achieve a harmonious, compatible arrangement of all land uses

Policy	Program
	<p>from the surrounding neighborhood and development pattern provided that any identified negative impacts to that surrounding neighborhood or development pattern have been addressed through appropriate mitigation</p>

**Goal LU-2** - Encourage optimum land utilization

Policy	Program
<p><b>A</b> Encourage low density residential and agricultural land uses within the City’s UGA to the exclusion of commercial, industrial or small lot/high density residential land uses until the provision of urban services and annexation</p>	<p><b>1</b> Develop and adopt an interlocal agreement with Kittitas County regarding land use permitting in and around the UGA</p>
	<p><b>2</b> Work with Kittitas County to review and revise Countywide planning policies on annexation to reinforce cooperative planning for efficient use of land</p>
	<p><b>3</b> Coordinate with County to revise zoning to include an “urban reserve” zone for the areas within and surrounding the UGA</p>
<p><b>B</b> Encourage infilling and increased residential density in and around the Central Commercial zones</p>	<p><b>1</b> Revise zoning to permit and encourage the mixing of residential and commercial uses</p>
	<p><b>2</b> Create a residential development density bonus incentive program to reward developers of infill housing projects in and around Central Commercial zones</p>
	<p><b>3</b> Streamline development and design review processes</p>
<p><b>C</b> Provide for adequate institutional</p>	<p><b>1</b> Revise zoning to expedite permit</p>

**Goal LU-2 - Encourage optimum land utilization**

Policy		Program	
	land uses and intersperse them throughout the community		processing for institutional uses on properties smaller than one acre
<b>D</b>	Encourage compact form for urban development, particularly in newly developed areas and where infill is possible	<b>1</b>	Prohibit over-parking or charge a fee for projects providing more parking than required by code
		<b>2</b>	Design subdivisions and development projects to be compatible with eventual public transportation service
		<b>3</b>	Study use of form-based codes for application to the Central Commercial zones and the west and south interchanges
		<b>4</b>	Phase developments to ensure optimal use of land

**Goal LU-3 - Provide convenient, centralized facilities designed to serve present and future citizen needs**

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Regard the Downtown Historic District as one of the predominant design and activity centers of the community and region	<b>1</b>	Prepare a Downtown Historic District urban design and land use plan
		<b>2</b>	Facilitate long-range planning workshops between CWU and downtown organizations
		<b>3</b>	Facilitate use of the Downtown Historic District for community events
<b>B</b>	Encourage and locate new, public buildings for administrative, cultural, and recreational activities in or in close proximity	<b>1</b>	Review and revise zoning, if necessary, to permit public buildings in and near the Central Commercial zones

**Goal LU-3** - Provide convenient, centralized facilities designed to serve present and future citizen needs

Policy		Program	
	to the Central Commercial zones	2	Revise zoning to prohibit construction of large institutional uses other than schools and public safety facilities distant from the Central Commercial zones
C	Encourage development and activity which increases automobile and pedestrian traffic in the Central Commercial zones after 6:00 PM	1	Revise zoning to permit and encourage the mixing of residential and commercial uses
		2	Coordinate with CWU to develop student housing in the Downtown Historic District, particularly in a mixed-use format
		3	Coordinate with the various downtown stakeholders to increase after-hours business
		4	Prepare a Downtown Historic District urban design and land use plan
D	Develop programs that address on and off street parking in the Downtown Historic District. Recognize that perceived parking problems downtown is one sign of success in its development	1	Prepare a parking study to identify locations for additional Central Commercial zone parking and ways to provide it
		2	Develop a parking trust fund to allow Downtown Historic District merchants to purchase their way out of parking requirements
		3	Review parking requirements and reduce or eliminate them in the Downtown Historic District as appropriate, while still ensuring sufficient parking exists for housing and Central Commercial zone customers
		4	Develop a parking fee to assess to projects that provide more parking than that required by the code
		5	Create storm water runoff designs and strategies that minimize the

**Goal LU-3** - Provide convenient, centralized facilities designed to serve present and future citizen needs

Policy		Program	
			amount of land necessary to treat runoff from parking areas
E	Encourage development of second floor housing/professional offices in the Downtown Historic District	1	Develop parking standards that provide credit for mixed or complementary uses
		2	Provide historic renovation training to local contractors interested in developing upper-story housing
F	Encourage retail variety in the Central Commercial zones	1	Sponsor creation of a long-range development plan by Central Commercial zone stakeholders
		2	Refine a regional economic development vision and strategy
		3	Invest early in Central Commercial zone capital improvement projects
		4	Identify and track shifts in economic activity from the Central Commercial zones and mitigate through business development or through the creation and funding of a Downtown Foundation
G	Maintain interconnectedness and high levels of access to the Central Commercial zones	1	Prepare a Central Commercial zones urban design and land use plan to interconnect regional retail with other Central Commercial zone uses
		2	Identify critical rights of way and important pedestrian corridors accessing Central Commercial zones
		3	Seek funding to institute limited public transportation service to link the west and south interchanges to the Central Commercial zones and CWU
		4	Implement a program of trails, signs or other strategies to interconnect the Central Commercial zones with the west and south interchanges

**Goal LU-3** - Provide convenient, centralized facilities designed to serve present and future citizen needs

Policy		Program	
<b>H</b>	Encourage increased retail development at the west and south interchange areas	<b>1</b>	Consider adoption of development regulations for the west and south interchange areas which are specifically tailored to the uses anticipated to site in those areas, address consistency with development of many similar uses in the area, accommodate project impacts that are unique to this area because of the intensity of commercial, industrial, and residential land uses and activities.
		<b>2</b>	Prepare University Way and Dolarway Avenue corridor plans to ensure access management and land use designations along them are consistent with overall development strategies
		<b>3</b>	Enter into a development agreement with west and south interchange property owners to establish terms for development and infrastructure improvements
		<b>4</b>	Develop and implement new revenue sources to address off-site transportation impacts at the west interchange and along the Cascade/University Way corridor

**Goal LU-4** - Maintain the City of Ellensburg as the predominant center for commercial, financial, governmental, and cultural activities

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Establish coordinated commercial development policies with the County restricting new commercial development in the lower Kittitas Valley to the incorporated communities	<b>1</b>	Develop and adopt an interlocal agreement with Kittitas County regarding development of land for commercial uses
		<b>2</b>	Participate in County land use

**Goal LU-4** - Maintain the City of Ellensburg as the predominant center for commercial, financial, governmental, and cultural activities

Policy		Program	
			planning to ensure zoning regulations are consistent with Ellensburg’s plans
<b>B</b>	Discourage retail strip development characterized by uncoordinated development of separate lots	<b>1</b>	Prepare corridor plans for Canyon Road and University Way to limit the spread of commercial development while still recognizing each corridor’s unique qualities and opportunities
<b>C</b>	Facilitate development of vacant land in and around the Central Commercial zones into commercial, financial, governmental, high density residential and cultural uses	<b>1</b>	Prepare a Downtown Historic District urban design and land use plan to maintain and enhance the Downtown Historic District’s intimate scale and character.
		<b>2</b>	Refine a regional economic development vision and strategy
<b>D</b>	Take advantage of Ellensburg’s historic elements	<b>1</b>	Prepare corridor plans for Canyon Road and University Way, recognizing each corridor’s unique qualities, opportunities, and contributions to Ellensburg’s character
		<b>2</b>	Integrate the train depot and other historically significant places into a Central Commercial zones revitalization scheme

**Goal LU-5** - Capture increasing levels of CWU activity in the Central Commercial zones and other retail areas

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Encourage provision of parking on the southern and western periphery of Downtown Historic District	<b>1</b>	Prepare a parking study to identify locations for additional Central Commercial zone parking and ways to provide it
		<b>2</b>	Coordinate with CWU to define the character and scale of parking

**Goal LU-5** - Capture increasing levels of CWU activity in the Central Commercial zones and other retail areas

Policy		Program	
			provided in or near Central Commercial zones
<b>B</b>	Coordinate with CWU planning efforts	<b>1</b>	Develop a pedestrian circulation program for land on both sides of University Way
		<b>2</b>	Facilitate provision of student housing in the Downtown Historic District and along University Way between Water Street and Chestnut, particularly in a mixed-use format
		<b>3</b>	Prepare a Downtown Historic District urban design and land use plan to interconnect CWU with other Downtown Historic District uses
<b>C</b>	Coordinate with CWU student services	<b>1</b>	Establish a “Town and Gown” activities and issues committee

**Goal LU-6** - Achieve harmony between City and County land use policy

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Coordinate land use and capital facilities planning with Kittitas County	<b>1</b>	Circulate comprehensive plan and other land use plans to the County for comment
		<b>2</b>	Involve the County in joint planning for the UGA
		<b>3</b>	Coordinate with the County to develop land use designations, zoning districts and public works standards for the UGA that are consistent between the City and County

**Goal LU-6** - Achieve harmony between City and County land use policy

Policy		Program	
		4	Review County land use actions within the UGA to ensure consistency with County and City plans
		5	Invite Kittitas County to participate in west and south interchange planning
		6	Seek agreement with the County to restrict additional regional retail development in unincorporated areas
		7	Coordinate with Kittitas County to identify receiving areas for transferable development rights
B	Coordinate economic development planning on a regional level	1	Co-sponsor a strategic economic development plan with the County
		2	Refine a regional economic development vision and strategy

**Goal LU-7** - Increase the number of residents who choose to walk or bicycle in lieu of driving

Policy		Program	
A	Encourage other transportation modes	1	Revise zoning to permit mixing of land uses
		2	Revise street standards to allow for multiple modes
		3	Prepare neighborhood subarea plans in undeveloped areas of the City and UGA to encourage walking and bicycling

**Goal LU-7** - Increase the number of residents who choose to walk or bicycle in lieu of driving

Policy		Program	
		4	Prepare a Central Commercial zones urban design and land use plan to encourage walking and bicycling
		5	Investigate ways to provide effective and attractive public transportation, such as a trolley or jitney system
		6	Whenever possible retrofit existing streets with pedestrian and bicycle facilities
<b>B</b>	Reduce auto demand on local and arterial streets	1	Revise zoning to permit mixed uses near services
		2	Design subdivisions and development projects to be compatible with future public transportation service
<b>C</b>	Increase pedestrian safety along arterial streets	1	Revise street standards to provide an option to increase separation of pedestrians from travel ways
		2	Revise zoning to permit zero or reduced building setbacks in commercial districts
		3	Introduce calming measures to slow traffic on non-arterial streets
		4	Study methods of increasing pedestrian safety along University Way, particularly on the railroad overpass near the west interchange
		5	Provide an additional grade-separated rail crossing paralleling University Way to access increased services at the west interchange
		6	Improve known accident locations as well as high-risk locations for pedestrians, bicycles, and motorists

**Goal LU-7** - Increase the number of residents who choose to walk or bicycle in lieu of driving

Policy		Program	
			paying particular attention to at risk groups including the young and aging
		7	Incorporate safety prevention strategies into environmental design when bicycle and pedestrian facilities are developed. (i.e., lighting, distance between the street and sidewalk)
		8	Help designate and improve safe routes to schools

**Goal LU-8** - Manage the spatial aspect of growth to encourage convenient and cost-effective services provision

Policy		Program	
A	Encourage compactness in growth and development	1	Revise zoning to encourage mixing of uses, particularly in the Central Commercial zones and satellite urban village areas
		2	Study feasibility of limited public transportation service to link commercial centers
		3	Revise zoning and subdivision standards to permit a variety of less land-consumptive housing types
		4	Limit the amount of land that can be used for single-family residential development and coordinate with the County to reduce conversion of farmland into single-family subdivisions
		5	Coordinate with the County to identify areas in Ellensburg to receive transfer of development rights

**Goal LU-8** - Manage the spatial aspect of growth to encourage convenient and cost-effective services provision

Policy		Program	
B	Provide for adequate land devoted to institutional use	1	Permit institutional uses throughout the community on parcels smaller than one acre
C	Respect needs of and limitations to capital facilities and public services	1	Invest early to expand services capacity to provide adequate services in conjunction with anticipated spike in retail development and activity
		2	Coordinate with School District and other non-city service providers to ensure long-range plans are consistent and complement Ellensburg's goals

**\*Goal LU-9** – Encourage construction techniques which will result in a reduction of natural resource consumption and help to protect the environment

Policy		Program	
A	Encourage and support “Green Building Policies and Practices” and other “green” architecture policies and practices, such as LEED ( <i>Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design</i> ), that are designed to incorporate environmental protection and reduce natural resource consumption.		

## Priority Projects

The following priority projects represent immediate steps the City should take to implement this plan.

Project	Description and Goals
<b>CBD plan</b>	Prepare a subarea plan for the Central Commercial zones to facilitate and smooth their transition to a pedestrian oriented, retail, institutional, cultural and entertainment district
<b>West and south interchange areas</b>	Consider adoption of development regulations for the west and south interchange areas which are specifically tailored to the uses anticipated to site in those areas, address consistency with development of many similar uses in the area, accommodate project impacts that are unique to this area because of the intensity of commercial, industrial, and residential land uses and activities.
<b>University Way plan</b>	Investigate design and improvement strategies to emphasize University Way’s connection between the Central Commercial zones and the emerging hub at the west interchange, drawing on the street’s heritage as a historic cross-state highway for design reference
<b>Dolarway Road plan</b>	Study options to make Dolarway and increasingly attractive industrial corridor and more convenient link between the Central Commercial zones and the west interchange
<b>Zoning revisions</b>	Revise zoning and development regulations to be consistent with current GMA requirements and to implement policies and programs of this comprehensive plan
<b>Design guidelines</b>	Review current design guidelines and revise as necessary in scope and content to ensure new development and major renovations respect community character and elevate the appeal of the community’s public spaces.
<b>CBD business improvement district</b>	Study the feasibility and effect of a business improvement district for the Central Commercial zones, possibly offsetting negative impacts caused by shifts in retail activity to the west and south interchanges and arterial corridors
<b>Economic development vision</b>	Collaborate with others in the preparation of a regional economic development vision and strategy to help target land use designations and prioritize capital improvement projects
<b>Transit-oriented design standards</b>	Reevaluate zoning and subdivision standards to accommodate transit-oriented or multi-modal design in areas of more concentrated development, such as in the Downtown Historic District, near the university and in the area around the west and south interchanges

## 5 Transportation



## 5 Transportation

This chapter outlines how the City's transportation system can help achieve the plan's goals. The transportation system ensures reliable movement of goods and people, provides access to property, and occupies almost 20% of the community's land area. It provides a critical urban function and creates a public realm where Ellensburg's people move, meet, and mingle. This chapter's goals, policies and programs will help the City manage and, in some ways, transform its transportation system to meet the community's needs.

Ellensburg lies along Interstate 90, just west of the freeway's intersection with Interstate 82. Since its completion in the 1970's, I-90 has had a huge impact on the community, spurring intense development interest at the interchanges and increasing Ellensburg's prominence as a tourist and visitor stopping point. The two state highways (now Canyon Road and University Way) that had earlier been Ellensburg's connections to the region have developed as community retail and service corridors. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad, using the historic Northern Pacific right of way, continues to function as a significant corridor for exporting the region's products.

### Existing Transportation System

The community originally developed along the Canyon Road and University Way corridors and the Northern Pacific railroad (now the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad), establishing a grid system of streets. The grid continued to spread outward,



**Figure 5.1** – Canyon Road, looking south from the Capital Avenue intersection. (Image source: Studio Cascade Inc.)

with municipal plat additions emulating the original street patterns. That street system is characterized by relatively wide rights-of-way with alleys serving the rear of lots. It is a classic Victorian era subdivision pattern, replicated in hundreds of Western towns founded in the age of the railroad.

The ability to extend the grid is now hindered by subdivision and roadway patterns established in sparsely settled areas surrounding the community. As Ellensburg's growth pushed the city limits outward, the street system changed to reflect the developing conditions beyond the traditional plats. Thus, incremental conversion of rural land surrounding Ellensburg as suburban residential prevented extension of the grid. This early failure to project and protect necessary rights of way for future road extension is now causing problems for Ellensburg's transportation system as it continues to grow.

The existing roadway system works well for cars and trucks, with the only place where traffic slows being the I-90 interchange with Canyon Road. In this area, trucks, cars, residents and visitors converge on the interchange ramps and Canyon Road, making it difficult to turn left onto the westbound I-90 on-ramp or to turn right onto northbound Canyon Road. Main Street and University Way are crowded only for short periods during the day. Arterials (such as Water Street and "D" street) leading into northern Ellensburg carry increasing numbers of vehicles spurred by residential growth in the north, with traffic funneled onto only a few arterial streets connecting that area with the city's center and CWU.

### **Ellensburg's Streets**

Streets within a transportation system are generally classified into one or more of the following roadway classifications:

- **Principal Arterial** – Streets and highways that contain the greatest portion of through or long-distance travel. Such facilities serve high-volume travel corridors that connect major generators of traffic. The selected routes provide an integrated system for complete circulation of traffic, including ties to major rural highways entering the urban area. Generally, principal arterials include high traffic volume streets. Examples include University Way, Main Street and Canyon Road
- **Minor Arterial** – Streets and highways that connect with remaining arterial and collector roads extending into the urban area. Minor arterial streets and highways serve less concentrated traffic-generating areas such as neighborhood shopping centers and schools. Minor arterial streets serve as boundaries to neighborhoods and collect traffic from collector streets. Although the predominant function of minor arterial streets is the movement of through traffic, they also provide for considerable local traffic that originates or is

destined to points along the corridor. Examples include , Mountain View Avenue, Railroad Avenue, Dolarway Road and Water Street north of University Way

- **Collectors** – Streets that provide direct services to residential areas, local parks, churches and other similar uses. To preserve the amenities of neighborhoods, they are usually spaced at about one-half mile intervals to collect traffic from local access streets and convey it to principal or minor arterial streets and highways. Collector streets are typically one to two miles long, and direct access to abutting land is essential. Examples include Ruby Street, Capitol Avenue, Chestnut Street,Manitoba Avenue, and 3rd Avenue
- **Local Access** – Streets not identified as arterials or collectors are “local.” They allow access to individual homes, shops, and similar destinations. Direct access to abutting land is essential. Using appropriate geometric designs and traffic control devices, as well as providing a safe and efficient arterial system, should discourage through-traffic on local access streets. Examples include Anderson, Sprague, and Columbia streets, and Tacoma Avenue

Table 5.1 shows major City roadways by functional classification:

**Table 5.1 - Ellensburg Roadway Functional Classifications**

Road Name	Begin	End
<b>Urban Principal Arterial</b>		
University Way	Dolarway Road	City limits
Canyon Road	South UGA	Mountain View Avenue
Main Street	Mountain View Avenue	University Way
Manitoba Avenue	Main Street	Water Street
SR 97	University Way	North UGA
Vantage Highway	East City Limits	East UGA
Water Street	Manitoba Avenue	University Way
<b>Urban Minor Arterial</b>		
14th Avenue	Water Street	Main Street
Main Street (Ellensburg)	University Way	15th Avenue
Alder Street	University Way	Bowers Road
Anderson Road	City limits	Railroad Avenue

**Table 5.1 - Ellensburg Roadway Functional Classifications**

Road Name	Begin	End
Bowers Road	Reecer Creek Road	Look Road
Dolarway Road	Railroad Avenue	University Way
Game Farm Road	Pfenning Road	East UGA
Helena Avenue	Reecer Creek Road	East UGA
Main Street	University Way	15 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
Manitoba Avenue	Railroad Avenue/Anderson Street	Water Street
Mountain View Avenue	Canyon Road	East UGA
Railroad Avenue	Anderson Road	Dolarway Road
Old Hwy 10	Reecer Creek Road	West UGA
Pfenning Road	Kittitas Hwy	Game Farm Road
Railroad Avenue	Anderson Road	Dolarway Road
Reecer Creek Road	University Way	North UGA
Umptanum Road	West city limit	Ruby Street
Water Street	University Way	Bowers Road
<b>Urban Collector</b>		
3rd Avenue	Wenas Street	Pfenning Road
5th Avenue	Unnamed collector West of Railroad Avenue	Chestnut Street
14th Avenue	Main Street	Brook Lane
15 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Dry Creek Road	Water Street
8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	"D" Street	Approx 660' east of Alder St
Airport Road	Helena Avenue	Bowers Road
Bender Road	Reecer Creek Road	Airport Road (Ellensburg)
Brick Road	University Way	Sanders Road
Bull Road	I-90	Kittitas Hwy
Capitol Avenue	Water Strret	Pfenning Road

**Table 5.1** - Ellensburg Roadway Functional Classifications

Road Name	Begin	End
Chestnut Street	Umptanum Road	University Way
Cora Street	University Way	Bowers Road
"D" Street	University Way	18 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
Dry Creek Road	Reecer Creek Road	15 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
Greenfield Avenue	Delphine Street	Sanders Road
Manitoba Avenue	Main Street	Chestnut Street
Pearl Street	3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue	5 <sup>th</sup> Street
Pine Street	3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue	5 <sup>th</sup> Street
Ruby Street	Umptanum Road	University Way
Sanders Road	Airport Road	Brick Road
Walnut Street	14 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Helena Avenue
Wenas Street	3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue	University Way
Willow Street	Kittitas Hwy	Capitol Avenue

### **Bicycle Routes**

Since the 1995 comprehensive plan, Ellensburg has acted to increase the number of Class II bicycle routes in the city. There are bike routes along Canyon Road and Main Street, Mountain View Avenue (partial), and Water Street. The City is currently completing the Mountain View Avenue route and adding a bike route on Dolarway Road. A Class II bike route is a portion of a roadway designated by signs and/or pavement markings for the preferential use of cyclists.

The City is also planning a Class I bike path. This would cross Interstate 90 and connect Irene Rinehart Park with the downtown and the Rodeo. A Class I bike path is a physically separated facility for exclusive use by bicyclists and pedestrians.



**Figure 5.2** – Privately developed trails, as shown here, should tie into a coordinated, well-planned network of foot and bicycle paths for Ellensburg’s future transportation needs. (Image source: Donna Nylander, participant)

### **Recreational Trails**

The John Wayne Pioneer Trail is a State-managed facility for pedestrian, bicycle and other non-motorized uses. It is 110 miles in length and runs east-west through Kittitas County. The popular trail attracts 166,000 visitors each year. In Ellensburg, the Trail stops at the east and west edges of the city. Plans are underway to connect the trail ends for bicycle and pedestrian use. The planned 0.78-mile section will run from the eastern city limits at the Kittitas County Fairgrounds to the CWU campus, and then west from the CWU campus to the western city limits. A 4.34-mile north loop is also planned, enabling access to the John Wayne Pioneer Trail for horse and wagon users.

### **Pedestrian Facilities**

Ellensburg has sidewalks along many of its streets, mostly within central Ellensburg, and along Canyon Road and Water Street as they extend out from the center of the City. Most new residential subdivisions also have sidewalks. There are virtually no sidewalks along University Way west of central Ellensburg and along the entire length of Dolarway Road. Also, many areas in the UGA that are developing are not providing sidewalks.

The City is also upgrading most of its crosswalk striping with a more durable and visible methylmethacrylate spray. It has upgraded all school zone signs to neon green. With the Ellensburg School District, the City is also pursuing a State pedestrian safety grant. If awarded, it will enable installation of flashing caution lights within school zones.

### **Truck Routes**

Ellensburg is the focal point for truck movements in and out of Kittitas County. Seventy-nine percent of all freight truck departures are from Ellensburg and 12 percent are from Cle Elum. The City is also the most common freight truck destination with 432 incoming truck trips per day.

Ellensburg designated a system of truck routes to permit long-haul trucks to transit between the freeway interchanges and central Ellensburg. (*Figure 5.4*)

### **Public Transportation**

The primary provider of local public transportation is the non-profit social service agency, Hope Source, which operates a demand-responsive mini-van service called *RideLine*. Most of its clients are low income, elderly and disabled. *RideLine* accommodates 23,300 riders annually with limited countywide service to Cle Elum, Kittitas, Roslyn, Liberty and Ronald, and periodic service to Yakima. The other non-profit providers in Ellensburg are smaller and often coordinate with *RideLine*. They include Elmview with 11 vans and buses, Head Start with five buses, and OIC, Senior Center, Mountain View Meadows and Hearthstone Cottage, each with one van. Central Cab, a private operator, also provides service.

The two intercity bus lines serving Ellensburg are Greyhound Bus Line and Northwestern Stage Lines. Both are fixed route private operators with limited coverage. Greyhound recently announced service cutbacks resulting in only six daily runs to and from Seattle. Stops to other cities and town in the County were eliminated. Northwest Stage Lines provides daily service to Omak only, with one arrival in the morning and one departure in the evening.

In addition, CWU has instituted a transit service to help its students access Ellensburg's shopping districts and other services. This service may be available to non-students, as well.

Kittitas County has a Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA), but it has not been funded.

### **Air Transportation**

Bowers Field is an airport owned and managed by Kittitas County. It is located just north of Ellensburg and three miles from Interstate 90. There are no public air transport facilities at Bowers Field, and no commercial carriers operate from it. With no commercial service, usage is primarily for private single-engine, twin-engine and turbo prop aircraft. There is a fixed base operator for aircraft maintenance, instruction and charter flights. Bowers Field accommodates 6,100 passengers and visitors, 29,000 general operations, and 150 military operations annually.

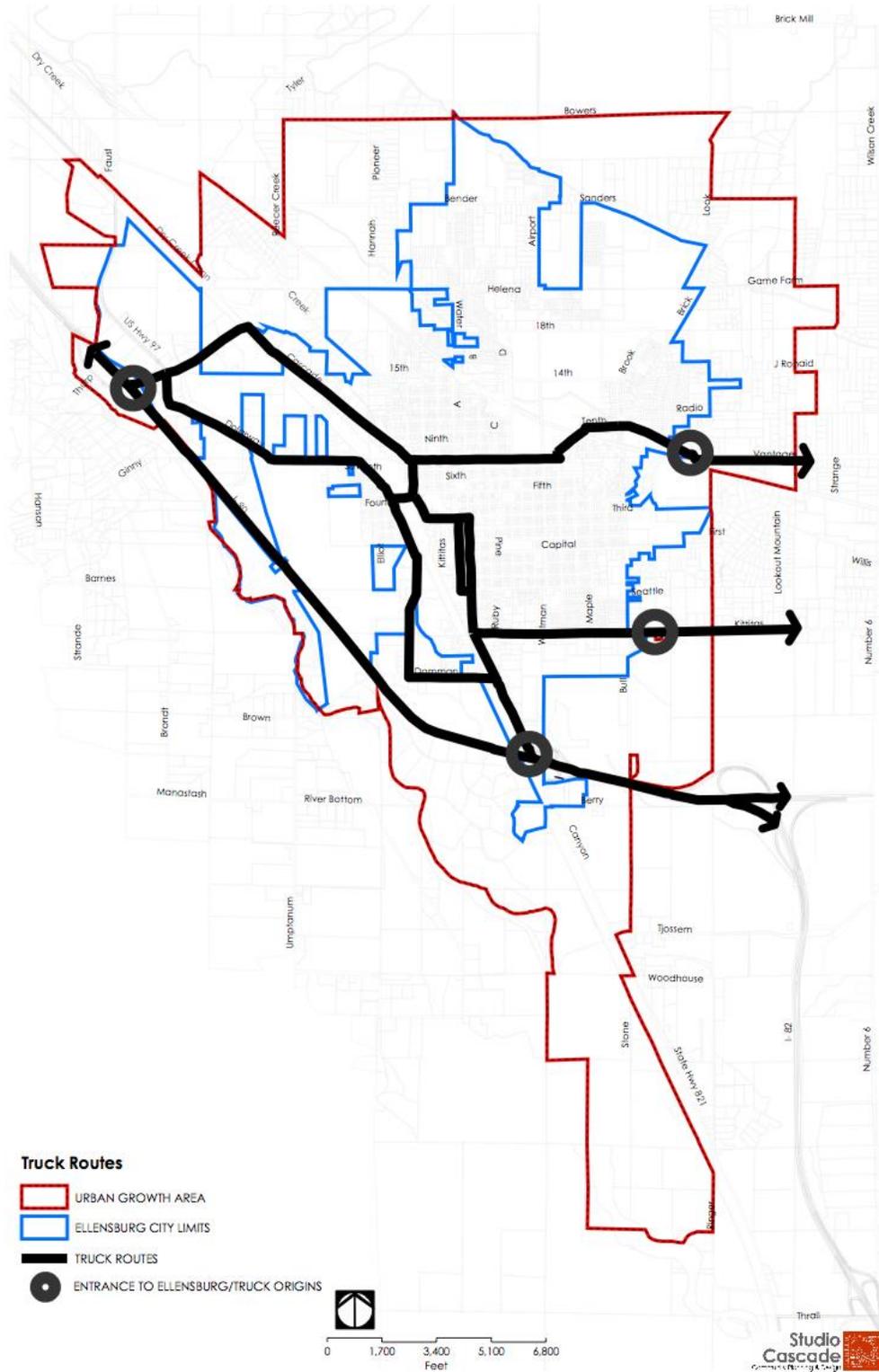
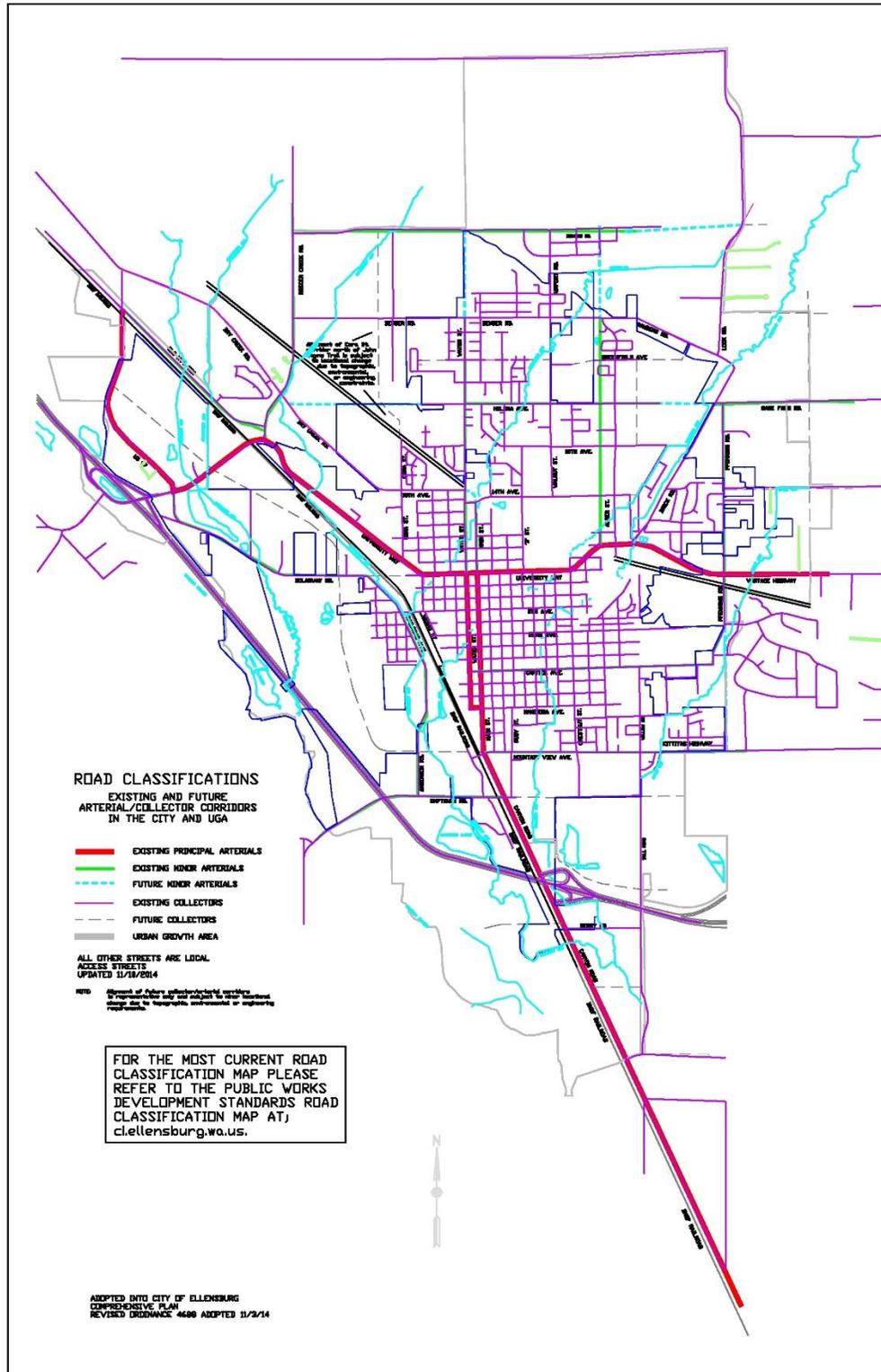


Figure 5.3 – Truck route map produced for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)



### Accident Data

The latest available three-year accident data was obtained from the various jurisdictions responsible for maintaining accident records (City of Ellensburg, Kittitas County and Washington State).

For the remaining roadway network, intersection and section accident histories including number and type were provided from the *2002 Washington State Highway Accident Report* (latest available). Accident rates were then calculated for each section and intersection and compared to the statewide average accident rate (obtained from the 2002 report) for similar types of facilities. High accident locations (HALs) are defined as locations with accident rates higher than the statewide average for similar facilities.

Accident rates for arterial roadway sections were expressed in accidents per million vehicle miles of travel. Accident rates for the arterial-to-arterial intersections were expressed in terms of accidents per million entering vehicles. Data for Ellensburg roadways are shown in Table 5.2. It shows the Main Street/University Way and Water Street/University Way intersections may be designated as HALs. They have accident rates higher than the statewide average for similar facilities.

**Table 5.2 - Accident Rates on City of Ellensburg Roadways**

Intersection	# of Accidents	Accident Rate	State Average
Main Street/Mountain View Avenue	6	0.30	1.00
Main Street/Capitol	7	0.40	1.00
Main Street/3rd Avenue	9	0.50	1.10
Main Street/5th Avenue	6	0.30	1.10
Main Street/University Way	20	1.10	1.00
University Way/"D" Street	14	0.70	1.00
University Way/Walnut Street	0	0.00	1.00
University Way/Chestnut Street	13	0.60	1.00
Walnut Street/18th Avenue	5	0.40	1.50
Ruby Street/3rd Avenue	4	0.30	1.50
Ruby Street/5th Avenue	4	0.30	1.50
Dolarway Road/University Way	8	0.60	1.00
"D" Street/18th Avenue	4	0.40	1.50

**Table 5.2** - Accident Rates on City of Ellensburg Roadways

Intersection	# of Accidents	Accident Rate	State Average
Alder Street/10th Avenue (University Way)	12	0.60	1.00
Canyon Road/I-90 EB Ramps	3	0.20	0.30
Canyon Road/I-90 WB Ramps	12	0.70	1.50
Ruby Street/Mountain View Avenue	15	1.10	1.50
Ruby Street/Manitoba Avenue	0	0.00	1.50
Mountain View Avenue /Chestnut Street	4	0.60	1.50
Water Street/Capitol Avenue	4	0.40	1.50
Water Street/3rd Avenue	6	0.40	1.50
Water Street/5th Avenue	4	0.30	1.50
Water Street/University Way	21	1.10	1.00
14 <sup>th</sup> Avenue /"D" Street	15	1.10	1.50
14 <sup>th</sup> Avenue /Alder Street	4	0.30	1.50
Water Street/15 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	2	0.30	1.50
Water Street/Helena Avenue	0	0.00	1.50
Helena Avenue /Walnut Street	4	0.70	1.50
University Way/Wenas Street	3	0.20	1.50
Main Street/Manitoba Avenue	13	0.60	1.00
University Way west of Cora Street	0	0.00	2.56
University Way west of Chestnut Street	0	0.00	2.56
University Way east of Alder Street	0	0.00	2.56
Main Street south of University Way	0	0.00	2.56
Capitol Avenue east of Main Street	1	0.30	3.38
Canyon Road north of Umptanum Road	9	0.80	2.56
Mountain View Avenue east of Ruby Street	6	0.40	3.38
Water Street north of University Way	0	0.00	3.38

**Main Street/ University Way** - The Main Street/University Way intersection has experienced 20 accidents during the latest three-year period with an accident rate of 1.1 accidents per million entering vehicles. Of the 20 accidents, there were eight left turn, six right-angle collisions, two right-turn, two sideswipe turn, two sideswipes and one fixed object collision. The left turns were typically west bound vehicles failing to yield the right of way to east bound traffic; right angle collisions were vehicles failing to yield, two right turn collisions were failure to yield, and the two side swipes were vehicles making right turns from the wrong lane.

Two alternative solutions to this problem include 1) increased enforcement and 2) enhanced delineation and signing to ensure motorists are alert to the driving constraints. Site review indicates no problems with the lane markings or signal timing. Lane widths appear to be up to standard. However, there is no left-turn signal phasing on either University Way or Main Street. With the volume of left turns during the peak hour (roughly 30% of both westbound traffic on University Way and northbound traffic on Main Street), adding a left-turn only phase to the signals will likely reduce the number of accidents.

**Water Street/University Way** - The Water Street/University Way intersection has experienced 21 accidents during the latest three-year period with an accident rate of 1.1 accidents per million entering vehicles. Of the 21 accidents, there were 11 right angle, seven rear-end, and three sideswipe accidents. The right angle accidents typically involved motorists failing to yield the right of way and running the red light. The seven rear end accidents typically involved a lead vehicle stopping for the signal and a following vehicle failing to stop. The three sideswipe accidents involved vehicles crossing the lane line. As in the case of the Main Street/University Way intersection, there is a considerable volume of accidents involving vehicles failing to yield the right of way. One solution to this problem is increased enforcement. Another solution is improving delineation and signing. For the sideswipe accidents, better delineation and signing would be helpful.

**Kittitas County Traffic Safety Corridor Project** - The Kittitas County Community Public Health and Safety Network, along with the Kittitas County Traffic Safety Team, conducted a safety corridor study between Ellensburg and the city of Kittitas. The primary roadways along this corridor are Kittitas Highway from the Ellensburg city limits to the Kittitas city limits, and Vantage Highway from the City of Ellensburg to No. 81 Road. The study was conducted in late 2004. The primary cause of accidents in the corridor was found to be: inattention, speeding, failure-to-yield, improper passing and disregarding a stop sign. These causes occurred at rates significantly higher than that along roadways of similar type in the county. The types of accidents that occurred higher than the average for similar roadways were right angle, driveway-related, and sideswipe

collisions. The sideswipes that occurred were both same-direction and opposite-direction.

Lack of sufficient shoulders along Kittitas Highway was cited as one problem along the corridor, as well as vehicles running into ditches and hitting objects along the side of the road. The study recommended seeking funds to bring the shoulders up to standard. The study provided an estimated cost of \$500,000 for upgrading the six miles of Kittitas Highway.

Other recommendations include reducing the number of objects along roadway shoulders, improving signage for slow-moving vehicles, and driver education. Construction of turnouts, in lieu of upgrading the entire roadway cross-section, would also provide locations to place mailboxes away from the travel lane.

### **Railroad Crossing Safety**

A summary of at-grade railroad crossing accidents was obtained from the Federal Railroad Administration. The inventory provides a historical record of all accidents reported at each crossing dating back to 1975. Table 5.3 lists the at-grade crossings in Ellensburg that experienced accidents in the last 30 years. The average accident rate nationwide is 0.1 accidents per crossing per year or three accidents in 30 years.

As shown in Table 5.3, all at-grade railroad crossings in Ellensburg have an accident rate less than the national average. During the last 30 years, seven at-grade-crossing accidents occurred. Of those, only two crossings at Damman Road and 3rd Avenue had more than one.

**Table 5.3 - At-Grade Railroad Crossing Accidents in and near Ellensburg**

Location	Crossing #	Highway Name	# of Accidents	Accident Rate
Ellensburg	0851223B	Dudley Road	1	0.03
Ellensburg	085187H	Umptanum Road	2	0.07
Ellensburg	085191X	Stone Road	1	0.03
Ellensburg	085168D	3rd Avenue	2	0.07
Ellensburg	085221M	Thorp Road	1	0.03
Ellensburg	085214C	US Highway 97	1	0.03
Ellensburg	085190R	Hanson Pitt Road	1	0.03
Ellensburg	085189W	Berry Road	0	0
Ellensburg	085185U	Mountain View Avenue	0	0
Ellensburg	085212N	5 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	0	0

### Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes indicate how many vehicles are moving through the transportation system. Kittitas County conducted traffic counts as part of its long-range transportation system plan for the arterials transiting Ellensburg. The traffic counts identified overall system use, as well as the turning movements at major intersections in the city and UGA.

The heaviest transportation system use is along Canyon Road, Main Street and University Way. The busiest PM peak hour traffic volumes are on the same streets, with PM traffic volumes on the rise on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues, Chestnut Street, “D” Street, Alder Street north of University Way, and Mountain View Avenue. The PM Peak and Average Daily Traffic volumes for major roadways serving Ellensburg are shown in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4 - Arterial and Collector Roadways serving Ellensburg**

2005 PM Peak and Average Daily Traffic		
Intersection	PM Peak	Average Daily
Tjossem / No. 6	210	2,600
Kittitas Highway / No. 6	530	6,700
Vantage Highway / Wilson Creek Road	450	5,000
Brick Mill Road / Wilson Creek Road	160	2,000

**Table 5.4 - Arterial and Collector Roadways serving Ellensburg**

2005 PM Peak and Average Daily Traffic		
Hungry Junction / Reecer Creek Road	120	1,600
State Route 10 / US Highway 97	430	5,600
Manastash / Umptanum	230	2,900
Cove Road / Thorp Highway	80	1,000
Smithson / L. Green Canyon	30	400

**Level of Service (LOS)**

The Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A070, requires the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan contain “...level of service standards for all arterials and transit routes to serve as a gauge to judge performance of the system. These standards should be regionally coordinated.”

In addition, the GMA concurrency requirement states: “...local jurisdictions must adopt and enforce ordinances which prohibit development approval if the development causes the level of service on a transportation facility to decline below the standard adopted in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan, unless transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made concurrent with the development.”

The National Transportation Research Board’s Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) contains specific methodologies to measure level of service (LOS) for various transportation facilities. Most counties and cities in Washington employ LOS methodologies from this manual. LOS is used to qualify the degree of traffic congestion and driver comfort on a street or at an intersection. The HCM describes the methodologies for calculating level of service on street segments and at signalized and unsignalized intersections.

According to the 2000 HCM, there are six levels-of-service by which the operational performance of the roadway system may be described. These levels range from LOS-A, which indicates a relatively free-flowing

**Table 5.5 – Level of Service Criteria**

Level of Service	Expected Delay
A	Little/No Delay
B	Short Delay
C	Average Delay
D	Long Delay
E	Very Long Delay
F	Extreme Delay

*Source: 2000 Highway Capacity Manual, Report 209, Fourth Edition.*

condition, to LOS-F, which indicates operational breakdown.

The LOS for a two-way stop controlled intersection is determined by the computed or measured control delay and is defined for each minor movement. LOS is not defined for the intersection as a whole. An average control delay less than or equal to 10 seconds per vehicle is defined as LOS-A. For LOS-F, the average control delay is greater than 50 seconds per vehicle.

The LOS for an all-way stop controlled intersection is defined in terms of average control delays per vehicle. LOS is defined for the intersection as a whole. An average control delay of less than or equal to ten seconds per vehicle is defined as LOS-A. For LOS-F, the average control delay is greater than 50 seconds per vehicle.

The LOS for signalized intersections is defined in terms of average control delay per vehicle. The criterion for LOS-A is an average control delay of less than or equal to ten seconds per vehicle. The criterion for LOS-F is an average control delay of greater than 80 seconds.

#### **Level of Service (LOS) Standards**

Once a level of service methodology is in place, a level of service standard can be set. A level of service standard is usually a congestion level measured by the LOS methodology, above which a road is considered to no longer function adequately. Once the LOS standard is exceeded, the road is considered to be “in need” and improvements should be made.

The Ellensburg 1995 Comprehensive Plan has an adopted LOS policy. As stated in the Plan:

*“...the Plan assumes an intersection and roadway level of service standard of LOS B for local access streets, LOS C for arterials and collector streets, and LOS D for arterials at the interchanges with the understanding that if traffic capacity on Canyon Road south of Mountain View is not increased, the LOS for Canyon Road will lower to LOS E.”*

Table 5.6 shows existing LOS on City arterials and collectors. It shows service on all roadways either meet or exceed the City’s LOS standards.

**Table 5.6 - Ellensburg Roadways Level of Service**

2005 PM Peak Hour				
Intersection	Control	LOS Exist.	LOS Policy	Jurisdiction
Main Street/Mountain View Avenue	Signal	B	C	EBG
Main Street/Capitol Avenue	Signal	B	C	EBG
Main Street/3rd Avenue	Signal	B	C	EBG
Main Street/5th Avenue	Signal	B	C	EBG
Main Street/University Way	Signal	C	C	EBG
University Way/"D" Street	Signal	B	C	EBG
University Way/Walnut Street	Signal	A	C	EBG
University Way/ Chestnut Street	Signal	B	C	EBG
Walnut Street/18th Avenue	Stop Sign	B	C	EBG
Ruby Street/3rd Avenue	Stop Sign	C	C	EBG
Ruby Street/5th Avenue	Stop Sign	C	C	EBG
University Way/Dolarway Road	Stop Sign	C	D	EBG
"D" Street/18th Avenue	Stop Sign	B	C	EBG
University Way/Alder Street	Signal	C	C	EBG
Canyon Road/Umptanum Road	Signal	B	C	EBG
Canyon Road/I-90 EB ramps	Stop Sign	B	D	WSDOT
Canyon Road/ I-90 WB ramps	Signal	B	D	WSDOT
Main Street/Manitoba Avenue	Signal	B	C	EBG
Ruby Street/Mountain View Avenue	Signal	C	C	EBG
Ruby Street/Manitoba Avenue	Stop Sign	C	C	EBG
Chestnut Street/Mountain View Avenue	Signal	A	C	EBG
Water Street/Capitol Avenue	Signal	B	C	EBG
Water Street/3rd Avenue	Signal	B	C	EBG
Water Street/5th Avenue	Signal	B	C	EBG
Water Street/University Way	Signal	B	C	EBG
"D" Street/14th Avenue	Stop Sign	C	C	EBG

**Table 5.6 - Ellensburg Roadways Level of Service**

2005 PM Peak Hour				
Intersection	Control	LOS Exist.	LOS Policy	Jurisdiction
Alder Street/14th Avenue	Stop Sign	C	C	EBG
Water Street/15th Avenue	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG
Water Street/Helena Avenue	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG
Walnut Street/Helena Avenue	Stop Sign	B	C	EBG
Wenas Street/University Way	Stop Sign	C	C	EBG
SR 10/US Highway 97	Stop Sign	A	D	WSDOT
University Way/Ruby Street	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG
University Way/Pfenning Road	Stop Sign	A	C	KIT
Main Street/4th Avenue	Signal	A	C	EBG
Water Street/Manitoba Avenue	N/A	A	C	EBG
Water Street/4th Avenue	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG
Ruby Street/Capitol Avenue	4-Way Stop	A	C	EBG
Ruby Street/4th Avenue	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG
Airport Road/Bowers Road	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG
Railroad Avenue /5th Avenue	Stop Sign	B	C	EBG
Anderson Road/Umptanum Road	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG
Chestnut Street/Capitol Avenue	4-Way Stop	A	C	EBG
Chestnut Street/5th Avenue	Stop Sign	B	C	EBG
Bull Road/Mountain View Avenue	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG
Willow Street/Capitol Avenue	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG
14 <sup>th</sup> Avenue /"A" Street	Stop Sign	B	C	EBG
14 <sup>th</sup> Avenue /Water Street	Stop Sign	B	C	EBG
18 <sup>th</sup> Avenue /Alder Street	4-Way Stop	B	C	EBG
18 <sup>th</sup> Avenue /Brook Lane	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG
Brick Road/Game Farm Road	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG
Bender Road/Airport Road	Stop Sign	A	C	EBG

## Future Transportation Demand

Ellensburg performed a transportation system assessment based on the alternative land use scenarios described later in this chapter. The various scenarios' impacts on the transportation system were forecast based on the modeling of expected traffic characteristics.

### Model

A countywide transportation forecast model, comprised of 218 internal and five external transportation analysis zones (TAZs), was developed for the County's long-range transportation plan. This TAZ structure was based upon a structure previously developed by the County and then refined for use in this study. The new structure assimilates data compiled from three older TMODEL model files, one from Cle Elum, Ellensburg and Kittitas County. That model was reviewed and revised to reflect Ellensburg's land use planning scenarios and guide the framework for this forecast. Revisions included the adjustment and allocation of land use intensities by TAZ and reviewing the various internal and external linkages.

The previous models for the cities of Cle Elum and Ellensburg and Kittitas County included this specificity of land use types but in different categories and in different traffic analysis zones. The previous models were not Geographic Information System (GIS) based and did not have usable polygons for the data collection. The older models were also in unique non-standard coordinate systems that needed to be registered before use as well. These were all first converted into a VISUM software platform so the data was consistent and could be referenced to the GIS system.

The countywide model's geographic area for the City of Ellensburg is as the city was configured in 1994. The model includes approximately 400 nodes and 1,000 links, almost as many as the Kittitas County model. It includes roads classified as collector and above but also includes some links classified as local streets where they function as collectors. The model included definitions for links by functional classification and nodes by type of control. The model has 100 internal zones, with zones 77 through 100 reserved for future use and 17 external zones.

The model is discussed in greater detail in the SEIS.



**Figure 5.5** – Segment of transportation model produced for land use alternative three. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

### **Future Transportation Service**

PM peak hour volumes on City of Ellensburg roadways will vary from 50 vehicles per hour on Helena Street west of Water Street to 1,960 vehicles per hour on University Way west of Chestnut Street. The transportation model prepared as part of this comprehensive plan update evaluates changes to the transportation system as a result of the four possible land use options, but in all cases the three following intersections present issues that will need to be addressed during this planning period.

- **University Way-Dolarway Road** – It is estimated to operate at LOS “C” in the 2005 PM peak hour. With the anticipated growth in traffic volume, it is projected to degrade to LOS “F” in the 2025 time horizon. The intersection currently operates as a four-way stop sign controlled intersection. There are channelized left-turn pockets on all legs; an exclusive through-lane on the south and west legs; a dedicated right-turn lane on the west and south legs; a right-turn pocket on the north leg; and a shared through/right lane on the east leg.
- **Canyon Road-I90 Eastbound ramps** – This intersection is estimated to operate at LOS “B” in the 2005 PM peak hour. With the anticipated growth in traffic volume, it is projected to degrade to LOS “E” in the 2025 time horizon. The intersection currently operates as a stop sign-controlled intersection. There is a northbound through-lane, a northbound right-turn lane, a southbound left-turn lane, a southbound through-lane and a westbound (EB ramp) left-turn and right-turn lane. The left-turn lane is stop sign-controlled. The right-turn is unconstrained.
- **Alder Street-14th Avenue** – This intersection is estimated to operate at LOS “C” in the 2005 PM peak hour. With the anticipated growth in traffic volume, the intersection is projected to degrade to LOS “F” in the 2025 time horizon. It currently operates as a four-way stop sign-controlled intersection with a single lane on each approach.

The baseline transportation model illustrates how the current developed condition impacts the transportation network. (*Figure 5.6*)

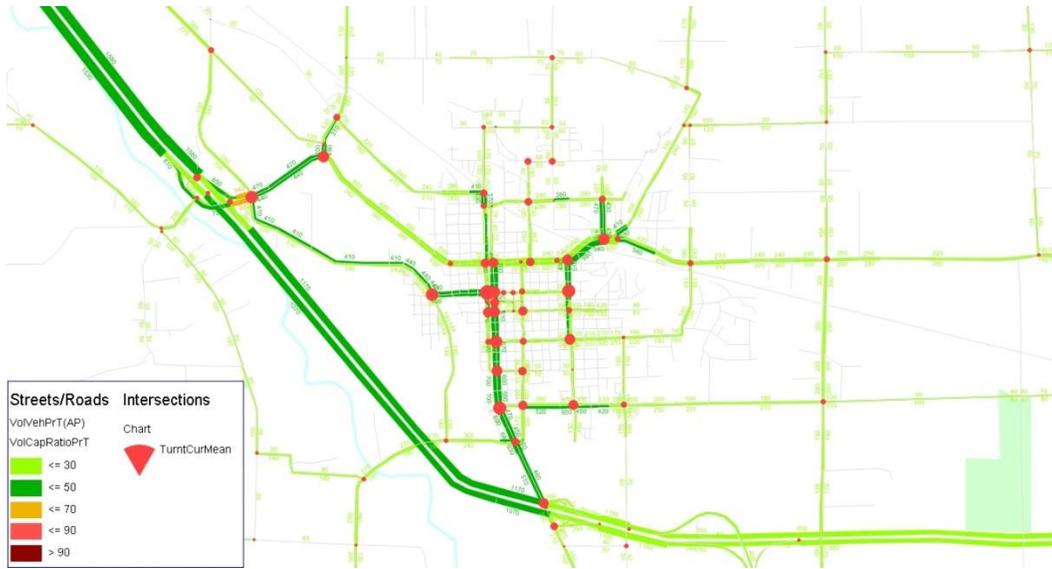


Figure 5.6 – Ellensburg baseline transportation model for existing conditions (Image source: Valerie Southern)

## **WTP Themes**

Further assessment of the community's characteristics and the abundant comment received from the public and Advisory Committee during this process revealed the following list of transportation issues. These issues introduce some of the more challenging circumstances Ellensburg will face during this planning period. They are presented here in a manner consistent with the Washington Transportation Plan to help the City seek and win transportation improvements funds as those moneys become available. The descriptions of the themes are drawn from the County's long-range transportation plan.

### ***Bottleneck and Choke Points***

In Washington State, growth in travel demand has exceeded the capacity of the transportation system. In Kittitas County, the system is responsive today but may become sluggish in the future if the deficiencies identified in this Transportation Plan are not addressed. Attending to the "spots" that slow the system is an effective and practical management tool.

### ***System Preservation***

The goal of system preservation is to keep the physical infrastructure in good condition and repair. As transportation facilities age, a regular schedule of upkeep and maintenance is required. The cost to maintain the system increases dramatically when investments are deferred.

### ***Safety***

An unsafe transportation system affects the quality of life within a community and overall transportation service. In Washington State, there are 600 transportation-related fatalities each year. In Kittitas County, there were six fatal collisions in 2002 and 10 fatal collisions in 2003. In Ellensburg, two high accident locations (HALs) have been identified.

### ***System Efficiencies***

Achieving high performance helps all users. User productivity increases when transportation service is reliable and safe. The factors that contribute to inefficiencies include congestion, design flaws, adverse weather and driver behavior. How the system is governed and planned is also a factor.

### ***Moving Freight***

Kittitas County is a prodigious producer and consumer of freight goods and services. Ellensburg is the most frequent freight truck destination and origin within the County. In

this, the City has a vested interest in ensuring the freight system performs efficiently and well.

***Transportation Access***

This theme addresses the mobility requirements of “special needs populations” represented primarily by the elderly, low income and disabled. Many within these groups do not have ready access to a personal automobile. Ensuring their access to basic services is a responsibility shared by the community and government. Another transportation access issue is public transportation for the general public, in terms of its availability and coverage.

***Economy and Jobs***

Roads, buses, airports, water ports and railways enable access to jobs. A transportation system that is well-maintained and balanced (with a menu of work commute options) offers the best means for access to markets and jobs.

***Health and Environment***

Transportation systems affect human health and the environment. Systems that are poorly planned, developed or maintained diminish and compromise public health, the environment, wildlife habitats and user safety. Systems that are “context-sensitive” complement and protect community land uses. Systems that enable safe walking and recreation enable healthier communities.

***Future Vision***

The populations within the County and City are growing in number. It is important to think ahead and consider what future innovations and services will be needed.

**Issues**

The public participation process revealed numerous transportation issues, many of which revolve around the interdependence between land use and the transportation system. These issues are listed below, along with corresponding WTP themes and the comprehensive plan’s relevant goals.

Issues	WTP Theme	Goal
The City of Ellensburg and Kittitas County have not effectively coordinated their planning efforts, particularly with regard to managing the development of land within and just beyond the limits of the urban growth area	System Preservation	T-2
	System Efficiencies	T-3
	Moving Freight	T-5
	Future Vision	T-9
Despite Ellensburg’s turn-of-the-century urban core, the community as a whole is not walkable, with new residential development and newer commercial uses dispersing across a wide area	Bottleneck and Choke Points	T-2
	Safety	T-3
	System Efficiencies	T-8
	Health and Environment	T-10
Single-family, suburban-style development is spreading into farmland on the northern and eastern edges of the community, creating a land use pattern strongly supported by current market demand but increasingly difficult and expensive to serve with utilities, roads, and public safety	Bottleneck and Choke Points	T-1
	System Efficiencies	T-2
	Transportation Access	T-3
	Economy and Jobs	T-7
	Health and Environment	T-9
Multiple property ownerships and parcel configurations in the Central Commercial zones act as barriers to large-scale redevelopment or to reconfiguration of the commercial and industrial districts to accommodate large retail users	System Efficiencies	T-2
	Moving Freight	T-3
	Economy and Jobs	T-5
		T-6
		T-7
There is no generally available public transportation system in Ellensburg	Transportation Access	T-1
	Economy and Jobs	T-3
	Health and Environment	T-9
The transportation system is not as friendly as it can be for bicyclists and pedestrians	Safety	T-3
	Transportation Access	T-4
	Health and Environment	T-5
	Future Vision	T-6
		T-8
Cul-de-sac streets are channeling traffic onto arterials and decreasing neighborhood connectivity	Bottleneck and Choke Points	T-2
	System Efficiencies	T-3
	Transportation Access	T-4
	Health and Environment	T-7

Issues	WTP Theme	Goal
		<b>T-10</b>
Participants noted that newer residential streets seemed wider than they need to be, but current street standards call for curb-to-curb widths wider than those in Ellensburg’s older neighborhoods	Safety	<b>T-1</b>
	System Efficiencies	<b>T-3</b>
	Health and Environment	<b>T-4</b>
	Future Vision	<b>T-10</b>
Generally, there are sidewalks in, around and through central Ellensburg, making the neighborhoods surrounding the Central Commercial zones very walkable. Some areas have sidewalks and missing link sections that should be considered for construction	Safety	<b>T-1</b>
	System Efficiencies	<b>T-2</b>
	Transportation Access	<b>T-3</b>
	Health and Environment	<b>T-4</b>
		<b>T-5</b>
	<b>T-10</b>	
University Way, because of its design and relatively high traffic volume, presents a distinct barrier between the Downtown Historic District and Central Washington University	Bottleneck and Choke Points	<b>T-3</b>
	Safety	<b>T-4</b>
	Moving Freight	<b>T-5</b>
	Transportation Access	<b>T-6</b>
	Economy and Jobs	<b>T-7</b>
	Health and Environment	<b>T-8</b>
	<b>T-10</b>	
Parcelization and right of way ownership throughout Ellensburg limits opportunities to create a grid street system like that in central Ellensburg	Bottleneck and Choke Points	<b>T-1</b>
	System Preservation	<b>T-2</b>
	System Efficiencies	<b>T-3</b>
	Transportation Access	<b>T-6</b>
	Economy and Jobs	<b>T-7</b>
	Future Vision	<b>T-9</b>
	<b>T-10</b>	

## **Policy Assumptions**

Ellensburg’s 1995 comprehensive plan established a preferred direction for the community’s transportation system. This plan update assumes that the policy direction from the 1995 plan is still appropriate. It provides additional direction to elaborate on the direction from the 1995 plan and to respond to comments raised in this planning process.

### **Level of Service (LOS)**

In 1995, Ellensburg considered a variety of LOS-setting approaches, ultimately deciding on the following policy:

- LOS B for local access streets
- LOS C for arterials and collector streets
- LOS D for arterials at the interchanges, with the understanding that if capacity on Canyon Road south of Mountain View is not increased the LOS for Canyon Road will lower to LOS E

This plan carries forward that policy direction.

### **Truck Routes**

Freight mobility is a very important consideration in the design and operation of a transportation system. At the time of the 1995 plan, the City did not have any designated truck routes. That plan included the following policy recommendation:

- Ellensburg designate truck routes throughout the city and restrict truck access to non-route streets

In setting that direction, the City elected not to continue unrestricted access to city streets and not to establish Ellensburg as a “truck-free” community, with long-haul trucks transferring their cargo to small delivery trucks at a truck depot for access to the commercial core.

Ellensburg has since designated truck routes, and those routes are incorporated into this plan update by reference.

### **Non-Motorized Transportation Routes/Facilities**

The 1995 comprehensive plan directed the City to:

- Establish a task force to study the non-motorized transit issue and to recommend a non-motorized transit plan to Council

- Focus on development of a major non-motorized pathway segment connecting Irene Rinehart Park with the Rodeo/Fairgrounds

The City adopted a non-motorized facilities plan in 1995 which was updated in 2008, and that 2008 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan is incorporated into this comprehensive plan by reference and is substituted for the 1995 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.

### **Rail Transit**

Rail's importance to Ellensburg has diminished over time. The rail depot was once the transportation hub of the community, but long-haul trucks and automobiles have replaced rail as the primary transportation mode for goods and people. The Milwaukee Railroad has been abandoned and converted into the John Wayne Pioneer Trail, a non-motorized pathway crossing Washington from Idaho to the Puget Sound. Washington Central Railroad leases the Burlington Northern rail line to the west of the Central Commercial zones, using the line for transportation of bulk goods between Yakima and Ellensburg. Though the line runs as far west as Cle Elum, the railroad has no plans to extend service beyond its current use.

In the 1995 plan, the City acknowledged:

- That rail transit through the city could have both positive and negative impacts on the city and recommended that rail impacts be studied and addressed in relation to on/off loading of containers for shipment to/from Puget Sound and in relation to industrial development

This recommendation was made in light of the increase in containerized shipping in Puget Sound and the possibility of Burlington Northern reopening its line across Stampede Pass. While the potential for increased rail activity still exists, there has been little increase since 1995. The 1995 plan's direction is still appropriate given the Port of Seattle's prominence and the possibility of increased cross-state rail traffic along a route roughly paralleling Interstate 90.

### **Arterial/Collector Priorities**

The 1995 plan identified priority street improvements necessary to serve new development in the UGA. The plan identified improvements and extensions to existing streets, identifying where increased capacity would be needed and where right of way



**Figure 5.7** – Ellensburg's depot best symbolizes the city's passenger rail past. (Image source: Unknown participant)

would need to be preserved, acquired or improved. Direction in that plan was multi-faceted, including directives to:

- Identify and designate specific arterial corridors for protection
- Establish a fund for acquiring identified corridors not subject to public dedication
- Improve Water Street, Helena Avenue, Idaho Avenue, Alder Street, Manitoba Avenue, and Main Street extensions
- Establish a west interchange/airport connection

The City's arterial road plans and 6-year capital improvement plans have included these directions, and the City has been working to acquire right of way as practicable through purchase and dedication.

## **Areas Warranting Special Handling**

There are several areas within Ellensburg's UGA that will warrant special transportation consideration as the community evolves. Scenario modeling identified these areas, as did a broad base of public involvement during the planning process. No matter what land use direction Ellensburg chooses, these areas will deserve special attention.

**Developing neighborhoods (1)** – Ellensburg has experienced rapid residential development. The area's history is agricultural, and the land ownership patterns reflect it. Parcel lines follow natural contours or the wishes of farmers who may have divided land for any number of purposes. Rarely do the parcel lines coincide with natural extensions of streets or trails as developed in the original Ellensburg plats. This presents difficulty as the city expands outward. Streets end at "T" intersections. Traffic that in the original city could filter through multiple streets becomes concentrated on major arterials in newly-developed areas. The pattern of property ownership has caused the development of an entirely different land use and transportation system to serve these areas, and the differences have created a distinctly different development character surrounding the traditional city. Alder Street and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue has emerged as an intersection with particular challenges.

**CBD (2)** – The Downtown Historic District has been Ellensburg's primary focus since the town's founding. Currently, it is in transition, having facing increased competition from regional retailers located far away, it is developing a new identity as a cultural and institutional center. A major change carried forth in this plan supports the establishment of regional retail at the west and south interchanges, two miles from the Central Commercial zones. The Central Commercial zones' transportation system will need to be studied to ensure it can adapt to the changes that will likely come.

**Canyon Road (3)** – Canyon Road is Ellensburg's most popular freeway interchange. As Ellensburg grows, transportation demand at this location will also increase. The interchange's geometry and lane alignments are confusing to some, and it is the area of the community's greatest traffic. Canyon Road's I-90 interchange and approach into the Central Commercial zone is due for study.

**West Interchange (3)** – Ellensburg's western interchange with I-90 has largely been dedicated to tourist commercial land uses, typified by the restaurants, gas stations, hotels, and truck stops developed there over the past 20 years. More recent land use changes have permitted auto sales and an office complex to develop there. Much of this comprehensive plan rewrite has been framed around land use issues arising from requests to modify designations at the west interchange to permit large-scale, regional retail and industrial uses.

The City will consider adoption of development regulations to address the manner in which new development will complement existing development in the community, contribute to the success of the CBD, and serve as an appropriate western gateway into the city.

**South Interchange (4)** - For many, the I-90 interchange with Canyon Road is all they see of Ellensburg. Several hotels, restaurants, and specialized retailers have established themselves there, catering to the needs of Interstate travelers, tourists and visitors. Canyon Road has become a continuous strip of commercial development stretching from the freeway to the Central Commercial zones. As with the west interchange, interest for more intense development at the south interchange is motivating requests for different land use designations that would allow more variety, including regional retail development.

The City will consider adoption of development regulations to address the manner in which new development will complement existing development in the community, contribute to the success of the CBD, and serve as an appropriate southern gateway into the city.

**University Way (5)** - University Way runs through Ellensburg, linking the west interchange to the Vantage Highway. Its course takes it along CWU's southern boundary, and the street marks the northern edge of the Central Commercial zones. This plan's preferred land use plan calls for increased revitalization of the Central Commercial zones and for increased coordination between CWU and the City of Ellensburg. University Way is an important community arterial, and it will need extensive study and some alteration to make it function as a pedestrian corridor that connects the university to the rest of the town. Its congestion now makes it a barrier.

**Dolarway Road (6)** - Ellensburg needs more industrial land that is relatively free of constraints and has good access to regional transportation facilities. While some of this industrial land may now be found at and around Bowers Field, the bulk of available industrial land lies along Dolarway Road between central Ellensburg and the west interchange. Dolarway is slated to develop as Ellensburg's primary industrial district, and the roadway and land uses lining it may need some close attention to ensure its industrial future is appropriately planned.

**Bowers Field (7)** - Ellensburg's airport is actually a County facility and is located beyond the city limits. The airport does not have a high profile yet, but aircraft operations have been increasing steadily in the past 10 years. As the City scrambles for economic development opportunities, the airport may rise in importance.

**Rail Corridor (8)** - Rail access is crucial for robust industrial development. Much of the land along the rail corridor is in the flood plain, limiting industrial development

opportunities. While the rail corridor is very important, the lack of industrial rail users may make it difficult for Ellensburg to take full advantage of the rail lines, limiting access to rail spurs and favorable rolling rates. In addition, the rail corridor presents a barrier to access, separating land on one side of the tracks from the other. This impacts the development potential of land to the west of the tracks and the provision of emergency services.

## Transportation Scenarios

The intent behind the various transportation scenarios discussed in this comprehensive plan was to explore conceptual strategies consistent with and complementing the four land use scenarios developed as part of the process. Each scenario was considered in a manner consistent with the policy assumptions included in each alternative. In this way, the City created a series of transportation scenarios that were “ready made” to fit with the four land use scenarios.

### **Downtown Retail Growth Scenario**

This scenario provided a mix of goals, policies and programs to retain and enhance the 1995 comprehensive plan’s direction emphasizing commercial development in and around the Downtown Historic District. Overall, this scenario allowed for the spread of commercial land uses throughout the CC-I and CC-II areas, permitting regional retail projects near the community’s center. The key reasoning behind this alternative was to allow Ellensburg residents to have an opportunity to shop locally, while still concentrating retail activity in central Ellensburg.

This scenario required the successful intermingling of the Downtown Historic District and the new regional retail uses expected to develop to the south and west of the area. Traffic would increase, and parking would be in high demand. That would mean providing for strong and clear pedestrian linkages and the preserving of interconnectedness between the two districts, requiring them to function as one.

The City ran transportation models on this scenario and on the others described here. The model indicated transportation impacts for the Downtown Retail Expansion scenario, including increased traffic congestion along Main Street/Canyon Road, University Way, Water and adjacent arterials and collectors. Parking availability becomes increasingly scarce, and pedestrian traffic in and around the Downtown Historic District increases. The freeway interchange at Canyon Road becomes busier as new central regional retail attracts visitors from outside the city. The route from the west interchange to the central city would become increasingly congested, putting demand on the interchange, the University Way Bridge and Dolarway Road’s connections to central Ellensburg. Increasing traffic would also impact Water Street and Main Street through the Central Commercial zones, as well as Chestnut Street and its intersections with 5<sup>th</sup>



**Figure 5.8** – Automotive-related sales lot near Ellensburg’s west interchange at I-90. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Avenue, Capitol and Mountain View. The intersections of Canyon Road at Mountain View and Umptanum Road will also be impacted.

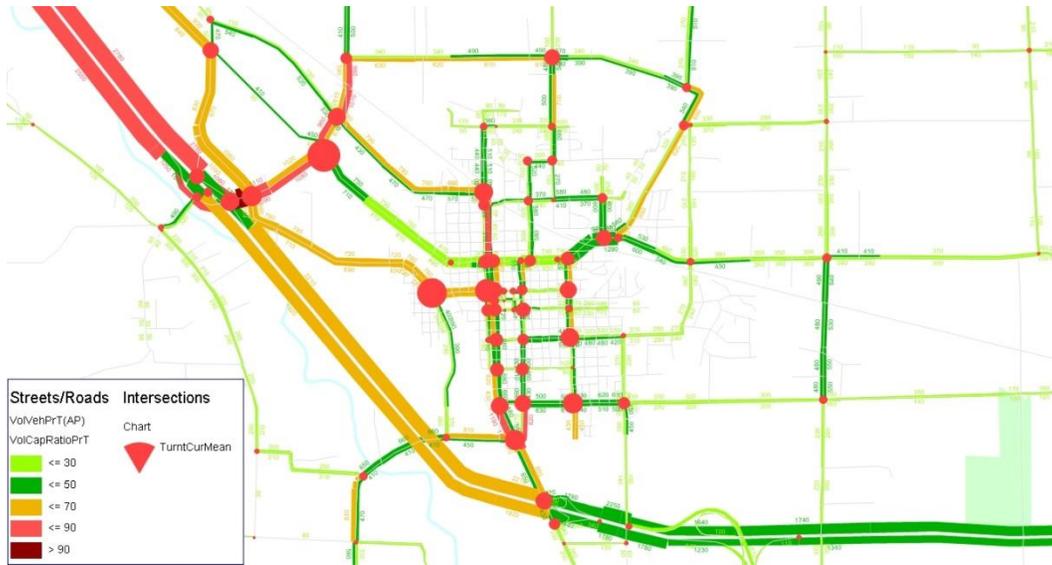
Possible mitigation measures include preparation of a traffic and parking plan to assess, in detail, the traffic and parking impacts of this alternative, establish a list of demand management programs and facility improvements and then assign implementation responsibility to the City, Central Washington University, WSDOT or others as appropriate. Improvement projects may include capacity increases at those areas identified in the traffic model as suffering high congestion levels, particularly within the Central Commercial zones along Water Street and Main Street.

### ***Limited Retail Growth Scenario***

In this scenario, Ellensburg's retail energies were to be focused on increasing vitality and diversity in the Central Commercial zones. It also envisioned satellite office/retail urban villages in the northern areas of the community. Additional large-scale retail was not welcomed in this scenario. Access to the Central Commercial zones was to be enhanced from all areas of town, while still emphasizing local access to the satellite urban villages. The key objective behind this alternative was to retain the small-scale, specialized retail character the community has developed, keeping Ellensburg's Central Commercial zones as the undisputed center for local shopping, despite the growing trend for out-of-town and internet shopping.

The transportation model indicated traffic would continue to grow in the Limited Retail Growth scenario. Increasing traffic would impact intersections on Water Street and Main Street at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and at University Way. Traffic would also exceed system capacity at the west interchange, particularly at the transition from the freeway ramps to the intersection at Dolarway Road. Dolarway Road would exceed capacity at its intersection with 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and improvements would be necessary at Canyon Road's intersection with Mountain View and Umptanum Road. Chestnut Street and its intersections with 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Capital, and Mountain View would experience congestion. Pedestrian traffic in and around the Downtown Historic District would increase.

Possible mitigation measures include preparation of a traffic and parking plan to assess, in detail, the traffic and parking impacts of this alternative, establish a list of demand management programs and facility improvements and then assign implementation responsibility to the City, Central Washington University, WSDOT or others as appropriate. Improvement projects may include capacity increases at those areas identified in the traffic model as suffering high congestion levels, particularly within the Central Commercial zones along Water Street and Main Street. It will also need to address non-motorized mobility, outlining strategies to reinforce the Downtown Historic District's intimate scale.



**Figure 5.9** - Preferred Scenario option, assumes County regional projects are not constructed. (Image source: Valerie Southern)

**Preferred Scenario: South Interchange Development**

This scenario preferred by Council to requests for regional retail, office and residential land use designations on the land north of I-90 and east of Canyon Road. This alternative included policies to facilitate that type of development, while also striving to emphasize the Canyon Road area’s connection to central Ellensburg and to the rest of the community. The focus behind this alternative was to provide land for increased regional retail activity where freeway visibility and land ownership were favorable, while also providing it at a location within “walkable” proximity to central Ellensburg.

The model showed increased retail development near the southern interchange increases traffic congestion at that interchange and north along Canyon Road into central Ellensburg. Other points of increased congestion include the University Way corridor from the west interchange toward the Central Commercial zones and the grid of the Downtown Historic District streets, similar to all other scenarios. University Way will also experience increased congestion at its intersection with 5<sup>th</sup>, Capitol and Mountain View, particularly as more traffic uses Chestnut to access south interchange development.

Possible mitigation measures include preparation of a traffic and parking plan to assess, in detail, the traffic and parking impacts of this alternative, establish a list of demand management programs and facility improvements and then assign implementation

responsibility to the City, Central Washington University, WSDOT or others as appropriate. Specific mitigations may include:

- Construction of an additional westbound left turn lane (providing dual westbound left turn lanes with approximately 200 feet of queue storage)
- Permitted/protected southbound left turn phasing
- Widening on Canyon Road

In addition, Canyon Road will be the primary connection between the commercial nodes. Focusing on pathways or other non-automotive means to connect the two districts to maintain “walkability” of the new development is important to maintain Central Commercial zone health.

#### ***Preferred Scenario: West Interchange Development***

The scenario preferred by Council presents goals, policies and programs complementing increased regional retail and industrial development at the west interchange. It suggests a transportation strategy generally consistent with the projected land use development at the west interchange area while still remaining consistent with the 1995 transportation element. These policies and programs include measures to mitigate direct environmental impact from the development at the interchange, as well as measures to help connect this project to central Ellensburg, to minimize reliance on the automobile, to revitalize the Central Commercial zones, and create an appropriate and attractive community entry at its western end.

This project will change the appearance and function of Ellensburg’s transportation system, particularly at the west interchange and along the University Way and Dolarway Road corridors. It is crucial that the transportation system be designed and built in a way that preserves the community’s identity, invigorates the Central Commercial zones, and provides a safe and effective transportation environment.

The transportation model indicates that increasing the retail development at the west interchange causes increased traffic congestion at that interchange and extending eastward along University Way and Dolarway Road toward central Ellensburg. Specific conflict areas are the interchange ramps, the intersection of University Way and Dolarway Road, and University Way Bridge, Reecer Creek Road, and Dolarway Road at 5<sup>th</sup>. Canyon Road and Water Street will experience increased traffic, particularly at their intersections with University Way, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Capitol Way. Canyon Road will experience increased congestion at Mountain View, Umptanum Road and its interchange with I-90.

Possible mitigation measures for these impacts include a transportation impact fee study to review costs for system expansion and identify revenue sources to help pay for them,

developing a methodology for the creation, assessment, collection, and disposition of impact fees. The City will need to investigate design and improvement strategies to emphasize University Way's connection between central Ellensburg and the emerging hub at the west interchange, drawing on the street's heritage as a historic cross-state highway for design reference. This alternative will require increased automotive and pedestrian capacity to access new regional retail development at the west interchange. Increased traffic at this intersection and more intense commercial uses taking access from the immediate area will require installation of a multiphase traffic signal at the intersection of University Way and Dolarway Road. Increased traffic and increase reliance in the west interchange for regional retail related trips will require work with WSDOT to assess how the access ramps can be compatible with increasing regional retail development while still providing access to northbound US Highway 97. The city would need to study land use and transportation characteristics and plan for increased development as a regional retail hub, designing a transportation system in concert with an integrated subarea land use plan and identifying costs associated with specific improvements required to make the area a functional, successful commercial district. Additional public transit may be warranted to unite the community's commercial poles. Preparation of a traffic and parking plan to assess, in detail, the traffic and parking impacts of this alternative, establish a list of demand management programs and facility improvements and then assign implementation responsibility to the City, Central Washington University, WSDOT or others as appropriate. Specific improvements to the transportation system in this alternative will likely include improvements at the US Highway 97/University Way intersection to bring this intersection to LOS B. Those mitigations may include:

- Installation of a traffic signal
- Construction of an additional eastbound left turn lane (providing dual eastbound left turn lanes with approximately 200 feet of queue storage)
- Maintain the existing free-flowing southbound right turn lane

**Factors:**

- The west interchange is two miles away from the Central Commercial zones, separated by railroad tracks, open spaces, and disconnected, land-intensive commercial and storage land uses. There is little possibility of developing a pedestrian connection between the west interchange and the Central Commercial zones
- Designating this land for retail use will further limit availability of land for industrial development, particularly where development constraints are more easily overcome

- Retail development at the interchange will create pressure to develop compatible uses surrounding it
- New automobile and truck traffic can be easily managed at the interchange location
- Increased municipal revenues from retail development may allow the City to reinvest in transportation system improvements in other areas

Transportation models were run for this scenario considering whether the County's regional projects were constructed ("build") or not ("no build"), illustrating the various impacts that this scenario would have on the transportation network. This comprehensive plan presumes the "no build" scenario (*Figure 5.9*) and concentrates on the localized improvements necessary for the transportation system within Ellensburg's UGA.

## Goals, Policies and Programs

The following table provides goals, policies and programs that will help the City implement this comprehensive plan. The programs are intended to be specific and task-oriented, allowing the City Council and City Manager to assign responsibility to various staff members or commissions for completion. Systematic undertaking and completion of the various programs will ensure that policies are implemented and will help achieve plan goals.

### **Goal T-1** - *Achieve a harmonious, compatible arrangement of all land uses*

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Incorporate industrial growth only off specific transportation corridors	<b>1</b>	Designate and zone land along industrial corridors appropriately
		<b>2</b>	Identify industrial corridors
<b>B</b>	Establish additional logical access routes outside of the established street system for bicycle and foot traffic	<b>1</b>	Implement the non-motorized transit plan
		<b>2</b>	Identify trail easements and develop an effective maintenance strategy, including a reliable source of funding

### **Goal T-2** - *Encourage optimum land utilization*

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Establish a development process that results in a pattern of contiguous growth beyond the established urban growth boundary	<b>1</b>	Develop and adopt an interlocal agreement with Kittitas County regarding the design and preservation of transportation corridors in the UGA
		<b>2</b>	Prepare neighborhood subarea plans in undeveloped areas of the City and UGA to preserve needed transportation corridors
<b>B</b>	Retain a compact urban growth pattern with distinct boundaries between town and rural land uses	<b>1</b>	Revise street design and parking standards to encourage the mixing of residential and commercial uses
		<b>2</b>	Align arterials to respect and reinforce UGA limits, not

**Goal T-2** - Encourage optimum land utilization

Policy	Program
	designing them presupposing or facilitating their continuation into territory outside the existing UGA
	<b>3</b> Minimize street widths
	<b>4</b> Minimize use of cul-de-sacs

**Goal T-3** - Provide a multi-modal transportation system that moves people and goods efficiently

Policy	Program
<b>A</b> Encourage convenient retail/services at the west interchange and provide for the full range of needs experienced by persons engaged in long-haul trucking at the south interchange and west interchange	<b>1</b>
<b>B</b> Concentrate long-haul truck traffic to the interchange areas of the community except for those engaged in local delivery activity	<b>1</b> Review development regulations and street standards to ensure they are current with contemporary truck design criteria, particularly as they apply to those areas near the freeway interchanges
	<b>2</b> Maintain and enforce truck routes through city and ensure connection to freeway interchanges
<b>C</b> Improve pedestrian use and automobile access to the Central Commercial zones by enhancing pedestrian access throughout the Central Commercial zones.	<b>1</b> Prepare a Central Commercial zones urban design and access plan to interconnect all Central Commercial zone uses
	<b>2</b> Collaborate with CWU to overcome University Way's function as a divider between CWU and the Central Commercial zones

**Goal T-3** - Provide a multi-modal transportation system that moves people and goods efficiently

Policy	Program
	<p>3 Prepare a parking study for the Central Commercial zones, including determination of where parking facilities should be located and how to implement them</p> <hr/> <p>4 Enhance public rights of way</p>
<p><b>D</b> Provide safe, logical areas for employee and resident parking, with automobile traffic on Central Commercial zone streets associated with consumer automobiles increasing as a percentage of the total traffic volume</p>	<p>1 Designate employee parking areas in the Central Commercial zones, giving preference Central Commercial zone patrons</p> <hr/> <p>2 Continue the Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) and expand it to include Central Commercial zone housing as it develops</p> <hr/> <p>3 Prepare a parking study for the Central Commercial zones, including determination of where parking facilities should be located and how to implement them</p>
<p><b>E</b> Provide a consistent level of reliable, public transportation to medical, governmental, financial, retail and cultural locations throughout the community through a locally supported public transportation system</p>	<p>1 Study feasibility of limited public transportation</p> <hr/> <p>2 Study options to link the west and south interchanges to central Ellensburg</p>
<p><b>F</b> Develop and reference a complete street, sidewalk, footpath and bicycle lane classification system and locally derived traffic volume standards for all major land use decisions</p>	<p>1 Establish LOS B for local streets</p> <hr/> <p>2 Establish LOS C for arterials and collectors</p> <hr/> <p>3 Establish LOC D for I-90 interchanges</p> <hr/> <p>4 Implement the non-motorized transit plan</p> <hr/> <p>5 Review street design standards</p>
<p><b>G</b> Continue to identify, evaluate and</p>	<p>1 Adopt an interlocal agreement</p>

**Goal T-3** - Provide a multi-modal transportation system that moves people and goods efficiently

Policy		Program	
	acquire major arterial corridors leading from the established community to the UGA		with Kittitas County to identify and preserve major right of way corridors and define street intervals
		2	Comment on all development proposals in the UGA
		3	Prepare neighborhood subarea plans in undeveloped areas of the City and UGA to preserve needed transportation corridors
<b>H</b>	Regularly discuss innovations to improve the transport of people and materials through the community, considering implementing innovations for trial periods and emphasizing non-motorized connections to the west interchange	1	Coordinate with WSDOT on project design and opportunities for innovation
		2	Prepare a Canyon Road corridor plan
		3	Prepare a University Way corridor plan, including improvements to pedestrian links between the University and the Central Commercial zones while preserving its function as a major arterial
		4	Identify innovations for movement of pedestrians and vehicles and implement them as trial projects, prioritizing projects along University Way, Main Street, and Canyon Road
		5	Prepare a Dolarway Road corridor plan, including improvements to ensure its function as an industrial corridor as well as a major link between the west interchange and central Ellensburg
<b>I</b>	Treat pedestrians, bicycle, automotive and truck traffic all as	1	Review and revise street standards as necessary

**Goal T-3** - Provide a multi-modal transportation system that moves people and goods efficiently

Policy	Program
	<p>legitimate forms of transport in the community, including consideration of the effects upon other modes when making major decisions on one mode of transport</p> <p><b>2</b> Review and comment on street and highway project designs proposed by WSDOT and Kittitas County</p>
<p><b>J</b> Design of new streets in the city shall use a street grid system at an interval of 1/2 mile for arterial streets. Within the 1/2 mile sections, attempt to maintain a 1/4 mile connection for auto circulation, with 200 to 800 foot pedestrian connections, depending on zone density</p>	<p><b>1</b> For all undeveloped areas of the city, UGA, and rural transition zone, prepare maps of future street alignments, especially for arterials, considering existing development patterns and physical barriers such as streams and steep slopes</p>
	<p><b>2</b> Create a street fund to finance the City’s share of matching grants and LIDS, and to complete motorized and non-motorized transportation systems</p>
	<p><b>3</b> Coordinate with Kittitas County to identify and protect future street alignments in the UGA and rural transition zone</p>
<p><b>K</b> Encourage industrial development along the railroad corridor, at the west interchange, along Dolarway Road, and at the intersection of Canyon Road and Thrall Road</p>	<p><b>1</b> Study rail impacts with respect to container handling</p>
	<p><b>2</b> Study rail impacts with respect to local industrial development</p>
	<p><b>3</b> Study feasibility of industrial development at Thrall Road</p>
	<p><b>4</b> Rezone land for industrial use in designated areas as appropriate</p>

**Goal T-4** - Continue improvement of the overall appearance and physical condition of the community

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Enhance the appearance of and from public rights of way	<b>1</b>	Update and use the City’s public tree inventory and ensure an annual net gain of suitable trees in the public right of way
		<b>2</b>	Review street standards to permit more flexibility to enhance design of the public realm, provide greater separation of pedestrians from vehicles, and accommodate on-street parking in commercial districts
		<b>3</b>	Consider aligning streets to take advantage of views of landmarks when designing subdivisions
		<b>4</b>	Emphasize the sense of entry at the west interchange

**Goal T-5** - Provide convenient, centralized facilities designed to serve present and future citizen needs

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Regard the Downtown Historic District as the predominant design and activity center of the community and region	<b>1</b>	Prepare a Central Commercial zones urban design and access plan to interconnect regional retail with the Central Commercial zones
		<b>2</b>	Facilitate long-range planning workshops between CWU and the downtown organizations
		<b>3</b>	Provide Central Commercial zones parking and design parking facilities to serve multiple purposes, such as pedestrian plazas, performance venues, or sculpture walks
<b>B</b>	Encourage and locate new public	<b>1</b>	Implement the non-motorized

**Goal T-5** - Provide convenient, centralized facilities designed to serve present and future citizen needs

Policy	Program
buildings for administrative, cultural, and recreational activities in or in close proximity to the Central Commercial zones	transit plan to ensure adequate service for pedestrians and bicyclists in the Central Commercial zones and linkage to the west interchange
	2 Review parking requirements for institutional uses and reduce them where appropriate
<b>C</b> Encourage development and activity which increases automobile and pedestrian traffic in the Central Commercial zones after 6:00 PM	1 Revise zoning and parking requirements to permit and encourage the mixing of residential and commercial uses
	2 Coordinate with CWU to develop student housing in the Downtown Historic District, particularly in a mixed-use format
	3 Coordinate with the various downtown stakeholders to increase after-hours business.
	4 Prepare a Central Commercial zones urban design and access plan to interconnect all Central Commercial zone uses
<b>D</b> Develop programs that address on and off street parking in all commercial districts	1 Prepare a parking study to identify locations for additional Central Commercial zones parking and ways to provide it
	2 Develop a parking trust fund to allow Central Commercial zones merchants to purchase their way out of parking requirements
	3 Review parking requirements and reduce or eliminate them in the Central Commercial zones as appropriate
	4 Develop a parking fee to assess to

**Goal T-5** - Provide convenient, centralized facilities designed to serve present and future citizen needs

Policy		Program	
			projects that provide more parking than that required by the code
		5	Create storm water runoff designs and strategies that minimize the amount of land necessary to treat runoff from parking areas
E	Encourage development of second floor housing/professional offices in the Downtown Historic District	1	Develop parking standards that provide credit for mixed or complementary uses
		2	Provide and protect parking for Downtown Historic District residents, perhaps through construction of structured parking
F	Maintain interconnectedness and high levels of access	1	Prepare a Central Commercial zones urban design and access plan to interconnect all Central Commercial zones uses
		2	Identify critical rights of way and important pedestrian corridors accessing the Central Commercial zones and linking the Central Commercial zones to the west and south interchanges

**Goal T-6** - Maintain the City of Ellensburg as the predominant center for commercial, financial, governmental, and cultural activities

Policy		Program	
A	Encourage the growth of locally funded production businesses through public/private programs such as the Ellensburg Business Incubator	1	Designate and zone land appropriately along transportation corridors
		2	Study rail impacts with respect to local industrial development
		3	Coordinate with the County on

		airport master plan implementation	
<b>B</b>	Discourage retail strip development characterized by uncoordinated development of separate lots	<b>1</b>	Prepare corridor plans for Canyon Road, Mountain View Avenue, Umptanum Road, Dolarway Road and University Way to limit the spread of commercial development while still recognizing each corridor's unique qualities and opportunities
<b>C</b>	Take advantage of Ellensburg's historic elements	<b>1</b>	Prepare corridor plans for Canyon Road, University Way and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue, recognizing each corridor's unique qualities, opportunities, and contributions to Ellensburg's character
		<b>2</b>	Integrate the train depot and other historically significant places into a Central Commercial zones transportation scheme

**Goal T-7** - Constantly protect and improve the quality of the natural and built environment within the community and surrounding region

Policy	Program
<b>A</b>	Discourage urban or suburban intrusion onto prime farmland outside of the UGA
	<b>1</b>
	Identify prime farmland outside of the UGA
	<b>2</b>
	Prepare a north Ellensburg subarea plan, identifying goals and policies that help reduce development pressures on prime farmland
	<b>3</b>
	Adopt an interlocal agreement with the County to align rights of way in a manner that helps conserve prime farmland

**Goal T-8** - Capture increasing levels of CWU activity in the Downtown Historic District

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Encourage provision of parking on the southern and western periphery of Downtown Historic District	<b>1</b>	Prepare a parking study to identify locations for additional Central Commercial zones parking and ways to provide it
		<b>2</b>	Coordinate with CWU to define the character and scale of parking provided in or near the Central Commercial zones
<b>B</b>	Coordinate with CWU planning efforts	<b>1</b>	Develop a pedestrian circulation program for land on both sides of University Way near the Downtown Historic District

**Goal T-9** - Achieve harmony between City and County transportation policy

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Coordinate transportation and capital facilities planning with Kittitas County and WSDOT	<b>1</b>	Circulate comprehensive plan and other transportation plans to the County and WSDOT for comment
		<b>2</b>	Involve the County in joint planning for the UGA
		<b>3</b>	Develop arterial road plans and street design standards for the UGA that are consistent between the City and County
		<b>4</b>	Review County land use actions and transportation improvement programs to ensure consistency with County and City plans

**Goal T-10** - Implement a non-motorized transportation system that increases the number of residents who choose to walk or bicycle in lieu of driving

Policy		Program	
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**Goal T-10** - Implement a non-motorized transportation system that increases the number of residents who choose to walk or bicycle in lieu of driving

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Encourage other transportation modes	<b>1</b>	Revise zoning to permit mixing of land uses
		<b>2</b>	Implement the Non-motorized Transportation Plan to develop a comprehensive non-motorized circulation plan and implementation program
		<b>3</b>	Build streets, trails, linear parks, and pathways to connect neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial areas as both recreation and transportation facilities
		<b>4</b>	Prepare a Central Commercial zones urban design and access plan to encourage walking and bicycling
		<b>5</b>	Investigate ways to provide effective and attractive public transportation, such as a trolley or jitney system linking the Central Commercial zones to the west and south interchanges
		<b>6</b>	Whenever possible, retrofit existing streets with pedestrian and bicycle facilities
<b>B</b>	Reduce auto demand on local and arterial streets	<b>1</b>	Revise zoning to permit mixed uses near services
		<b>2</b>	Design higher density projects to be compatible with future public transportation service
		<b>3</b>	Develop, design, and construct standards for walkways and bikeways that emphasize connectivity and reduce operations and maintenance costs

**Goal T-10** - *Implement a non-motorized transportation system that increases the number of residents who choose to walk or bicycle in lieu of driving*

Policy		Program	
C	Increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety along arterial streets	1	Revise street standards to increase separation of pedestrians from travel ways
		2	Revise zoning to permit zero or reduced building setbacks in commercial districts
		3	Introduce calming measures to slow traffic on non-arterial streets
		4	Consolidate pedestrian crossings on University Way at traffic lights

### Priority Projects: Preferred Scenario

The following priority projects represent immediate steps the City should take to implement this plan.

Project	Description and Goals
<b>Transportation impact fee study</b>	Review likely costs for system expansions and identify revenue sources to help pay for them, developing a methodology for the creation, assessment, collection, and disposition of impact fees
<b>Transportation system plan</b>	Prepare a detailed analysis of the existing network and identify specific improvements, examining alternatives to achieve sufficient capacity while respecting community character
<b>West and south interchange areas</b>	Consider adoption of development regulations for the west and south interchange areas which are specifically tailored to the uses anticipated to site in those areas, address consistency with development of many similar uses in the area, accommodate project impacts that are unique to this area because of the intensity of commercial, industrial, and residential land uses and activities.
<b>University Way plan</b>	Investigate design and improvement strategies to emphasize University Way’s connection between central Ellensburg and the emerging hub at the west interchange
<b>University Way/Dolarway Road signalization</b>	Study the installation of a multiphase traffic signal at the intersection of University Way and Dolarway Road to accommodate increased traffic at the west interchange as the area develops into a regional retail hub
<b>CBD Plan</b>	Study access, mobility, parking and multimodal system compatibility to ensure the Central Commercial zones can adjust to the transition to a specialized retail, institutional, cultural and entertainment district
<b>Dolarway Road plan</b>	Study options to make Dolarway an increasingly attractive industrial corridor and more convenient link between central Ellensburg and the west and south interchanges
<b>Zoning revisions</b>	Revise zoning as necessary to implement findings and recommendations from the impact fee study
<b>Traffic studies</b>	Require traffic studies as necessary as part of development review to ensure transportation impacts are adequately addressed in project design and conditions of approval

Project	Description and Goals
<b>Economic development vision</b>	Coordinate system-wide transportation planning and project prioritizing with a regional economic development vision and strategy
<b>Transit-oriented design standards</b>	Reevaluate transportation system design standards to accommodate transit-oriented or multi-modal design in areas of more concentrated development, such as in the Central Commercial zones, near the university and in the area around the west and south interchanges
<b>Northern Pacific Depot</b>	Study measures necessary for using the historic depot as an inter/multi-modal transportation hub.

### **Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program**

Local jurisdictions are required to prepare and keep current a six-year transportation improvement program (TIP). These programs identify capital transportation projects, prioritize them, indicate project costs and identify funding sources for each project. Ellensburg will continue to prepare TIPs every year designed to implement the preferred alternative and rectify system deficiencies.

## 6 Capital Facilities and Utilities



## 6 Capital Facilities and Utilities

Ellensburg is a full-service municipality. It offers water, wastewater, gas and electric utilities, storm water drainage, a street system, law enforcement, a library, a parks and recreation system and a host of administrative services that keep it all running. Ellensburg is one of only three municipalities in Washington State that provide gas service and one of only four that have an electric utility.

In addition, the Ellensburg School District, Fairpoint Communications, Charter Communications, Waste Management, Puget Power, Kittitas County PUD, and Kittitas County also provide services to Ellensburg residents and to land within the UGA.

This chapter examines it all, providing an inventory of the existing service environment, identifying issues the City will need to address, and establishing goals, policies and programs to help Ellensburg meet the community's needs. This part of the comprehensive plan will help the City prepare its capital improvement plans, putting those six-year plans in the context of the 20-year comprehensive plan. Where appropriate, it will reference existing city master plans for water and sewer, keeping this chapter brief while still acknowledging the depth of work being done in those specific service areas.



**Figure 6.1** - To varying degrees, Ellensburg's growth will require new investment in expanded and improved services. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

This chapter will also establish or reference levels of service (LOS) where appropriate to help the City plan for the incremental expansion of services as its population grows.

## **Water**

Ellensburg is in the process of updating its comprehensive water plan, detailing its long-range plans for water service. The plan examines water source, storage, delivery, and quality, providing a strategic and tactical tool for the management and operations of Ellensburg's water system. That water system plan is adopted by reference into this comprehensive plan. This chapter will provide a summary of the City's water system and establish a general policy context within which the water system plan will operate.

The City's water supply is sufficient to meet current needs and to serve areas that develop within the UGA. Some of the City's water rights are not yet fully developed, but they exist and can be fully developed when it is time to bring more water into the system. Pumps and pipes necessary to fully develop existing ground water rights will be incorporated in the capital facilities element of the water plan update. That plan will also evaluate timing for development of surface water rights held by the City for municipal supply.

The City's water delivery system has grown outward from the core, expanding to serve new areas as they become incorporated within the City limits. Ellensburg has chosen to serve some customers outside the city limits, but those service agreements are few, with the vast majority of water customers located within the City of Ellensburg.

The water system plan plans for the water service area that generally coincides with Ellensburg's UGA. While the majority of Ellensburg's water system lies within the incorporated city limits, the water system plan will account for land within the UGA that is yet to be served by municipal water.

The City maintains six deep wells and one infiltration gallery known as the City Wells. The deep wells pump from the Ellensburg Formation, a semi-consolidated deposit of clay, silt, sand and gravel. The City Wells infiltration gallery pumps water from the shallow sands and gravels located along the Yakima River approximately seven miles to the northwest of the city. A telemetry system engages the pumps at the sources to ensure the city's reservoirs remain sufficiently full. All water supply facilities add chlorine to the water.

The water system is comprised of two pressure zones to account for the approximately 200' elevation difference from the highest service point to the lowest. The upper pressure zone is in the community's northeast, serving the Vuecrest and Brooklane neighborhoods. The lower pressure zone serves the balance of the community. The City

has expanded the boundaries of the upper pressure zone to serve the area north of 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Demand for water has steadily increased with the community's growth. The current water system plan assumes an annual growth rate of 1.5% per year in the lower pressure zone, with a growth rate of closer to 3% in the upper pressure zone and in northern Ellensburg. This would result in an almost 40% increase in customers by the year 2025. The majority of this demand is anticipated to come from residential customers. Twin City Foods is the single highest water user, accounting for almost 19% of total water used. Central Washington University is the second highest user, consuming approximately 15% of the total water used.



**Figure 6.2** – Demand for water has steadily increased with the community's growth. Residential customers are expected to drive demand upwards by as much as 40% in coming years. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

## **Wastewater/Storm Sewer**

Ellensburg is also updating its comprehensive sewer plan. As with the water system plan, this chapter adopts the comprehensive sewer plan by reference, using general system information in this document to help outline a policy context for the more detailed sewer system plan.

The sewer system serves virtually all residents and businesses in Ellensburg with its network of 1930's-era vitrified clay and concrete pipe. The sewer system has expanded to the north, east and west more recently, using asbestos cement pipe, concrete pipe, and, most recently, PVC pipe. There are only three lift stations in the system, helping the flow of effluent in its movement from north to south. Wastewater and storm drainage are transmitted to the wastewater treatment plant, a secondary treatment facility completed in 1974 south of Interstate 90.

The wastewater treatment plant is designed for a population of 31,000 with a hydraulic peak flow capacity of 15 million gallons per day and a treatment capacity of eight million gallons per day. It is now operating at close to 50%. The final waste sludge from the treatment plant is dried and stored, ultimately delivered for dry land application in the lower Yakima Valley.

Most of the city's storm runoff is discharged into the creeks running through the community. Some, mostly from roof drains in the Central Commercial zones, is collected

in the sanitary sewer system. The inclusion of storm water drainage into the sewer system increases demand on the system's conveyance and treatment, effectively reducing capacity for true sanitary sewer users.

Flow into the treatment plant is divided into three general categories: base sewage flow, infiltration due to groundwater, and infiltration due to rainfall. Recent studies indicated that per-capita sewage flows were approximately 125 gallons per day, resulting in a base sewage flow of approximately two million gallons per day in 2005. Inflow due to groundwater coincides with the irrigation season, with high rates of infiltration during the summer and low rates during the winter. Rainfall inflow increases when Ellensburg receives more than 0.4 inches of rain per day. A study in 1992 established a safety allowance of 500 gallons per acre per day for system flow analysis purposes. This factor will be revised in conjunction with the plan update and likely reduced to a lower value due to completed capital projects targeting inflow.

## **Power**

Ellensburg's electrical utility began in June of 1891, making it the oldest municipal electric utility system in Washington. At the outset, the "City Light Department" generated its own power with a small hydroelectric plant near the Upper Yakima River Bridge. The utility, now part of the Energy Services Department, is a customer of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), abandoning its generating facility in 1951.

The current electric system is entirely 12,470 volt, three-phase, 60 Hz., and consists of 47 miles of overhead line, 41 miles of underground cable and two substations. There are approximately 9,200 meters. All new growth within the system is built with long-life underground cable-in conduit and includes loop feed capability wherever possible. The existing aerial facilities are in excellent condition due to continuous maintenance.

In 1998 the City purchased the power transformers and other 12,470-volt equipment at two substations from BPA, avoiding costly low-voltage delivery charges. The City also replaced all the 12 main feeder reclosers at the substations and installed a remote data system, making response to outages more reliable.

The electrical system has a capacity of 55 Megawatts. The maximum peak load of 42 Megawatts was realized on February 6, 1996. It is estimated the system has essentially reached the capacity due to loads added to the system since then. The City has encouraged natural gas fuel switching and conservation strategies over recent years, and these efforts have significantly slowed the effect of rapid growth on the electrical system.

The City is finalizing plans to upgrade one of the three power transformers, adding 20 Megawatts of capacity to the system in 2006, and later building a third substation on the north end of town, adding another 15 Megawatts of capacity. These improvements will

assist loop-feed capability, make year-round maintenance on all facilities simpler, and continue the high level of reliability the electrical customers have enjoyed.

## Natural Gas

Ellensburg's is the first municipal natural gas system west of the Mississippi. The system was founded in 1956. There are approximately 4,000 customers inside and outside the city limits. These are served by a network of approximately 105 miles of distribution mains and 54 miles of service line.

Gas arrives in Ellensburg via the Northwest Pipeline's (Williams') tap east of the city. Gas then passes through one of three regulator stations, the major one being on Seattle Avenue. The distribution system runs at a pressure of 40 psi, feeding an annual consumption of approximately 800,000 MMbtu's.

The current "firm load" available from Northwest Pipeline (Williams) is 8,000 MMbtu, which is the maximum firm load that can be obtained without Williams carrying out major reinforcement work. Any additional request for gas will be treated as "interruptible." Currently, gas demand peaks in the winter and can vary widely dependent on the prevailing temperatures.

The current maximum demand experienced was on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004, with a consumption of 6,250,000 cubic feet. Should a "peak day" be experienced – that is a day with the worst temperatures in the past 30 years – consumption would exceed 8,000,000 cubic feet. With recent growth in the city, gas consumption figures are showing a growth of almost 8% for the last two years. The "firm load" limit may soon be reached.

Plans are in a preliminary stage to reinforce the existing system with one more tap station and up to six more regulator stations. Together with proposed storage, the system will be in an excellent position to serve the city for the foreseeable future.

The existing system is robust, serving many areas of the county and is well-placed to serve many more developments that are planned. The system was laid as a fully-welded system and investigations have shown that there is little, if any, need to carry out any replacement work of the older mains and services.



**Figure 6.3** – Ellensburg has ample water capacity to serve areas within the UGA; if needed, additional undeveloped water rights may be exercised. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Additional detail on the gas system and its forecasts of future demand is maintained in the Gas Division’s office at City Hall. What appears in this plan is only a summary of the system and its demand characteristics, allowing the City to consider appropriate strategic policy guidance within which the utility can operate.

### **Shop/Warehouse**

The Shop/Warehouse facility is sufficient to meet current demand. However, as utility, parks and street functions expand to meet growth demand, improvements to the facility will be necessary. Through the planning horizon, shop expansion will be driven by and should be sensitive to the needs of the various division tenants of the facility.

### **Streets and Non-Motorized Transportation**

The description of the city’s street system is provided in Chapter 5. The description of the City’s non-motorized transportation system is provided in the 2008 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan that has been incorporated into this comprehensive plan by reference in Chapter 5.

### **Library**

Ellensburg operates a library, founded in 1907 by the Women’s Municipal Improvement Society of Ellensburg, in partnership with Andrew Carnegie. The Society donated two lots on the corner of Third and Ruby, opening the library in 1910. The library remains there, in its new facility, today.

The library’s mission is:

*“...to provide a safe and welcoming place where patrons can develop an appreciation for reading and learning; find information about their community and its opportunities; and investigate or explore a wide range of topics relevant to their work, school and personal lives”*

All Kittitas County residents are welcome to use the library facilities. Kittitas County annually contributes general tax funds in support of Library operations. The City enjoys reciprocal agreements with all other Kittitas County municipalities’ libraries. Central Washington University students use the public library for research and recreation.

Unique factors affect the space needs of the Ellensburg Public Library. These needs are driven by projected growth patterns countywide, the need to keep up with changing technology and expanding services, and by the desire to improve the focus areas that are unique to this library. The comprehensive plan will help guide planning for a potential expansion of the existing facility.

As the Ellensburg population expands and the role of the library in the community changes, the need for library service, facility changes may well follow. A recent study of the library's service area indicates that increased customer demand is a factor of geography, revealing that the community's size and dispersion may argue for other expansion alternatives such as mobile service; construction of a branch facility; and/or expansion of the library's website and electronic resources..

- **Centralized Facility** - The Ellensburg Public Library is a municipal library located at a substantial distance from other public libraries. The expansion in 2003 of the facility and its holdings was intended to serve Ellensburg and the county well into the future. Recent upward trends in library visits and circulation of materials show that there will be increased demand for space, services and material beyond what the current facility can provide. As the city and county population grows, likewise does the collection, technology and space needs of the library.
- **Hal Holmes Center** - Completed in 1982, the Hal Holmes Community Center is the City's multi-purpose facility providing space for community events and activities; for performing and visual arts, for educational and public purposes that contribute to the public good and achieve the purposes of its funding source. The facility was separated from the library by an outdoor breezeway. In 2003, the library was expanded by 2,350 square feet, and encompassed the breezeway. This renovation greatly expanded the children's staff and circulation areas of the library, and brought the Library and Hal Holmes Center under one roof with a shared lobby, public and staff restrooms. The Hal Holmes Center's large public meeting spaces benefit the library's programming space needs as well as the



**Figure 6.4** - Ellensburg's library has been a centerpiece of civic life since its founding in 1907. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

greater community's. It is assumed that as the community continues to grow and other conference and meeting spaces are identified, the Center's meeting room space will be available to meet the expanded need for library functions. This built-in room for expansion will enable the library to maintain its historically important place in the downtown core.

- **Parking** - The City of Ellensburg's purchase of the property on the east side of Pine between 1st and 2nd streets in 2003 allows for further expansion of the library on the same block it occupies at present, moving parking to the new property across the street. Presently, the majority of the parking serving the library is street parking. The small off-street parking lot on the south side of the Holmes Center may be taken up with any future expansion needs of the library, enabling the library to remain in its present location.
- **Local History Collection** - The residents of the City of Ellensburg have taken a great interest in the town's past. This interest is fostered at the library. The large local history collection is partially housed in a special room accessible to the public in the main library, but much of the collection is inaccessible in basement archives. An adequate ventilation system and an elevator are necessary improvements to be made to the Hal Holmes basement area to allow public utilization of the archives. These improvements would allow space for public research and exploration of local history documents and photographs as well as workspace to maintain and organize the collection as it grows over time.

The Ellensburg Public Library Board has prepared and adopted a series of goals and objectives to ensure the library continues to be an integral part of community life in the Kittitas Valley. Those goals and objectives, submitted to the City on February 20, 2006, are incorporated into this comprehensive plan by reference.

## **Parks and Recreation**

Ellensburg prepared a comprehensive parks and recreation plan in 2002, building on the goals and policies of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan and creating a detailed strategy for continuing to provide parks and recreation services for Ellensburg residents. This comprehensive plan includes a parks and recreation element that is intended to update the goals, policies and programs of the 2002 parks and recreation plan, carrying forward that plan's recommendations and making revisions as appropriate to reflect changes in community needs.

The listing of specific park improvements is included in Chapter 9.

## City Hall

City Hall is now located in what used to be the Washington School. The City completed its remodel in 2005, providing more than 20,000 square feet of office space to house the City Council chambers and all but two of the City's departments. The City acquired and remodeled the school building in response to recommendations made by the City Hall Technical Advisory Committee.

The new City Hall satisfied the vast majority of the City's space needs and will be sufficient to serve Ellensburg's administrative offices for the rest of the planning period.



**Figure 6.5** – Participants viewed City Hall's move into the renovated former Washington School as very positive. (Image source: Unknown participant)

## Police

The Ellensburg Police Department (EPD) provides law enforcement services to the City of Ellensburg, with police offices located in the southern end of the public safety building near the Central Business District. The public safety building was constructed in 1955 and remodeled in 1977, with the 1977 remodel including the addition of a fire bay and the removal of the jail holding facility. A second remodel was completed in 1991, adding no square footage to the police department space but allowing for more efficient use of existing space.

Since 1991, the police department has made minor modifications to the space and altered the location of various office functions to adapt to changes and increases in demand. Evidence and property functions are now located in the basement, requiring moving items up and down stairs. The police department believes it has reached, if not exceeded, the limits of its available office space.

The Police Department also operates a remote evidence/property building on the grounds of the City Shop. That building houses larger property items such as bicycles or vehicles for short-term storage. Additional fenced space may be needed in the near future for storage of items outdoors.

Ellensburg now has 23 sworn officers, up from 17 in 1991. Calls for service have increased at a rate consistent with the increases in population and service area. The rate of staff increase has not kept pace.

The police department needs additional staff, and it needs additional space to house law enforcement functions. Options include expanding the police occupancy of the public safety building by taking over space the fire department may vacate, constructing a second floor on the public safety building if the fire department remains in its current space, expanding the public safety building into the northern parking lot and re-subdividing building space between fire and police, or purchasing a new facility either near or distant from the current police department offices.

### **Animal Shelter**

The Ellensburg Animal Shelter (EAS) was constructed in 1974 with 16 dog kennels intended to house 547 dogs annually, manned by one employee and open to the public a total of 13 hours per week. Through grant funding, the carport was converted to a cat room and 20 cat cages were added in 1987. Two years later, a second full-time position and part-time position were added. The demand for shelter services has continued to grow and EAS is now charged with finding space to house a wide variety of animals, including wildlife, livestock farm animals, rodents, reptiles, and feathered animals. Currently, EAS houses nearly 1,500 animals annually, an increase of 271% over the original intent. EAS is an open admission shelter, and the 16 dog kennels and 20 cat cages are at maximum capacity 90% of the time. In the last 17 years, the population of the City has increased 36% and impounded animals are up 51%. Calls for service are up 82% and dog bite cases are up 300%. Despite this, the staffing level has remained the same since 1989, with 2 FTEs and 1 PTE. When the shelter is full, space is made by euthanizing. The EAS euthanasia rate is 67% compared to a national average of 44%. Currently, EAS has an active volunteer program with both on-site volunteers and several off-site volunteers. These volunteers not only help reduce shelter overcrowding by transferring animals to rescue groups and other shelters, but also help maintain the mental health of the shelter animals by providing much needed interaction and exercise. Because of the efforts of these volunteers the euthanasia rate has been substantially reduced, causing a much better public image for the shelter as well as boosting staff morale.

Since its inception, EAS has been the only animal shelter facility in Kittitas County and has become a regional facility providing services to other municipalities and unincorporated areas of Kittitas County. Currently, the majority of funding for the shelter is provided by the City of Ellensburg. City-only services include licensing cats and dogs, picking up DOA animals from City streets, patrolling City parks, responding to emergency and other calls from the City, ordinance enforcement, writing citations, investigating animal cruelty, nuisance, aggression and bite complaints. Services provided to the City, other municipalities and unincorporated County areas include short-term housing for stray and surrendered animals, euthanizing unwanted and un-adoptable dogs and cats and carcasses disposal, animal adoption program, administration of fees and fines, and providing animal care and training information. The citizens of Ellensburg

largely fund these regional animal shelter services. A regional animal shelter organization must be formed to involve all County governments, reflecting the regional need to fund and operate these important services.

Many modern animal shelters include programs and facilities not available in Ellensburg such as: adoption counseling, humane education, foster programs, low cost spay/neuter programs, feral cat programs, separation of sick or vicious animals, behavior counseling, noise abatement, ventilation systems, disease control, individual kennel drains, and heated floors.

### **Fire/EMS**

Ellensburg previously operated a fire department with 20 paid staff and more than 20 volunteer firefighters. Fire and EMS responsibility is now shifted to the Fire Protection District, which assimilated the City's fire department. The community has a fire insurance rating of five, providing as high a level of fire protection service as possible with a volunteer department and a city its size. The fire district also provides emergency medical services, with ALS and BLS providers.

A fire station in central Ellensburg has been sufficient to serve the community for the past century. However, the increasing dispersion of Ellensburg's population to the north and increasing traffic on the community's arterial streets are increasing pressure to develop a remote fire station to serve the northern areas.

## Issues

Discussion of the various public facilities and services with service providers, as well as community discussions through workshops, revealed the following issues this plan will need to address:

Service	Issues
<b>Water</b>	<p>The water supply is adequate overall, but will require additional production facilities to address growth demand</p> <p>Water rights are available to service the growth forecast</p> <p>The City will need to construct additional wells to withdraw its allocated water rights</p> <p>Expansion of the system into the UGA poses no serious problems, with the existing system well-positioned to support extensions as demand increases and as property owners are able to afford system installation</p>
<b>Wastewater</b>	<p>The system has adequate capacity to serve projected 20-year demand</p> <p>Extending the system to the northern, northwestern and eastern UGA presents few problems, as long as land development is contiguous and does not require long extensions past undeveloped property</p> <p>Extending the system to the south could be difficult and expensive, requiring lift stations to overcome elevation differences and special handling to protect against impacts in the flood plain near the Yakima River</p> <p>Compliance with regulatory federal storm water guidelines may result in the need to revise storm water management requirements and adopt funding strategies to address these requirements</p> <p>Industrial development may change the characteristics of sewage, and the City may need to address industrial discharge on a case-by-case basis to verify the system’s ability to handle it</p>
<b>Power</b>	<p>The system is reaching capacity and major system improvements will need to be constructed within the next five to ten years to satisfy growth, including at least one new substation</p> <p>There are options available to meet future system demands, including increasing capacity, implementation of conservation measures, or a combination of the two</p> <p>The system is well-positioned for expansion into the UGA, but there may be difficulty coordinating with or taking service over from other electrical service providers in the UGA</p>
<b>Gas</b>	<p>The system is reaching capacity and major system improvements will need</p>

Service	Issues
	to be constructed within the next five to ten years to satisfy growth, including a new take station and city gate
<b>Streets</b>	Street issues are discussed in the Transportation Element, Chapter 5
<b>Library</b>	<p>To keep pace with current and forecast increasing demand for and raising costs of library services, Kittitas County’s contribution to the library will need to grow</p> <p>Demand for increased services must be answered with increased commitment for adequate staffing levels</p> <p>Technological advances may change demand for space and staff assistance in ways not fully anticipated or understood yet</p> <p>As the City grows outward from the center, it may wish to consider other expanded library service models</p>
<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>	Parks and recreation issues are discussed in the parks and recreation chapter (Chapter 9) of this comprehensive plan update
<b>City Hall</b>	Since occupying the new City Hall, Ellensburg will need no additional city hall space during the planning period
<b>Police</b>	Population growth is causing the need for additional patrol officers and support staff, requiring the City to expand its police station or find ways to reduce need for administrative space
<b>Animal Shelter</b>	A staff and facility needs analysis is needed to formulate a long-range plan to modernize and expand the Animal Shelter to meet future City and regional needs. The City of Ellensburg currently provides animal shelter services to all of Kittitas County without adequate funding from the other County governments
<b>Fire/EMS</b>	Population increases and the geographic spread of development are increasing pressures for the fire district to develop a north-side station
<b>City Shop</b>	Shop facilities will need to expand with increasing demand on public services

## **Policy Assumptions**

In its 1995 comprehensive plan, the City set the following policy direction on utility extension, a direction that is carried forward in this plan:

**Water and Sewer/Wastewater and Electric Extension** – Serve city residents and UGA residents who sign utility extension agreements; develop financing plans with new development paying the cost of extension; make extension policies contingent upon the successful execution of all necessary UGA policies with the County.

**Natural Gas Extension** – Continue to serve the current service area licensed by the WUTC with new development paying a greater portion of the cost of extension. Serve all new residents and UGA residents, and develop a financing plan.

**Electrical Service** – Request Kittitas County require all new electrical facilities built in the UGA be constructed to City standards, and use, on a case-by-case basis, several preferred alternatives for acquiring additional assets in the UGA, including:

- Purchase existing assets from other utilities immediately, recognizing that the cost may be at least partially subsidized by existing ratepayers. (This option will require the development of a financing plan)
- Wait the required seven-year amortization period and then purchase the assets from existing electric providers in the UGA, or build new assets
- Develop agreements with the PUD in the UGA for shared assets to serve new developments only
- Require developers to provide assets within developments

**Natural Gas Service** – Request a blanket franchise from Kittitas County to serve natural gas to the full WUTC franchise service area.

## Capital Facilities and Utilities Scenario

This chapter provides a preferred capital facilities and utilities scenario that reflects comments made during this plan update process. Ellensburg citizens are most concerned with the maintenance of their quality of life, ensuring that public services continue to be provided and also expanded as necessary to respond to new development.

The following table provides goals, policies and programs that will help the City implement this comprehensive plan. The programs are intended to be specific and task-oriented, allowing the City Council and City Manager to assign responsibility to various staff members or commissions for completion. Systematic undertaking and completion of the various programs will ensure that policies are implemented and will help achieve plan goals.

### **Goal CFU-1** - Encourage optimum land utilization

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Establish a development process that results in a pattern of contiguous growth beyond the established urban boundary	<b>1</b>	Adopt an interlocal agreement with Kittitas County to specify responsibilities and desired outcomes in land use application review
		<b>2</b>	Consider a tiered UGA to give preference to land development nearer to the city
<b>B</b>	Retain a compact urban growth pattern with distinct boundaries between town and rural land uses	<b>1</b>	Adopt an interlocal agreement with Kittitas County empowering both agencies to control the rate of urban spread into the UGA
		<b>2</b>	Revise zoning to incorporate specific standards for compact urban-style projects in planned unit developments in the UGA
		<b>3</b>	Consult with Kittitas County in its designation of agricultural land uses beyond the UGA
<b>C</b>	Encourage low density residential and agricultural land uses within the city’s UGA until the provision of urban services and annexation	<b>1</b>	Adopt an urban reserve land use designation for those areas in the UGA furthest from existing urban development
		<b>2</b>	Consult with Kittitas County

**Goal CFU-1** - Encourage optimum land utilization

Policy	Program
	when it applies zoning districts to land within the UGA and press for an urban reserve-style zoning district
<p><b>D</b> Establish use of existing utility systems from established utility corridors for new development</p>	<p><b>1</b> Prioritize land development along existing utility corridors</p>
	<p><b>2</b> Serve city residents and UGA residents who sign utility extension agreements</p>
	<p><b>3</b> Develop financing plans with new development paying the cost of extension</p>
<p><b>E</b> Implement the strategy for expanding the electrical utility into the UGA, drawing from each of the four options as appropriate.</p>	<p><b>1</b> Purchase existing assets from other utilities immediately, recognizing that the cost may be at least partially subsidized by existing ratepayers</p>
	<p><b>2</b> Wait the required seven-year amortization period and then purchase the assets from existing electric providers in the UGA or build new assets</p>
	<p><b>3</b> Develop agreements with existing electric providers in the UGA for shared assets to serve new developments only</p>
	<p><b>4</b> Require developers to provide assets within developments</p>
<p><b>F</b> Facilitate expansion of natural gas service into the UGA</p>	<p><b>1</b> Request a blanket franchise from Kittitas County to serve natural gas to the full WUTC franchise service area</p>

**Goal CFU-2** - *Maintain the City of Ellensburg as the predominant center for commercial, financial, governmental, and cultural activities*

Policy		Program	
A	Reaffirm City policy of requiring annexation, or approval of a utility extension agreement, to the City to receive any city water, sewer, or electric service	1	Develop and employ a standard outside utility agreement concerning provision of services
		2	Identify priority service areas that lie along utility corridors and attempt to include those among early phase UGA developments
		3	Do not provide service connections outside of city limits without a utility extension agreement, except for natural gas

**Goal CFU-3** - *Ensure that necessary public facilities and services can adequately serve development when it is occupied and used without negatively impacting existing service levels*

Policy		Program	
A	Define acceptable standards for public facilities and services	1	Continue policy of providing water, sewer, and storm drainage services, with highest priority given to improving services in those areas where it already exists, next highest priority to infilling areas surrounded by utility service, and lowest priority to extension of utilities into un-served areas
		2	Include options that recommend immediate low-cost investments with delayed benefits that would be unavailable in the future

**Goal CFU-4** – Facilitate the development of public services concurrently with the growth that is expected to occur in Ellensburg

Policy		Program	
A	Provide services concurrently with or in advance of demand, as required by the Growth Management Act	1	Define a classification system to help target Capital Facilities expenditures. Compact growth, including the infill of vacant or undeveloped land, should be emphasized to allow for the efficient provision of public services
		2	Reassess land use element if funding to accomplish future growth falls short of meeting existing needs
		3	Develop a concurrency requirement that new development demonstrate the adequate provision of public services or provide for impact mitigation

**Goal CFU-5** – Ensure that public facilities and services are high quality, fully maintained and cost effective

Policy		Program	
A	Emphasize compact growth, including the infill of vacant or undeveloped land to allow for the efficient provision of services	1	Adopt a long-range plan that will finance capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies sources of public money for such purposes
B	Coordinate land use, facility and service planning	1	Allow eventual siting and construction of natural gas and electric distribution lines within rights of way that are being dedicated or within roads that are being constructed or reconstructed
		2	Allow solid waste collection routes within right of way and roads

**Goal CFU-6** - Facilitate the provision of services in a manner that is safe and reliable, environmentally sensitive, and aesthetically compatible with the surrounding land uses and that results in reasonable economic costs

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Assure that public facilities, utilities, and streets are designed, constructed, and maintained to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the community	<b>1</b>	Phase major Capital Facilities investment to implement this comprehensive plan.
		<b>2</b>	Promote co-location of new public and private utility distribution facilities in shared trenches when reasonable and feasible and the coordination of construction timing to minimize construction-related disruptions and reduce the cost of utility delivery
		<b>3</b>	Collaborate with the County to locate a composting facility for yard waste in or near the City
<b>B</b>	Any changes to the service area should be based on efficiency and equity based criteria	<b>1</b>	Develop a targeting (investment) policy for funds that includes a commitment to maintaining the existing level of facilities and services to City residents
		<b>2</b>	Purchase land for the location of natural gas facilities, including location of gas distribution lines within transportation corridors
<b>C</b>	Promote water and energy efficiency and alternative energy sources	<b>1</b>	Promote the use of solar and other renewable technology within the community
		<b>2</b>	Assist citizens with upgrading energy efficiency in homes and businesses through weatherization and improvements to mechanical and lighting systems
		<b>3</b>	Promote and support the use of Energy Star and Green Building practices in new construction

**Goal CFU-7** - Encourage adequate school facilities and quality education through the coordination of planning efforts

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Encourage community involvement and support for school activities	<b>1</b>	Proximity of housing to school location should be encouraged. Pedestrian access should be required
<b>B</b>	Encourage communication and cooperation between the school district, developers, and the public	<b>1</b>	Establish a system whereby schools are notified of all proposed development projects and that provides for school district review early in the process
		<b>2</b>	Enact ordinance requiring that adequate school facilities be in place before new development is to occur and/or require impact mitigation fees

## Levels-of-Service

The level-of-service (LOS) standard is a principal criterion for identifying when capital improvements are needed. This chapter identifies the adopted LOS standards for each public facility, and requires new development be served by adequate facilities (the concurrency requirement of GMA). These standards will help ensure services will continue to be provided to maintain the community’s quality of life. Public services and facilities and their LOS standards include:

Service/Facility	LOS Standards
<b>Police Protection</b>	Priority 1 response time to be determined by future study
<b>Fire Protection</b>	Follow the guidelines from the National Fire Protection Association #1720
<b>Emergency Medical Service</b>	Basic Life Support at 5 minutes/90% of the time Advanced Life Support at 9 minutes/90% of the time
<b>Transportation</b>	LOS B for local access streets LOS C for arterials and collector streets LOS D for arterials at the interchanges with the understanding that if traffic capacity on Canyon Road south of Mountain View Avenue is not increased, the LOS for Canyon Road will lower to LOS E.
<b>Water Utility</b>	Provide water meeting all requirements of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act and Washington State Dept. of Health to any customer desiring service that lies within the city’s water service area
<b>Sewer Utility</b>	Provide a collection system capable of conveying all wastewater discharges from residential, commercial and industrial customers within the city limits and UGA
<b>Storm water System</b>	Provide a public collection system capable of conveying a storm event with a 25-year return frequency without flooding or damage to structures. Meet the requirements of the City’s State Stormwater Discharge Permit, and develop a Stormwater Utility to fund compliance measures required under the permit.
<b>Natural Gas Utility</b>	Provide minimum gas pressure of 20 psi at the customer’s meter
<b>Solid Waste Management</b>	Weekly curbside refuse collection

Library Service            2009 Level of Service document is incorporated into this  
Comprehensive Plan by reference

## Priority Projects

The following priority projects represent immediate steps the City should take to implement this plan.

Project	Description and Goals
<b>Additional water source development</b>	Seek new sources for public water supply
<b>Sewer and water growth extensions</b>	Identify areas of need, design system expansions and phase system improvements
<b>Sewer system sludge handling expansion</b>	Expand sludge handling capacity
<b>Water system plan</b>	Complete and keep current the water system plan
<b>Sewer system plan</b>	Complete and keep current the sewer system plan
<b>Industrial land service</b>	Verify the capability of the existing system to serve industrial land in Ellensburg’s UGA and estimate costs for likely system expansions if capacity is unavailable
<b>Inflow and infiltration</b>	Study I & I impact to sanitary sewer and correct problems that exist
<b>Inter-utility MOU</b>	Adopt and maintain an inter-utility memorandum of understanding
<b>Natural gas franchise</b>	Prepare and apply a natural gas franchise
<b>Library facility study</b>	Study the library’s capacity to serve forecast population with its existing facilities
<b>Police facility study</b>	Study the adequacy of the police facilities and likely future needs as population increases
<b>Remote fire station</b>	Study the need for a remote fire station and begin the development process if one is needed
<b>Animal shelter facility study</b>	Form a regional animal shelter organization in Kittitas County

### **Six-Year Capital Facilities Plan**

Each year Ellensburg must update its six-year capital facilities plan. The plans are prepared in a manner consistent with the general guidance of the comprehensive plan and to implement its policies and programs. The six-year capital facilities plan for 2005 is attached as an appendix to this comprehensive plan update and will serve as a model for future plans to follow.

When preparing its six-year capital facilities plan, Ellensburg will refer to this comprehensive plan update, to the water system plan incorporated herein by reference, the sewer system plan incorporated herein by reference, the six-year street improvement plan, the comprehensive parks and recreation plan as modified herein, and any other current and controlling facilities plans prepared by the City.

## 7 Housing



## 7 Housing

This chapter examines housing supply, condition, occupancy, and affordability and develops programs for meeting future housing demand. That demand may be for housing that is both more varied and more affordable. While the gap between what is affordable to a potential household and what is available on the market may continue to widen, Ellensburg's population will likely demand different types of housing options in the future.

Housing affordability affects all segments of the population. According to federal housing guidelines, no more than 30% of a family's gross monthly income should be spent on housing, including heating and other bills. Available, affordable, safe and decent housing is a critical ingredient to the success of how a community accommodates population growth.

To help forecast and plan for Ellensburg's housing marketplace, it is important to assess and analyze the existing characteristics of the community's housing stock. This chapter contains descriptions of trends in housing types, their age, condition and value, as well as characteristics of households, including income, percentage of income spent for housing, type of household and age of residents. Baseline housing data are from the 2000 Census, and the information reveals persistent housing trends despite the age of the data as of this plan. Based on information supplied by participants in this plan, housing is scarcer and more expensive than in 2000, with the median home price exceeding \$150,000.



**Figure 7.1** - Plan policies can help influence market conditions toward a more diverse, sustainable housing stock. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Things have changed in five years, making the housing supply tighter and less affordable.

The information creates an informative picture of housing availability and affordability in Ellensburg. The community has seen a great deal of population growth in the last 10 years, new residency and residential movement, coupled with an increasing number of homeownership units and escalating rental and home prices. Demand, particularly among those with low and moderate incomes, has not decreased. Approximately 20% of homeowners are paying monthly housing expenses that exceed 30% of household income. But renters are in a tighter spot, with more than 60% of them paying more than 30% of household income on monthly housing.



**Figure 7.2** – Increased housing densities may offer solutions to accommodating growth within Ellensburg’s current UGA, as well as improving housing affordability. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

## Housing Profile

The community has grown steadily for the past 60 years, creating a housing stock that is varied in age and context. Old homes exist next to new ones in the central part of town. Apartments exist next to single-family homes and next to commercial districts. Some housing, like that in West Ellensburg, is nestled in little enclaves immediately adjacent to industrial, institutional, or open space areas. Ellensburg’s sustained population growth has created a housing environment that is surprisingly diverse for a community of its size.

Over the past 15 years, however, housing has been in short supply. This is due, in part, to enrollment increases at CWU and an upsurge in population growth. Central Washington University’s enrollment at the Ellensburg campus is close to 8,000 students. The University strives to house on campus all the students who wish to live on campus, but many elect either to live off campus or commute from home. The number of students living off campus has continued to increase as a factor of overall enrollment, putting additional pressure on market housing in the community.

**Table 7.1 – Housing Units and Population**

	1990		2000		% Change: 1990-2000	
	Ellensburg	Kittitas Co.	Ellensburg	Kittitas Co.	Ellensburg	Kittitas Co.
Total Housing Units	5,015	13,215	6,763	16,475	35%	25%
Total Population	12,361	26,725	15,414	33,362	25%	25%

**Table 7.2 – Housing Vacancy Rates**

Over the past five years, housing starts appear to be lagging behind growth. Though the decade between 1990 and 2000 may have relaxed the housing market somewhat, vacant units in Ellensburg do not remain vacant for long today.

Ellensburg also has several mobile home parks in the city. Some are zoned mobile home parks and provide low- and moderate-income housing. Several other mobile home parks are grandfathered within commercial zoning districts. The condition of units within these mobile home parks varies greatly, with many appearing to be in substandard condition.

The City performed a housing condition assessment in 1992 of 2,216 units as part of a Housing Affordability Assessment. Sixty percent of the structures were found to be in good condition, needing only minor maintenance. Twenty-seven percent were in fair condition, needing maintenance that has been deferred or moderate repairs. Fewer than ten percent needed substantial repair and three percent were found to be substandard. Field research as part of this planning process indicates the percentages may not be much changed today. There are, however, many more units occupied now than there were in 1992, and property values are rising. This may increase pressures to maintain housing at a higher level and make home improvement an attractive option for existing homeowners.

Growth in population and housing units only begins to tell the story. While most of the new residential construction has been single-family detached housing, Ellensburg has a relatively large proportion of multi-family dwelling units. This can be partially explained by the presence of CWU and the large number of students living in town. Many students live in single-family residences, however, and non-students occupy many apartments.

The 2000 US Census estimated 6,763 total housing units in Ellensburg, an increase of 35%

since 1990. This corresponds with a 25% increase in population over the same time period. In the same ten-year timeframe, Kittitas County’s housing units and population increased by 25%. *(Table 7.1)*

	1990	2000
Occupied housing units	4,785	6,249
Vacant housing units	230	483
Homeowner vacancy rate	0.7%	2.3%
Renter vacancy rate	3.7%	6.6%

Of the housing units reported in the 2000 Census, 6,249 out of 6,763 units were occupied - an overall occupancy rate of 92%, including both homeowner and rental housing. Occupancy rates in 2000 were lower than in 1990, probably as a result of the increase in housing unit construction during that decade and the increased number of seasonal or part-time housing now available in Ellensburg. *(Table 7.2)*

Statistics suggest that homeownership has increased due to more single-family home construction. In 2000, of the 6,249 occupied housing units, 35% were owner occupied and 65% were renter occupied. This is very similar to the situation in 1990, too. In Kittitas County, however, the proportions were reversed, with 66% owner occupied and 34% renter occupied.

**Housing Types**

As in 1995, Ellensburg remains a predominantly single-family, detached unit community. The past 15 years have seen an increase in the construction of higher-density attached housing, mostly around CWU to help house the growing student enrollment.

Newer residential development has focused on construction of single-family

**Table 7.4 – Housing Eras for Ellensburg Housing**

Year Structure Built	Number	%
1999 to March 2000	113	1.7
1995 to 1998	1,072	15.9
1990 to 1994	548	8.1
1980 to 1989	491	7.3
1970 to 1979	1,103	16.3
1960 to 1969	1,202	17.8
1940 to 1959	1,227	18.1
1939 or earlier	1,007	14.9

Source: US Census 2000

neighborhoods in northern Ellensburg. These projects have created single-density neighborhoods in a conventional suburban pattern. While they provide additional housing units, they are not designed to accommodate incremental densification as has occurred nearer the town’s center. These new subdivisions are built out at approximately four units per acre, and will likely remain that way for decades to come. (Table 7.3)

**Table 7.3 – Housing Characteristics**

Housing Characteristics	1990				2000			
	Ellensburg		Kittitas Co.		Ellensburg		Kittitas Co.	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total housing units	5,015		13,215		6,763		16,475	
Units in Structure								
1-unit, detached	2,297		8,343		2,773	41.0	9,861	59.9
1-unit, attached	149		183		264	3.9	394	2.4
2-4 units	991		1,089		1,342	19.8	1,475	9.0
5 to 9 units	286		334		351	5.2	403	2.4
10 or more units	1,036		1,311		1,754	26.0	1,479	9.0
Mobile home, RV and other	256		1,955		280	4.1	2,207	13.4

Source: US Census 2000 and 1990

**Age of Housing**

Of the housing units in Ellensburg, nearly half were built before 1970. Ellensburg’s housing stock is aging, but more units are coming on line, particularly in the northern part of the community. (Table 7.4) Recent information supplied by the City indicates that 372 housing units were constructed between 2000 and 2004, representing a 6% increase in the housing supply in the past five years.

**Occupancy Timeline**

Ellensburg is a college town. Its population today is slightly greater than 16,500, and enrollment (total) at CWU is approximately 8,800. The Census 2000 data on when households moved into their homes is consistent with this. In that census, almost one half

of the community’s households had moved into their units within the previous year. Moving is something of an annual ritual, with the ebb and flow of students causing almost half of Ellensburg’s housing units to change occupancy.

In contrast, approximately 1,200 of non-Ellensburg Kittitas County households moved within the year previous to the 2000 Census.

**Real Estate Value**

Home values appreciated considerably throughout the Kittitas County region during the 1990’s, while rents also increased steadily. Ellensburg was no exception. From 1990 to 2000, the median value of a single-family home in Ellensburg nearly doubled from \$86,100 to \$160,000. Sixty percent of owner-occupied units were valued at \$150,000 or more. Values increased by almost 70% in the same time period in Kittitas County. (Table 7.5)

In 2000, a homebuyer would need to have had a household income of at least \$48,000 to afford the median-priced home. That buyer would also to have made a 10% down payment and covered associated purchase expenses, spending at least \$20,000 out of pocket to initiate the purchase. Federal affordability guidelines would have required that no more than 30% of the household’s income would be necessary to cover the \$1,200 per month mortgage payments. A household earning the median 2000 annual income of \$20,000 would not come close to qualifying. With home prices outstripping increases in local incomes since 2000, the affordability gap has widened.

**Household Income**

The 2000 median income in Ellensburg was almost \$12,000 lower than in the County. Four times as many households in Kittitas County are in the highest income category than in Ellensburg. One quarter of Ellensburg’s households were in the lowest reporting income category, earning less than \$10,000 per year. Many of those households are probably student households, but the figure still indicates a significant population that is barely able to afford housing. (Table 7.6)

It should be noted that not all income received by students is reported as such for the purposes of the census, which may significantly skew the figures in table 7.6. CWU reported that 78% of its students

**Table 7.5 – Housing Occupancy in Ellensburg**

	Number	Percent
Year Moved Into Unit		
1999 to March 2000	2,899	46.3
1995 to 1998	1,739	8.9
1990 to 1994	556	8.9
1980 to 1989	484	7.7
1970 to 1979	262	4.2
1969 or earlier	328	5.2

Source: US Census 2000

received some form of aid in 2005. Financial resources disbursed to CWU students in 2005 included over \$73 million in loans and gift aid not treated as income. In addition, financial resources provided by parents, the amount of which is not quantifiable, are certainly used to pay the rent, even though they are not included as income in table 7.6.

**Table 7.6 – Household Income 1999**

	Ellensburg		Kittitas Co.		Washington State	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Less than \$10,000	1,592	25.5	2,173	16.2	171,863	7.6
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,006	16.1	1,414	10.5	124,848	5.5
\$15,000 to \$24,999	971	15.5	1,802	13.4	265,131	11.7
\$25,000 to \$34,999	793	12.7	1,718	12.8	284,630	12.5
\$35,000 to \$49,999	721	11.5	2,063	15.4	389,434	17.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	727	11.6	2,271	16.9	486,392	21.4
\$75,000 to \$99,999	287	4.6	994	7.4	264,498	11.6
\$100,000 to \$149,999	64	1.0	595	4.4	188,513	8.3
\$150,000 or more	92	1.5	375	2.8	96,952	4.3
Median household income (dollars)	20,034		32,546		45,776	

Source: US Census 2000

**Income Devoted to Housing**

Ellensburg has a large portion of its population spending more than 30% of household income on housing related expenses. This is seen both with households paying a mortgage and those renting an apartment, but particularly for renters.

**Table 7.7 – Homeownership Costs as a Percentage of Income**

	Ellensburg		Kittitas Co.	
	Number	%	Number	%
Less than 15%	745	39.5	2,097	39.2
15 to 19%	352	18.7	917	17.2
20 to 24%	258	13.7	770	14.4
25 to 29%	136	7.2	478	8.9

**Table 7.7 – Homeownership Costs as a Percentage of Income**

	Ellensburg		Kittitas Co.	
	Number	%	Number	%
30 to 34%	85	4.5	248	4.6
35% and above	294	15.6	778	14.6
Not computed	17	0.9	56	1.0

Source: US Census 2000

**Table 7.8 – Gross Rental Costs as a Percentage of Income**

	Ellensburg		Kittitas Co.	
	Number	%	Number	%
Less than 15%	287	7.0	543	10.0
15 to 19%	319	7.8	490	9.1
20 to 24%	432	10.6	618	11.4
25 to 29%	348	8.5	460	8.5
30 to 34%	279	6.8	319	5.9
35% and above	2,185	53.6	2,520	46.6
Not computed	226	5.5	458	8.5

Source: US Census 2000

More than 20% of Ellensburg’s ownership households were paying more than what the federal affordability threshold would dictate for housing. Of all ownership households, almost 380 of them were paying more than 30% of their household income toward home ownership costs. The percentages for Kittitas County were similar. Conversely, almost 40% of all ownership households in Ellensburg and Kittitas County were paying less than 15% of their household income toward housing in 2000. That indicates that home prices rose sharply in that decade, with homeowners with more tenure benefiting from the lower home costs existing at the time they bought into the market. It is interesting to compare these numbers with the table presenting the year residents moved into their housing units - more recent occupants are likely to be paying more for their accommodations.

The picture for renters is extreme. More than 60% of Ellensburg’s rental households are paying more than 30% of their incomes for housing. The situation in Kittitas County is

similar, but not quite as bleak. Renters are still paying more than they can afford, no matter where they live in the area. Median rental costs were almost \$490 per month in 2000, and rents have not decreased since. The bulk of Ellensburg’s renters were paying between \$300 and \$750 per month in housing costs. In 2000, a median income household in the city would be paying 30% of its income to afford the median rent of \$490.

**Table 7.9** – Gross Rents for Rental Households

	Ellensburg		Kititas Co.	
	Number	%	Number	%
Less than \$200	299	7.3	406	7.5
\$200 to \$299	360	8.8	462	8.5
\$300 to \$499	1,452	35.6	1,729	32.0
\$500 to \$749	1,368	33.6	1,788	33.1
\$750 to \$999	373	9.2	564	10.4
\$1,000 to \$1,499	82	2.0	119	2.2
\$1,500 or more	62	1.5	70	1.3
No cash rent	80	2.0	270	5.0
Median (dollars)	489		497	

Source: US Census 2000

## **Housing Need**

Ellensburg's greatest housing needs include a more diverse base of affordable rental opportunities signified by range of rent and housing type, allowing the market to relax upward rental pricing pressure. In addition, the community needs affordable single-family homes. Potential homebuyers are getting priced out of the market due to insufficient income and escalating real estate prices.

Median income households cannot afford the median-priced home in Ellensburg. If today's median home price were \$150,000, a qualifying household would need to make a \$15,000 down payment for a conventional mortgage and plan on paying close to \$1,000 per month. That would require an annual household income of approximately \$40,000 to meet federal affordability standards. That is roughly twice what Ellensburg's median household income was in 2000. For comparison, the median income household in the year 2000 could afford a home worth \$75,000, presuming that household could come up with the required down payment. There is a significant "housing gap," where median income households are priced well out of the home ownership market.

For renters, the census data and interviews suggest that there is a high demand for units serving low and moderate-income households. It also appears there is an inadequate supply of rental units affordable to people at median income or less.

There are limited temporary shelters, transitional housing opportunities, and domestic violence services in Ellensburg. Households experiencing domestic violence issues or youth homelessness may receive services either outside of the community or from service providers that come into the community from somewhere else, but demand for such services currently exceeds supply.

## Issues

Housing affordability is a big issue in Ellensburg, especially when the gap between what the average household can afford and the average selling price of a home widens. By federal housing affordability standards, many Ellensburg households are spending more for shelter than they should. Ellensburg’s residents understand that this widening gap may lead to the development of more affordable housing types (like townhouses, zero-lot line homes, multi-family structures, manufactured housing or condominiums), but they also want to preserve the characteristics of the neighborhoods they find so valuable and endearing.

### Issues

Housing is not generally affordable for all levels of income, and the possibility of creating more affordable mixed-use neighborhoods with incremental development of higher density infill housing diminishes with continuing approval of suburban subdivisions

Many Historic District buildings are either vacant or partially vacant, with approximately 20% of the available street-level retail space and almost 80% of the space above the first floor unoccupied

Housing prices are increasing in Ellensburg, with the median home price of \$150,000 not affordable to households earning an income of less than \$40,000

There are limited housing types available in Ellensburg, targeting mainly the single-family and apartment markets

Housing is becoming less affordable, especially for traditional single-family homes. Cheaper land is located further away from the community’s center, causing residents of newer, less expensive housing to have to travel long distances for shopping, work, school or other daily activities. The money they save on the purchase price of their home may be consumed by time and travel expense

## **Policy Assumptions**

The 1995 comprehensive plan identified seven policy directions, and this plan carries those forward. This plan update's process has shown support for these policies in general. However, participants have asked for additional detail in how the policies could be implemented and for greater flexibility in the means available.

- Ease the demand for affordable rental units for low-income families by increasing the supply
- Create a neighborhood rental housing incentive program to upgrade deteriorated rental housing units
- Work with CWU to help ease the pressure created by students in the community's private rental housing market
- Encourage development of new home ownership opportunities for all income groups, but especially moderate-income families
- Strengthen the ability of non-profit housing providers to take full advantage of resources to serve the needs of low-income families
- Strengthen the planned unit development (PUD) process and neighborhood planning
- Encourage public agencies to work together for planning and acquiring migrant housing
- Encourage a variety of lot sizes within the city and UGA

## Housing Goals, Policies and Programs

While other elements of this comprehensive plan included optional policy scenarios, the housing element includes only one. This reflects the general consensus expressed regarding housing in Ellensburg and the overall need to increase the supply of affordable housing, enhance the appearance and function of residential areas, allow for mixed residential and commercial uses (particularly in the Central Commercial zones), and permit more flexibility in housing types and densities. These consensus items are also generally consistent with the 1995 plan, except that there is more support now for variety in housing type, probably reflecting increasing market acceptance of mixed-use and higher density housing alternatives.

Community members are fond of their neighborhoods. They like where they live, and they want to make sure their neighborhoods retain the character that drew them there in the first place. Ellensburg’s neighborhoods are family friendly, and, in the case of those near the Central Commercial zones, intimate and walkable.

**Goal H-1** - *Preserve, protect, and strengthen the vitality and stability of existing neighborhoods*

Policy		Program	
A	Promote community involvement and neighborhood improvement through City-initiated neighborhood enhancement activities	1	Continue community-oriented policing or other similar methods of integrating municipal presence directly into neighborhoods
		2	Encourage active neighborhood associations
B	Establish additional logical access routes outside of the established street system for bicycle and foot traffic	1	Identify trail easements and develop an effective maintenance strategy
C	Enhance appearance and maintain public spaces in residential areas	1	Ensure that housing is compatible in quality, design and intensity with surrounding land uses, traffic patterns, public facilities and environmentally-sensitive features through specific site and building design measures
		2	Review the City’s development regulations to ensure that they promote neighborhood quality by permitting integration of open

**Goal H-1** - Preserve, protect, and strengthen the vitality and stability of existing neighborhoods

Policy		Program	
			spaces and institutional land uses in and near residential areas
		3	Continue facility maintenance and street tree programs
D	Maintain existing area facilities to meet the City's needs	1	Disperse municipal and institutional facilities throughout the community, while still emphasizing the Central Commercial zone's centrality
E	Preserve the scale and rural character of Ellensburg	1	Require clustering and open space provisions in large developments on the perimeter of the city

The community also came out strongly in favor of increased flexibility in the pursuit of providing housing that is more affordable, but only in a manner that also increases the sense of community that helps tie a more intensely developed neighborhood together. Residents desire more affordability, but not at the expense of quality of life or the social networks that make Ellensburg a family place. In addition, residents also believe that choice in housing options is important. They want to see Ellensburg continue to provide single-family neighborhoods, but they would like to see them better integrated in to the community's fabric and better able to adapt to change.

Over the next 20 years, Ellensburg will be caught up in the same demographic forces impacting Washington State, including the aging of its population and reductions in its typical household size. To prepare for this, Ellensburg must provide a variety of housing types. This variety will help meet affordability demands, and will help meet housing demand in general. Increasingly, households will desire units that are smaller, that require less maintenance, and that are located within walking distance of shopping, houses of worship, parks, schools, and medical facilities. This dictates development of more compact housing forms and innovation in how they are designed and arranged to suit a variety of needs.

**Goal H-2** - Allow various densities and housing types for a variety of needs including senior, affordable, and disability housing

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Encourage variety in housing types	<b>1</b>	Revise zoning and subdivision regulation to provide for higher density, more design flexibility, and mixing of residential and commercial uses
		<b>2</b>	Locate housing near services to minimize transport costs or develop services in neighborhoods
		<b>3</b>	Create a workable model for a variety of housing development types and densities including clustered, cottage or other types of less land-consumptive housing while still increasing supplies of detached housing units
<b>B</b>	Encourage the use of smaller lot sizes and/or multifamily housing in areas designated for such uses	<b>1</b>	Zone for housing above retail in the Central Commercial zones
		<b>2</b>	Ensure that development regulations allow for accessory units as a method of addressing multifamily housing
		<b>3</b>	Ensure zoning permits duplexes, triplexes, and four-plexes within the city
<b>C</b>	Create and preserve affordable housing opportunities locally and with a regional perspective, especially for developments with fewer units	<b>1</b>	Work collaboratively with various interests including adjacent jurisdictions, Kittitas County, private developers, service and non-profit housing providers, and community residents to address housing affordability and variety
		<b>2</b>	Challenge local real estate agents to work with non-profit housing providers to gain site control when private property becomes available for sale
		<b>3</b>	Create housing specifically

**Goal H-2** - Allow various densities and housing types for a variety of needs including senior, affordable, and disability housing

Policy		Program	
			designed for an elderly population
		4	Revise zoning and subdivision standards to accommodate innovative housing design solutions such as cottage housing to increase housing density while enhancing quality of life
D	Facilitate the creation of “new market” housing in the Central Commercial zones	1	Develop a variety of incentive programs to promote new housing projects in Central Commercial zones
		2	Coordinate with CWU to provide student housing in the Downtown Historic District

**Goal H-3** - Make housing affordable to more Ellensburg households

Policy		Program	
A	Coordinate with other agencies that provide social services	1	Coordinate with State and regional health care and housing programs
		2	Collaborate with social and health service organizations that offer support programs for those with special needs, particularly those programs that help people remain in the community
B	Preserve existing affordable housing and serve it with transit	1	Identify existing affordable housing and all transit routes within the community and alter or add routes for service to more intensely-developed neighborhoods
		2	Monitor the stability of existing affordable housing options to determine their sustainability

**Goal H-3** - *Make housing affordable to more Ellensburg households*

Policy		Program	
<b>C</b>	Promote development of institutional and financial mechanisms to provide for affordable housing	<b>1</b>	Investigate available Federal, State and local programs and private options for financing affordable and special-needs housing
<b>D</b>	Lead by example, with the City of Ellensburg taking an active role in facilitating housing affordability	<b>1</b>	Create an inventory of City-owned land that can be set aside for housing development
<b>E</b>	Encourage preservation of affordable housing dispersed throughout the City’s neighborhoods	<b>1</b>	Consider operational cost as a factor in determining housing affordability
		<b>2</b>	Increase the number of affordable housing units in the community
		<b>3</b>	Educate landlords about low-income housing programs
		<b>4</b>	Educate the public about first-time homebuyer programs or sweat equity programs
		<b>5</b>	Provide counseling programs to inform people about their housing choices and budgeting
		<b>6</b>	Develop a bonus program in which developments receive “credit” in additional units (beyond what zoning allows) if units available and affordable to households under 80% of median income are integrated into new projects
<b>F</b>	Take advantage of local, Kittitas County, State and Federal housing resources to construct affordable housing and provide services if needed	<b>1</b>	Create a regional funding entity, much like the Kittitas County “Hope Source” program
		<b>2</b>	Encourage development and utilization of a Community Land Trust as one tool for addressing affordable housing issues

## Priority Projects

Housing elements often outline policy steps jurisdictions can take to help provide affordable housing and maintain or enhance the quality of existing residential areas. This chapter identifies several such policies and implementing programs, and the items below are some the City considers and high priority actions it can take to begin achieving this plan’s goals.

Project	Description and Goals
<b>Density bonus program</b>	Implement a density bonus program awarding higher density to projects providing housing to meet the housing demand of the elderly, low or moderate income households or other special needs groups
<b>City-owned land inventory</b>	Inventory land owned by the City of Ellensburg and identify properties suitable for housing development
<b>Affordable housing unit projects</b>	Partner with local housing agencies to investigate opportunities for affordable housing development and create a pilot project when suitable opportunities become available
<b>Section 8</b>	Facilitate provision of Section 8-subsidized housing units as is practicable, through density bonus programs, landlord education or other programs
<b>PUD and subdivision standards revision</b>	Review and revise as necessary the City’s regulations for planned unit developments and small-lot single-family subdivisions to ensure the development community can achieve higher infill housing densities in areas of the community already characterized with more intense urban development
<b>Rental rehabilitation program</b>	Collaborate with local housing agencies and others as appropriate to facilitate or sponsor a rental rehabilitation program designed to renovate and upgrade rental housing units
<b>Student housing</b>	Collaborate with the university to locate student housing in a manner that enhances the cultural and economic vitality of the Downtown Historic District, even investigating opportunities to house students in upper floors of Downtown Historic District buildings
<b>Kittitas County Housing Authority coordination</b>	Establish and maintain regular contact with the Housing Authority to ensure the City is aware of and has the opportunity to participate in affordable housing programs

## **Areas Warranting Special Handling**

There are several areas of interest within Ellensburg's UGA that warrant special consideration in Ellensburg's housing strategies.

**North Ellensburg (1)** – Recently, Northern Ellensburg has experienced rapid residential development. With the exception of areas adjacent to the university, northern Ellensburg has become a predominantly single-family district, with subdivisions platted at relatively low density. There may be opportunities to mix different housing types and related uses into this area, making it more diverse and promoting increased pedestrian activity to help enrich the area's character.

**Downtown Historic District (2)** – The Downtown Historic District has been Ellensburg's primary focus since the town's founding. The community and the district are changing, and it is time to develop strategies to manage that change in a way that acknowledges the Downtown Historic District's importance and position. Opportunities exist to provide housing in and around the Downtown Historic District; many of the resulting units may relieve pressure on the rental market.

**West Ellensburg (3)** – The residential district west of the railroad tracks is an example of a charming, affordable single-family urban neighborhood. Opportunities exist there to increase density while enhancing existing qualities that makes it unique and functional.

**West Interchange (4)** – Traditionally, Ellensburg's western interchange with I-90 has been designated for tourist commercial land uses, including restaurants, gas stations, hotels, and truck stops. As revisions to land use designations take place permitting a broader range of commercial and industrial land uses, the City may wish to consider ways to integrate housing into the area, providing affordable, urban-style dwellings intermixed with new development.

**South Interchange (5)** – There are almost 300 developable acres just east of Canyon Road and north of I-90 with potential for mixed-use residential development. The City may wish to act early to engage property owners in master planning this area for such a mix, integrating new development into the existing urban fabric.

## **8 Economic Development**



## 8 Economic Development

This chapter illustrates Ellensburg's existing economic patterns and potential economic opportunities. Much of this chapter's material is based on the 2000 Census and the market study prepared as part of this plan update. That market study provides an in-depth assessment of the characteristics and anticipated demand for commercial and industrial land. This plan provides policies and programs to help Ellensburg build a promising economic future. Economic development strategies can strengthen the community's position as a unique, established, and attractive place to work, reside and visit.

This chapter looks at Ellensburg as an economic machine, composed of different and interrelating economic components. It describes sectors of economic activity and outlines how Ellensburg functions within its region. It identifies strategies to improve local economic development, describing the things Ellensburg can do to capitalize on current market trends and demands and take advantage of its surroundings, human resources, heritage and institutions.

Ellensburg was settled before the turn of the century as a point of trade, collecting resources from the surrounding fields, mountains and forests and shipping them off to other locations for packing, processing or milling. A secondary, or "service," sector of



**Figure 8.1** - Growth and demographic trends are forcing Ellensburg to re-think many of its traditional economic strategies; in 2006, the community is at an important crossroads. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

financial institutions, retail, housing and professional offices grew and diversified to serve the primary, or “basic,” sector geared for resource export. Though Ellensburg lost its bid to become the state capitol in 1889, it was awarded the normal school that later became Central Washington University.

Ellensburg’s economy is now less dependent on the natural and agricultural resources surrounding it. Many of Ellensburg’s residents work at the university, at Kittitas Valley Hospital, in professional office environments, in service sector businesses, or for the government sector. Many also leave Ellensburg for their jobs; make regular commutes to Yakima, or, in some cases, to cities west of Snoqualmie Pass. Ellensburg’s businesses have also evolved, relying less on industrial production and more on retail and service commercial trade to support the community’s residents. The days of Ellensburg’s classical export-based economy are gone.

However, Ellensburg remains a center for trade in Kittitas County. It offers services for local residents and the financial, religious and educational institutions that serve an area much larger than what is within city limits. It remains a “central place,” retaining a diversity of activities that serve more people than those who reside in Ellensburg. Understanding this role is one of the first steps in crafting the community’s economic development policy.

### **Household Income**

Ellensburg incomes reported in 1999 were low. The reported median household income in the 2000 Census was \$20,034, less than one-half the reported median household income in Washington. (*Table 8.1*) This may be due, in part, to the large percentage of Ellensburg’s population who are students.

This plan’s market study provided a household income projection derived from other data (*Claritas. 2004 Household Trend Report for Kittitas County*) that indicates continued growth in Kittitas County household income through 2009. The data also include both a median income and a mean income, illustrating the “student effect” on median household incomes and, perhaps, a more accurate depiction of Kittitas County’s household income. Annual median household income is expected to increase \$8,205 from \$32,644 to \$40,849 by 2009. (*Table 8.2*)

**Table 8.1** – Household Income, Ellensburg, 1999

	Ellensburg		Kittitas County		Washington State	
	Hsehlids	%	Hsehlids	%	Hsehlids	%
Less than \$10,000	1,592	25.5	2,173	16.2	171,863	7.6
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,006	16.1	1,414	10.5	124,848	5.5
\$15,000 to \$24,999	971	15.5	1,802	13.4	265,131	11.7
\$25,000 to \$34,999	793	12.7	1,718	12.8	284,630	12.5
\$35,000 to \$49,999	721	11.5	2,063	15.4	389,434	17.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	727	11.6	2,271	16.9	486,392	21.4
\$75,000 to \$99,999	287	4.6	994	7.4	264,498	11.6
\$100,000 to \$149,999	64	1.0	595	4.4	188,513	8.3
\$150,000 or more	92	1.5	375	2.8	96,952	4.3
Median household income (dollars)	20,034		32,546		45,776	

Source: US Census 2000

**Table 8.2** – Expected Income Growth, Kittitas County, 2000 – 2009

Income Range	2000		2004		2009		2000-2009	
	Hsehlids	%	Hsehlids	%	Hsehlids	%	Change	%
Less than \$15,000	3,587	27	3,486	24	3,277	21	-310	-9
\$15,000 - \$24,999	1,802	13	1,871	13	1,988	13	186	10
\$25,000 - \$34,999	1,718	13	1,659	12	1,584	10	-134	-8
\$35,000 - \$49,999	2,063	15	2,089	15	2,289	15	226	11
\$50,000 - \$74,999	2,271	17	2,444	17	2,549	16	278	12
\$75,000 - \$99,999	994	7	1,343	9	1,563	10	569	57
\$100,000 - \$149,999	595	4	919	6	1,456	9	861	145
\$150,000 - \$249,999	278	2	328	2	481	3	203	73
\$250,000 - \$499,999	83	1	155	1	213	1	130	157

**Table 8.2** – Expected Income Growth, Kittitas County, 2000 – 2009

Income Range	2000		2004		2009		2000-2009	
	Hsehlds	%	Hsehlds	%	Hsehlds	%	Change	%
\$500,000 or more	14	0	38	0	83	1	69	493
Total Households	13,405		14,332		15,483		2078	
Median Household Income	\$32,644		\$36,080		\$40,849		\$8,205	
Mean Household Income	\$45,941		\$50,357		\$57,849		\$11,908	

Source: Claritas. 2004 Household Trend Report for Kittitas County

### Employment Growth and Distribution

Ellensburg’s employed population is divided by class of worker in a way not entirely consistent with state averages (*Table 8.3*). A greater percentage of workers are employed in the government sector, with a smaller percentages employed in both the self-employed and private wage and salary classifications. This is consistent with CWU’s prominence in the community, and it suggests that there is room to grow in Ellensburg’s private employment sectors.

In the market study for this comprehensive plan update, four primary findings concerning employment growth and distribution are made:

- Population in Kittitas County grew at an average rate of 2.1% per year from 1990 through 2003, substantially higher than the average rate of 0.7% per year experienced in the 1980’s. Population growth in Kittitas County lagged behind the rate in Washington in the 1980’s, but it has been above the state rate since 1990
- Total covered employment in Kittitas County grew at an average rate of 2.5% per year during 1990 through 2003, slightly faster than population in the same period. Population and employment growth tend to grow at similar rates. Employment growing faster than population may indicate a decrease in unemployment, an increase in the labor force participation rate, or increased level of workers commuting from outside of Kittitas County
- Population in Kittitas County is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 0.6% (low), 1.3% (intermediate), or 1.8% (high) during the 20 years from 2005 to 2025

- Employment in Kittitas County is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 1.4% during the ten years from 2002 to 2012

Employment in Kittitas County may continue to grow slightly faster than population as it has since 1990, or it may grow slightly slower than population growth if the labor force participation rate declines due to an aging population. Given the range of growth rates in the state’s population forecast for Kittitas County over the 2005 – 2025 period, this suggests employment growth at a rate of 0.5% to 2.0% per year over the next 20 years. The low end of this range, however, is unlikely to occur unless the US or Washington State experiences a severe economic recession. While this scenario is possible, it is unlikely and not a useful scenario for planning purposes. Given the range of forecast population and employment growth rates, a range for total employment growth in Ellensburg of 1.0% to 2.0% per year appears reasonable.

Of this growth, the study forecasts that the share of employment in public education will decrease as employment at CWU grows more slowly than employment in other sectors. Office and commercial sector employment should increase in share to reflect a growth in services as Ellensburg’s population increases. Industrial and retail commercial are expected to retain their current share of total employment. Compared to Washington State as a whole, Ellensburg has a lower share of employment in industrial uses (15% compared to 25%) and a higher share of employment in retail commercial (20% compared to 12%).

Total employment in Ellensburg may grow by 1,900 to 4,200 during the next 20 years.

**Table 8.3 – Class of Worker - 2000**

	Ellensburg		Kittitas County		Washington State	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Private Wage and Salary Workers	4,188	60.5	9,857	63.6	2,125,029	76.1
Government Workers	2,338	33.8	4,239	27.3	459,722	16.5
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	380	5.5	1,346	8.7	199,827	7.2
Unpaid family workers	18	0.3	67	0.4	9,144	0.3

Source: US Census 2000

## Economic Development Vision

The City of Ellensburg will be proactive in creating a stable, sustainable and diversified economy. The City will encourage business development to address demonstrated market demand and emphasize the creation of family-wage jobs. The economic vision will enable the City and its citizens to achieve economic prosperity while preserving the environment and a high quality of life.

## Economic Development Strategy

Ellensburg's market area is much larger than the actual community boundary. The Kittitas Valley is Ellensburg's primary market area, with the secondary market area extending west to the Upper County, south to the Manashtash Ridge, east to the Columbia River and north to Mission Ridge. Given its position in the heart of its market area and its adjacency to I-90 and I-82, Ellensburg appears well suited to develop as an economic powerhouse.

Ellensburg residents want more local jobs. The City can meet the need for additional employment opportunities by focusing on employment sectors that are most likely to locate in Ellensburg and making the changes necessary to attract businesses within those economic sectors.

Multiple recent economic studies have shown that there is demand for regional retail businesses in Ellensburg. Currently, residents leave the City and Kittitas County to patronize regional retail businesses in other jurisdictions. As population growth continues, the amount of retail leakage that the City and County experience will increase, unless concerted efforts are made to capture spending from local residents currently benefiting jurisdictions outside Ellensburg. Attracting regional retail to Ellensburg would increase the City's tax base and diversify and fortify the local economy.

The market study commissioned as part of this planning process strove to identify the additional amount of land that may be needed for industrial and commercial development, but its target area ranges were very wide. The study indicated that Ellensburg may need anywhere from zero to more than 300 additional acres for industrial development. The study found that it was difficult to estimate accurately what would be needed because the community had not yet developed a coherent economic development vision or strategy. As the report states:



**Figure 8.2** – Market studies show demand for more retail options in Ellensburg; land at the I-90 west and south interchanges offer ample space for developing regional retail. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

*“In summary, the City faces some difficult choices. Having a clear economic development vision, supported by a viable strategy, is the best way to get what the City wants. There are many possible economic futures for Ellensburg. Many of the factors that will determine that future are outside of the City’s control...But the City of Ellensburg does have some control over many factors that will affect the type, rate and location of growth in the City over the next 20 years. It can adopt policies that affect the amount and price of land, and quality and price of public utilities, and incentives and charges to businesses for building and operating in the City. The challenge for the City is to decide on a future that is not only desirable, but that is also possible given the factors that constrain it.”*

Light industrial development would be very beneficial to Ellensburg’s economy. The Economic Development Group of Kittitas County has established an inventory of industrial land to identify available sites for industrial development and job creation, but there has been little success in landing major industrial users in the community because none of the industrially zoned property is ready for a tenant. There is a lack of developable industrial land in Ellensburg and Kittitas County in general. The private sector has been unwilling or unable to provide adequate industrially zoned property with infrastructure in place to allow for industrial development. Much of the currently zoned industrial land lies in the flood plain or contains wetlands, or may have both constraints. Without a port district, the City is the logical entity to develop a public light industrial park and work with the County to encourage more industrial development near the airport. Such a successful development by the City and County may entice private property owners to follow suit and develop their property.

In addition to focusing on attracting industrial development and regional retail the City can also make some policy and procedural changes that will make Ellensburg more attractive to businesses.

Companies looking to relocate or expand consider a variety of issues before deciding on a location. One of the prime considerations is how soon the company can be up and running. Often, permitting time will greatly exceed the time it takes to actually construct or remodel a facility. The City needs to be proactive in establishing a regulatory environment that is business-friendly in terms of processing time and consistency of process. In order to compete with other communities in the state, Ellensburg must have a clear, easy to understand permitting process and give companies a reasonable expectation of the time required to process necessary permits. Having a business-friendly regulatory environment will make the City more attractive and competitive in its efforts to bring family wage jobs to the community.

While available property and an adequate labor force are at the top of the list of criteria sought by businesses looking to relocate, financial and other incentives rank immediately

behind them in the site selection process. The State offers a number of incentives but also provides the ability for local government to offer additional incentives. Kittitas County is at a distinct disadvantage because it lacks a Port District to provide funding and infrastructure. The City should consider establishing incentives to retain existing and attract new businesses that provide family wage jobs.

Ellensburg can stimulate local economic development successes by emulating the strategies used in other communities. It takes work, but the following steps can help the community improve its chances for prosperity:

- Focus on strengthening and diversifying the local economy and meeting demonstrated market demand; for example, by encouraging additional retail business
- Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses
- Encourage and nurture new business development of all sizes
- Create economic incentives to reduce start-up costs and/or risks for businesses that provide family-wage jobs
- Pre-permit property to reduce time for a business to be up and running
- Support innovative programs to develop a highly qualified labor force
- Stimulate industrial development through public investment
- Create a permitting process that is predictable and efficient



**Figure 8.3** – Re-developing the downtown core as a service, entertainment and retail destination may help revitalize vacant or underutilized properties within the Central Commercial zones. (Image source: Tom Pickerel, participant)

## Issues

Extensive public participation and the project market study helped define and clarify the various economic development issues listed below. Each is addressed in the goals, policies and programs that follow.

Issues	Goal Reference
Central Washington University is located in Ellensburg, with almost 10,000 students forecast to be attending the university by 2025. The current supply and variety of employment is not providing opportunities for graduating students to remain in Ellensburg	ED-4
The 100-year flood plain impacts a large area of the community, making development of much of Ellensburg’s industrial land challenging and expensive	ED-2
Ellensburg is the County seat, and, as such, has an abundance of civic and economic activity derived from Kittitas County residents and businesses	ED-2
Many Downtown Historic District buildings are either vacant or partially vacant, with approximately 20% of the available street-level retail space and almost 80% of the space above the first floor unoccupied	ED-5
Ellensburg residents desire large-scale regional retail shopping options and have been traveling to areas outside of Ellensburg to satisfy that demand. Multiple property ownerships and parcel configurations in the CBD act as barriers to large-scale redevelopment or to reconfiguration of the commercial and industrial districts to accommodate large retail users. In order to capture retail spending that is currently leaving Ellensburg, the City needs to designate appropriate land for “regional retail” uses	ED-1 ED-2
Fiscal health is important to the City's ability to continue providing police, fire, emergency medical, library, and other public services to the community, and revenues are not increasing at the same rate as Ellensburg's population. Certain types of uses provide more financial benefit than others. For every dollar in taxes paid, residential land use requires \$1.15 to \$1.50 of local government services. For every dollar in taxes paid, commercial/industrial land use requires 35¢-65¢ of local government services. For every dollar in taxes paid, open space/agricultural land use requires 30¢-50¢ of local government services. A financially healthy community needs to maintain a mix of land uses	ED-3
World economics will continue to impact local agriculture. Smaller farms will find it more difficult to compete on a global scale, and, despite an increasing emphasis on local reliance, many additional acres of farmland will shift from farm use to abandonment, or will be developed for residential or industrial uses	ED-7

## Economic Development Goals and Policies

This chapter provides one (1) preferred economic development scenario and vision that reflects comments and determinations made during this plan update process. Ellensburg citizens are most concerned with the provision of jobs in the community and with the City’s ability to continue providing services to maintain the community’s quality of life. Residents want to be able to earn more per household to be able to afford to buy into the community’s housing market, and they want to be able to earn enough to be able to stay in-town. Residents also want to be able to shop in Ellensburg and enjoy the economic benefits that an increased retail tax base would provide.

While it is nearly impossible to predict what specific businesses will develop in the community, it is possible to create an environment that encourages the types of enterprises the community would like to see. These economic development goals, policies and programs are designed to work in concert with the plan’s other elements to help stimulate a productive and sustainable economic development environment.

In addition, the City has adopted an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (EECS) that contains a number of goals related to the City’s continued efforts to reduce overall energy consumption, thereby fostering cost savings, economic development, and long term sustainability. That EECS is hereby incorporated by reference in the Comp Plan.

The following table provides the goals, policies and programs that will help the City implement its Economic Development strategies. The programs are intended to be specific and task-oriented, allowing the City Council and City Manager to assign responsibility to various staff members or commissions for completion. Systematic undertaking and completion of the various programs will ensure that policies are implemented and will help achieve plan goals.

**Goal ED-1** - *Incorporate economic development strategies as an integral part of Ellensburg's vision and implementation plan for a balanced and sustainable community*

Policy	Program
<p><b>A</b> Coordinate with local organizations to implement successful economic strategies</p>	<p><b>1</b> Develop and implement a strategic economic development plan with representatives from the industrial sector, transportation, agriculture and education</p>
	<p><b>2</b> Coordinate with Economic Development Group to recruit new businesses and update the list of target industries for Ellensburg</p>

**Goal ED-1** - Incorporate economic development strategies as an integral part of Ellensburg's vision and implementation plan for a balanced and sustainable community

Policy		Program	
		3	Establish strong relationships for cooperation and collaboration between - and improved communication among - the business community, economic development boards, university, hospital, and local government
<b>B</b>	Integrate economic strategies into other aspects of community planning	1	When evaluating future locations for particular land use districts, consider the market needs of the types of businesses likely to locate in those districts (i.e. trip counts, visibility, etc.) in addition to other community considerations (i.e. compatibility with surrounding land uses, impact on infrastructure, etc.)
		2	Monitor the impact of community planning actions on the City's economic goals and objectives
		3	Identify parties responsible for implementing the City's economic development strategies and annually monitor the success of those strategies

**Goal ED-2** - Stimulate and diversify Ellensburg's economy

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses as well as the development of new businesses	1	Solicit comments and feedback from local businesses on things that the City could change to better support local businesses
		2	Establish financial and other incentives to retain existing and attract new businesses
		3	Market to a variety of business -

**Goal ED-2 - Stimulate and diversify Ellensburg's economy**

Policy	Program
	<p style="text-align: right;">both large and small - that fit with Ellensburg's character and meets the needs of the local market</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>4</b> Inventory vacant building space in Central Commercial zones and post on the City's web site</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>5</b> Facilitate the creation and expansion of businesses and institutions that benefit from locating in the County seat</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>6</b> Promote the development of innovative niche businesses</p>
<b>B</b>	<p>Establish a business friendly regulatory environment</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>1</b> Provide adequate resources to process permits in a timely fashion. Pursue an automated permitting process to allow on-line applications for some permit types</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2</b> Streamline permitting by establishing a one-stop permit center for all permits and establishing an expedited permit process for some projects</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>3</b> Encourage the use of the pre-application process as a means of identifying potential obstacles to the development of a particular site</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>4</b> Establish predictable processing times and consistent review processes</p>
<b>C</b>	<p>Encourage development of light industrial uses within the City of Ellensburg</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>1</b> Develop City-owned property off Dolarway for a light industrial park</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2</b> Continue to partner with Kittitas County on development of the Kittitas County Industrial Park at</p>

**Goal ED-2** - Stimulate and diversify Ellensburg's economy

Policy	Program
	the Airport
	3 Consider developing another incubator project
	4 Coordinate with the Economic Development Group to develop business plans for value-added industry
	5 Identify strategies to mitigate constraints imposed by the flood plain on industrial land, and to minimize negative connotations of being designated within the 100-year flood plain
	6 Encourage pre-permitting of industrial property by deferring fees until the property is developed

As export-based economies shrink, the service sector established to serve them also shrinks, sometimes losing its diversity as the market gets smaller. Ellensburg has been able to retain its service sector diversity despite the downturn in basic industry. There is no single-source directory, however, to encourage a “buy local” program. As Ellensburg seeks to enrich its commerce sector, it will promote local businesses more actively and provide accommodations for their visitors. Ellensburg will encourage a more entrepreneurial culture, supporting existing and start-up businesses as they explore new markets.

The community noted during the participation process that they wanted to see more jobs in Ellensburg. People want to work in the town in which they live, go to school, and shop. The trick will be to match job creation and skills development, coordinating with local industry and local educational institutions to develop effective job training programs.

**Goal ED-3** - *Grow the local economy and tax base in a manner that supports the desired level of municipal services for the community*

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Ensure an adequate tax base to provide desired municipal services to the community	<b>1</b>	Establish targets for land use development that provide for a balance between tax receipts and demand for services
		<b>2</b>	When tax receipts are out of balance because of land development trends, consider providing incentives to promote a particular type of development that is under-represented or impact fees to discourage a particular type of development that is over-represented
		<b>3</b>	Provide a balance between residential, commercial and industrial zoning that includes provisions for regional retail and mixed-use residential
<b>B</b>	Establish regulations that balance growth with the need for additional services	<b>1</b>	Establish fees for community services, where possible, in an attempt to recover the cost of providing the service
		<b>2</b>	Evaluate development projects for concurrency with transportation and other infrastructure needs

**Goal ED-4** - *Grow and sustain a qualified workforce*

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Enhance employment opportunities for Ellensburg’s citizens	<b>1</b>	Consider public/private sponsorship of entrepreneurial education programs
		<b>2</b>	Provide organizational partnerships that focus resources toward upgrading the

**Goal ED-4 - Grow and sustain a qualified workforce**

Policy		Program	
			employability of all citizens
<b>B</b>	Encourage continued growth and academic excellence at CWU	<b>1</b>	Coordinate with the university to increase the amount of student housing in the Downtown Historic District, enabling students to have their living experiences enhance their academic experiences
		<b>2</b>	Coordinate with the university to shape local economic development strategy
		<b>3</b>	Work with local businesses and CWU to evaluate opportunities for creating entry-level jobs for university graduates
		<b>4</b>	Encourage the development of a business research park
		<b>5</b>	Encourage student internship programs with local businesses

Ellensburg’s Downtown Historic District is the heart of the community and will continue to be the intuitive seat of its economic development. Maintaining the Central Commercial zones economic viability and heritage character will help the entire community prosper, even if more intense commercial or industrial businesses develop along the community’s highway corridors.

**Goal ED-5 - Revitalize the Central Commercial zones**

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Promote access from Interstate 90 and create a desire to stop within the central business area of Ellensburg	<b>1</b>	Develop a corridor plan for Canyon Road, Main Street, University Way, and Dolarway through Ellensburg
		<b>2</b>	Develop a wayfinding system to local businesses, city parking and pedestrian paths

**Goal ED-5 - Revitalize the Central Commercial zones**

Policy		Program	
		3	Encourage and support cultural activities and the arts
		4	Consider a retail incubator in the Central Commercial zones
B	Ensure the adequacy and appropriate expansion of utilities and infrastructure	1	Inventory the capital facilities of the City and develop a prioritization matrix ranking needed projects
		2	Study provision of limited public transportation service to support job development in the Central Commercial zones
		3	Dedicate a portion of increased sales tax revenues from regional retail development to Central Commercial zone revitalization efforts

Tourism is an important component of Ellensburg’s economy. The Kittitas County Fairgrounds, Mission Ridge, Columbia River and Wenatchee National Forest are prominent tourist destinations, and Ellensburg sits in close proximity to each. These regional tourist amenities draw thousands of people through Ellensburg. The City is now working to find ways to benefit from that recreational traffic, developing a tourism study concurrent with this plan’s adoption.

**Goal ED-6 - Promote and sustain a robust tourism base**

Policy		Program	
A	Promote Ellensburg’s tourism opportunities through advertising	1	Advertise to interested demographics at the regional, national, and international level
		2	Keep detailed and updated website including chamber, city, tourism, and local business links
		3	Develop a welcome center
		4	Promote Ellensburg’s role as a

**Goal ED-6** - Promote and sustain a robust tourism base

Policy		Program	
			gateway to regional recreation activities
<b>B</b>	Market Ellensburg’s central meeting areas	<b>1</b>	Identify areas where regional tourism-based enterprises can meet and use community spaces and resources
		<b>2</b>	Coordinate with current tourism development efforts to define specific marketing strategies
<b>C</b>	Develop tourism based rental opportunities	<b>1</b>	Create zoning for short-term tourism rental property in the Central Commercial zones, including bed and breakfasts, hotels, apartments, and private rooms

Though the traditional resource-based industry has declined, Ellensburg is still positioned to benefit from what remains. It has a heritage worth celebrating and an active agricultural sector with potential to explore and succeed in niche markets.

**Goal ED-7** - Recognize the vital role of resource based activities

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Incorporate the resource industries into local activities.	<b>1</b>	Invite the farmers market to participate in economic development meetings and the Main Street Program (Ellensburg Downtown Association).
		<b>2</b>	Create opportunities for celebration of farming and ranching during local community celebrations.

Ellensburg can continue to strengthen its position as the central place in the Kittitas Valley, offering an ever-widening circle of retail, institutional and employment activities as it grows. It will need to build on its central place position, however, continuing to monitor changes in the economic and social needs of the county’s population and

striving to meet those needs. Some of that work will involve a strategic and comprehensive assessment to determine how the regional highways that lead into and divide the community can be used to Ellensburg’s best advantage.

**Goal ED 8** - Foster resource sustainability and economic development through energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy.

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Maintain City leadership role in energy conservation and renewable energy production.	<b>1</b>	Maintain electric and gas utility conservation and weatherization programs for industrial, commercial and residential customers.
		<b>2</b>	Continue to make energy-saving improvements to city buildings and infrastructure.
		<b>3</b>	Continue to demonstrate solar, energy systems at the Community Renewables Park. Complete the Smart Grid grant Demonstration Project.
<b>B</b>	Ensure City codes and policies foster energy conservation and the production of renewable energy.	<b>1</b>	Streamline permitting processes to enable implementation of sustainable building practices.
		<b>2</b>	When drafting policy, consider the impact on energy efficiency, conservation and renewable energy production.
<b>C</b>	Create community-wide opportunities for energy conservation and renewable energy production.	<b>1</b>	Encourage and consider opportunities to partner with local businesses, educational institutions, and other local partners to conduct workshops and community action campaigns.
		<b>2</b>	<u>Consider providing incentives and flexibility in permitting to encourage conservation and use of renewable energy technologies.</u>
		<b>3</b>	Provide technical assistance to

**Goal ED 8** - Foster resource sustainability and economic development through energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy.

Policy		Program	
			local businesses and residents who wish to implement conservation and renewable energy and waste reduction technologies and strategies.
<b>D</b>	Maximize the benefits of existing Tier 1 power pricing.	<b>1</b>	Consider alternative pricing strategies to provide additional incentive to conserve or shift energy, specifically during periods of peak demand.

### Priority Projects

Based on the goals, policies and programs contained in this chapter and on the results of months of public discussion, the City identified the following as priority economic development projects for work in the immediate future.

Project	Description and Goals
<b>Economic development vision and strategic plan</b>	Collaborate with others to prepare an economic development vision and strategy for the region, identifying the types of land use designations and the relative priorities of capital investment necessary to create the type of economic development environment Ellensburg seeks.
<b>UGA adjustment</b>	Review the urban growth boundary and adjust it as necessary in the future to assure adequate land of adequate type is available to implement the recommendations of the economic development vision and strategic plan.
<b>Increase usable industrially-zoned property</b>	Review the industrial land inventory and identify and implement steps within the City’s control to make available land more easily developed.
<b>Streamline/automate permitting process</b>	Review land use permitting processes and make adjustments as necessary to streamline approval processes while still ensuring projects enhance Ellensburg’s economic vitality and community character.
<b>Airport development strategy</b>	Collaborate with Kittitas County to ensure the airport’s

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development plans contribute to overall economic growth in the region and that Ellensburg’s land use plans are compatible with continuing airport and airport-related uses.

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## Areas Warranting Special Handling

There are several areas of interest within Ellensburg's UGA that warrant special consideration in Ellensburg's economic development strategies.

**Bowers Field** – Kittitas County has recently completed an airport master plan for Bowers Field. As Ellensburg looks to expand its industrial and employment base, the airport may present development opportunities. While industrial land would certainly be compatible with aircraft operations, accessing the airport from Interstate 90 or US Highway 97 could be problematic because of the distance from the airport to the highways. Bowers Road, however, is now open and may help overcome that difficulty.

**CBD** – The Downtown Historic District began life as the city's commercial, institutional and governmental focus, providing the marketplace for goods coming into the city and the meeting place for the community's residents. While economic activity has dispersed beyond the limits of the Downtown Historic District, the area remains the most concentrated activity center in Ellensburg. Economic development needs to build on that, crafting strategies that take advantage of the Downtown Historic District's physical, economic and social environment to help the community thrive, grow and evolve.

**Dolarway Road** – Ellensburg is craving industrial development, and many participants in this planning process noted that the most likely area for industrial development is along Dolarway Road. Unfortunately, much of that land is also within the flood plain, making it less attractive to potential users than land elsewhere. If land along Dolarway is to develop with job-rich industrial uses, something will need to be done to make the land easier to develop.

**West Interchange** – The I-90 west interchange is located approximately two miles from the city's center. The triangle of land there includes nearly 200 acres, with the city limit line weaving between various parcels. All of these parcels lie within the UGA. The land use element identifies this area for increased commercial activity.

**South Interchange** – Located south of the Central Commercial zones and adjacent to Ellensburg's southernmost neighborhoods, are approximately 300 acres of open land with immediate access to I-90. This area provides another opportunity site for the City's economic-development strategies. How it develops will be vitally important, given its high visibility and its proximity to existing residential development. The area north of I-90 shall be designated for commercial activity. The acreage immediately south of Berry Road to Tjossem Road and adjacent to Canyon Road shall be reserved for industrial use.

## 9 Parks and Recreation



## 9 Parks and Recreation

Ellensburg maintains a parks and recreation system, offering a wide variety of facilities and activities for Ellensburg and Kittitas County residents. In 2002, Ellensburg prepared a comprehensive parks and recreation plan, ultimately establishing a list of facility and program improvements for the parks department to implement over time. This comprehensive plan update includes that parks and recreation plan by reference, drawing from it to help create a policy framework for inclusion in the comprehensive plan.

This comp plan update will also serve as an update to the comprehensive parks and recreation plan for purposes of maintaining and extending eligibility for grants through the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC). As such, the process and content of this update conform to the IAC's planning guidelines, though much of the detail on the existing park system inventory is still contained in the 2002 parks and recreation plan.

### Setting

The 2002 parks and recreation plan provides a detailed description of Ellensburg's regional physiographic and ecological setting. It outlines important natural and biotic features that provide the context for the community's parks and recreational activities. It identifies specific measures that the parks and recreation plan can take to help modern Ellensburg coexist with other species that rely on natural habitat:



**Figure 9.1** - Ellensburg maintains approximately 1,860 acres of parkland. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

- Replant - native vegetation along the shoreline and along drainage corridors
- Remove - artificial shoreline constructions and freshwater impoundment or diversions
- Control - stormwater runoff content and quality that enters the natural drainage system and within the watershed in natural impoundment on-site where pollutants can be separated from natural drainage
- Cultivate - berry or fruit plants that support and retain native species
- Cluster - roadways and other improvements to preserve natural shorelines and contiguous open spaces as common lands

The 2002 plan forecast a population of 21,189 by the year 2015. That is consistent with the growth anticipated during the planning period of this comprehensive plan update. This update considers that Ellensburg's population in 2025 will be approximately 23,000.

### **Existing Facilities**

Ellensburg, Kittitas County, the Ellensburg School District, Central Washington University, the Washington State departments of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) and Transportation (WSDOT), and other public and private agencies have large amounts of land within and/or adjacent to Ellensburg. Much of this land provides a variety of park, recreation and open space opportunities, including wildlife conservancies, waterfront beaches, picnic facilities, trail corridors, athletic fields, playgrounds, community centers, and related administrative and maintenance facilities. Ownership status of parks and recreation facilities is unchanged since the 2002 parks and recreation plan's adoption. Details on ownership, facilities, size and use can be found in the 2002 plan.

### **Needs and Issues**

This comprehensive plan update featured an extensive public participation effort, some of which was focused on parks, recreation and open space. The entire public participation process is described in the appendix of this plan, detailing the steps taken along the way, the reasons for the approach used, and the topics covered by the City, consultant, advisory committee, workshop participants, and the community at large.

The results of this 2005 effort confirm the findings of the community survey in 2002 and the conclusions of the 2002 parks and recreation plan. Issues that were important then are still important today.

According to the 2002 plan, Ellensburg has an abundance of overall parks and open space, but the allocation of the space and facilities may not be adequate to serve the community's needs. Ellensburg has more than 2,100 acres of parkland, with 1,860 acres controlled by the City. That is a rate of 137 acres per 1,000 population for total parkland

and 120 acres per 1,000 population for parkland owned by the City. The National Recreation and Parks Association proposes a guideline of approximately 34.45 acres of parks for every 1,000 population. Ellensburg exceeds that guideline, but most of its parkland is not improved, nor can it be improved, with the types of facilities the community needs.

The 2002 plan goes into great detail explaining the types of facilities that will need to be acquired and/or constructed to meet current and anticipated parks and recreation demand. By 2015, the parks system will need to expand by approximately 220 acres and increase its facilities by approximately 10,400 facility units. This describes a situation where some additional land will be necessary, but where an increase in the number and diversity of recreational and athletic facilities is crucial.

## Goals and Policies

To address these system deficiencies, the 2002 plan included the following goals. Those goals are carried forward in this comprehensive plan update, and are expanded also now to include policies and implementation programs to help the City budget for parks and recreation system improvements annually.

**Goal PR-1** - *Incorporate unique ecological features and resources into the park system to protect threatened species, preserve habitat, and retain migration corridors that are unique and important to local wildlife*

Policy	
<b>A</b>	Identify and conserve critical wildlife habitat including nesting sites, foraging areas, and migration corridors within or adjacent to natural areas, open spaces, and the developed urban area
<b>B</b>	Preserve especially sensitive habitat sites that support threatened species and urban wildlife habitat - such as the shoreline areas along Reecer, Currier, Wilson, and Naneum Creeks, and Dolarway Road, Mattoon, Goose Inn, Bull Run, and Hanson Pit Ponds, and the Yakima River
<b>C</b>	Preserve and protect significant environmental features including unique wetlands, open spaces, woodlands, shorelines, waterfronts and other characteristics that support wildlife and reflect Ellensburg’s resource heritage – such as Reecer, Currier, Wilson, and Naneum Creeks
<b>D</b>	Provide public access to environmentally sensitive areas and sites that are especially unique to the Ellensburg area - such as Dolarway Road Pond

**Goal PR-2** - *Develop a high quality, diversified park system that preserves and enhances significant environmental resources and features*

Policy	
<b>A</b>	Define and conserve a system of open space corridors or separators to provide definition between natural areas and urban land uses within the Ellensburg developing area – such as the Yakima River Greenway and Irene Rinehart Park
<b>B</b>	Increase natural area and open space linkages within the developed area, particularly along the John Wayne Trail/Iron Horse State Park
<b>C</b>	Preserve environmentally sensitive areas as natural area linkages and urban separators, particularly the Cascade and Town Canals corridors
<b>D</b>	Cooperate with other public and private agencies, and with private landowners to set aside land and resources necessary to provide high quality, convenient park,

**Goal PR-2** - *Develop a high quality, diversified park system that preserves and enhances significant environmental resources and features*

Policy	
	recreation, and open space facilities before the most suitable sites are lost to development – particularly the lands along the Yakima River
<b>E</b>	Preserve unique environmental features or areas in future land developments and increase public use and access. Cooperate with other public and private agencies, and with private landowners to set aside unique features or areas as publicly accessible resources
<b>F</b>	Create recreational overlay zone to include Irene Rinehart Park and surroundings to enhance recreational opportunities inherent with the natural setting of the Yakima River

**Goal PR-3** - *Develop a high quality, diversified park system that preserves significant historical opportunity areas and features*

Policy	
<b>A</b>	Identify, preserve, and enhance Ellensburg's multicultural heritage, traditions, and cultural features including historical sites, buildings, artworks, views, and monuments within the Downtown Historic District, other historical areas and park sites
<b>B</b>	Identify and incorporate significant historical and cultural lands, sites, artifacts, and facilities into the park system to preserve these interests and provide a balanced social experience - such as the Pinkard Mansion and Dammon and Woldale Schools
<b>C</b>	Work with Kittitas County Historical Society and Arts Commission and other cultural groups to incorporate community activities into the park and recreational program
<b>D</b>	Incorporate interesting manmade environments, structures, activities, and areas into the park system to preserve these features and provide a balanced park, recreation, and open space experience - such as the Northern Pacific Railroad Depot, Cascade and Town Canals
<b>E</b>	Work with property and facility owners to increase public access and utilization of these special features

**Goal PR-4** - *Develop a high quality system of multipurpose park trails and corridors that access significant environmental features, public facilities and developed local neighborhoods and business districts*

Policy	
<b>A</b>	Create a comprehensive system of multipurpose off-road trails using alignments along public road rights-of-way as well as cooperating private properties where appropriate
<b>B</b>	Create a comprehensive system of on-road bicycle routes for commuter, recreational, and touring enthusiasts using scenic, collector, and local road rights-of-way and alignments through and around Ellensburg
<b>C</b>	Link residential neighborhoods to community facilities like Central Washington Park, CWU Community Fields, West Ellensburg Park, among others
<b>D</b>	Work with WSDOT, Kittitas County, and other appropriate parties to link and extend trails around Ellensburg and with the John Wayne and Yakima River Trails
<b>E</b>	Link trails with elementary and middle schools, the Central Commercial zones as well as other commercial and retail activity centers within the Ellensburg urban growth area
<b>F</b>	Extend trails through natural area corridors like the Yakima River that will provide a high quality, diverse sampling of area environmental resources
<b>G</b>	Furnish trail systems with appropriate supporting trailhead improvements that include interpretive and directory signage systems, rest stops, drinking fountains, restrooms, parking and loading areas, water, and other services
<b>H</b>	Where appropriate, locate trailheads at or in conjunction with park sites, schools, and other community facilities to increase local area access to the trail system and reduce duplication of supporting improvements
<b>I</b>	Install telephones, emergency call boxes, or other means by which trail users can summon fire, emergency aid, police, and other safety and security personnel should the need arise
<b>J</b>	Develop trail improvements of a design and development standard that is easy to maintain and access by maintenance, security, and other appropriate personnel, equipment, and vehicles

**Goal PR-5** - *Develop a high quality, diversified recreation system that provides for all age and interest groups*

Policy	
<b>A</b>	Cooperate with Kittitas County, the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife, and other public and private agencies to acquire and preserve additional shoreline access for waterfront fishing, wading, swimming, and other related recreational activities and pursuits
<b>B</b>	Develop a mixture of watercraft access opportunities including canoe, kayak, and other non-power boating activities on the Yakima River and Matoon Lake
<b>C</b>	Develop athletic facilities that meet the highest quality competitive playing standards and requirements for all age groups, skill levels, and recreational interests
<b>D</b>	Concentrate on court and field activities like skateboard, basketball, tennis, volleyball, soccer, baseball, and softball that provide for the largest number of participants
<b>E</b>	Develop, where appropriate, a select number of facilities that provide the highest competitive playing standard in conjunction with the Ellensburg School District, local church and private school organizations, and other public and private agencies
<b>F</b>	Develop multiple use indoor community centers that provide arts and crafts, music, video, classroom instruction, meeting facilities, eating and health care, daycare, latchkey, and other spaces for all age groups including preschool, youth, teens, and seniors on a year-round basis
<b>G</b>	Maintain and expand multiple use indoor recreational centers that provide aquatic, gymnasiums, physical conditioning, recreational courts, and other athletic spaces for all age groups, skill levels, and community interests on a year-round basis
<b>H</b>	Support the continued development and diversification by the Ellensburg School District, Kittitas County Rodeo and Fairgrounds, and other organizations of special meeting, assembly, eating, health, and other community facilities that provide general support to school age populations and the community-at-large at elementary, middle, and high schools within the Ellensburg urban growth area
<b>I</b>	Develop and operate special indoor and outdoor cultural and performing arts facilities that enhance and expand music, dance, drama, and other audience and participatory opportunities for the community-at-large. Cooperate with Kittitas County, CWU, Ellensburg School District, and other organizations to support arts within the community
<b>J</b>	Work with other public and private agencies to operate an off-leash dog park

**Goal PR-6** - Support the development of high quality facilities that meet the interests of all segments of the community

Policy	
<b>A</b>	Where appropriate and economically feasible (self-supporting), develop and operate specialized and special interest recreational facilities like swimming pools and aquatic centers, ice arenas, convention and theater facilities, and golf courses for these interests in the general population
<b>B</b>	Where appropriate, initiate joint planning and operating programs with other public and private agencies to determine and provide for special activities like golf, water parks and marinas, and camping on a regional basis

**Goal PR-7** - Develop high quality recreational programs and services that meet all community group needs

Policy	
<b>A</b>	Support arts and crafts, classroom instruction in music and dance, physical conditioning and health care, meeting facilities, daycare, latchkey, and other program activities for all cultural, age, physical and mental capability, and income groups in the community
<b>B</b>	Support basketball, volleyball, tennis, soccer, baseball, softball, and other instruction and participatory programs for all age, skill level, and income groups in the community.
<b>C</b>	Assist historical and cultural societies to develop and display artifacts, reports, and exhibits; and conduct lectures, classes, and other programs that document and develop awareness of Ellensburg's heritage.

**Goal PR-8** - Develop high quality, diversified cultural arts facilities and programs that increase community awareness, attendance, and participation opportunities

Policy	
<b>A</b>	Support successful collaborations between the Kittitas County Historical Society, Arts Commission, Chamber of Commerce, business community, service groups, schools, arts patrons, and artists that optimally utilize artistic resources and talents.
<b>B</b>	Develop strategies that will support and assist local artists and art organizations. Where appropriate, support policies and programs that encourage or provide incentives that attract and retain artists and artworks within the Ellensburg urban growth area.

**Goal PR-8** - *Develop high quality, diversified cultural arts facilities and programs that increase community awareness, attendance, and participation opportunities*

**Policy**

- C Acquire public artworks including paintings, sculptures, exhibits, and other media for indoor and outdoor display to expand resident access and appropriately furnish public places.

**Goal PR-9** - *Design and develop facilities that are accessible, safe, and easy to maintain, with life cycle features that account for long-term costs and benefits*

**Policy**

- A Design outdoor picnic areas, trails, playgrounds, courts, fields, parking lots, restrooms, and other active and supporting facilities to be accessible to individuals and organized groups of all physical capabilities, skill levels, age groups, income and activity interests

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- B Design indoor facility spaces, activity rooms, restrooms, hallways, parking lots, and other active and supporting spaces and improvements to be accessible to individuals and organized groups of all physical capabilities, skill levels, age groups, income and activity interests

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- C Design and develop facilities that are of low maintenance and high capacity design to reduce overall facility maintenance and operation requirements and costs

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- D Where appropriate, use low maintenance materials, settings or other value engineering considerations that reduce care and security requirements, and retain natural conditions and experiences

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- E Implement the provisions and requirements of the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and other design and development standards that will improve park facility safety and security features for park users, department personnel, and the public-at-large

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- F Develop and implement safety standards, procedures, and programs that will provide proper training and awareness for department personnel

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- G Define and enforce rules and regulations concerning park activities and operations that will protect user groups, department personnel, and the general public-at-large

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- H Where appropriate, use adopt-a-park programs, neighborhood park watches, park police patrols, and other innovative programs that will increase safety and security awareness and visibility

**Goal PR-10** - Create effective and efficient methods of acquiring, developing, operating and maintaining facilities and programs that accurately distribute costs and benefits to public and private interests

Policy	
<b>A</b>	Investigate innovative available methods, such as growth impact fees, land set-aside or fee-in-lieu-of-donation ordinances, and inter-local agreements, for the financing of facility development, maintenance, and operating needs in order to reduce costs, retain financial flexibility, match user benefits and interests, and increase facility services
<b>B</b>	Consider joint ventures with other public and private agencies such as the Ellensburg School District, Kittitas County, regional, state, federal, and other public and private agencies including for-profit concessionaires, where feasible and desirable
<b>C</b>	Create a comprehensive, balanced park, recreation, and open space system that integrates Ellensburg facilities and services with resources available from Ellensburg School District, Kittitas County, and other state, federal, and private park and recreational lands and facilities in a manner that will best serve and provide for resident area interests
<b>D</b>	Cooperate with Ellensburg School District, Kittitas County, and other public and private agencies to avoid duplication, improve facility quality and availability, reduce costs, and represent resident area interests through joint planning and development efforts
<b>E</b>	Define existing and proposed land and facility levels-of-service that differentiate requirements due to population growth impacts versus improved facility standards, neighborhood versus community nexus of benefit, city versus the combination of city, county, school, and other provider agency efforts in order to effectively plan and program park, recreation, and open space needs within the proposed urban growth area boundaries
<b>F</b>	Create effective and efficient methods of acquiring, developing, operating, and maintaining park and recreational facilities in manners that accurately distribute costs and benefits to public and private user interests - including the application of growth impact fees where new developments impact existing level-of-service (ELOS) standards
<b>G</b>	Develop and operate lifetime recreational programs that serve the broadest needs of the population recovering program and operating costs with a combination of registration fees, user fees, grants, sponsorships, donations, scholarships, volunteer efforts, and the use of general funding
<b>H</b>	Where appropriate, provide recreational programs, like golf and archery ranges, for those interested groups who are willing to finance the cost through user fees, registration fees, volunteer efforts or other means and methods

## **Implementation**

The City of Ellensburg adopted a financial strategy for the provision of its parks and recreation facilities and programs for the period from 2002 through 2008, with recommendations on longer-range implementation approaches. The 2002 comprehensive parks and recreation plan explains the financial strategy and long-range approaches in detail. Since adoption of the 2002 plan, the City has included individual parks projects in the annual capital improvement plan as appropriate.

The City will continue including its parks and recreation projects in the annual capital improvement plan to implement its 2002 comprehensive parks and recreation plan. The City will also need to reexamine its financial strategy in 2008 to evaluate its progress in implementing the 2002 plan and to develop another six-year financing strategy to provide adequate parks and recreational facilities.

## 10 Historic Preservation



## 10 Historic Preservation

Ellensburg has an extensive inventory of historic structures. Many of them are located within a 16-block area of the Downtown Historic District, an area rebuilt shortly after the fire of 1889. Others are located on the CWU campus, in the industrial district along the railroad, and in the residential neighborhoods in and surrounding the Central Commercial zones. Ellensburg was a thriving community at the turn of the century, and its legacy of community, innovation, drive, and pride live on today. The City of Ellensburg recognizes that protection of property values and public and private investment can be achieved within the framework of the existing built environment. As a result of rehabilitation of historic buildings, the character of the area is retained, high quality structures are redeveloped and neighborhood pride increases. A vacant building harms the property values of surrounding properties, thus negatively impacting revenue. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to provide incentives to property owners for the acquisition, preservation, restoration, redevelopment and continued use of outstanding historic properties. Incentive programs to assist landmark owners with the use, re-use, and redevelopment of historic buildings should be developed. Such incentives may include façade design assistance, revolving loan funds, tax relief or building and zoning code relief. According to the 1995 vision statement:



**Figure 10.1** - The “Evergreen Arch” created at the intersection of Ruby and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue greeted soldiers returning from the Spanish-American War, November 1899. (Image source: Ellensburg Public Library)

*“We covet the distinctive turn-of-the century identity of the downtown. We look forward to new buildings or rehabilitation of older ones that carry forward the themes or designs of that tradition.”*

In 1998, Ellensburg created a separate historic preservation element in its comprehensive plan to address the city’s unique and important historic structures and districts. The element was amended in 2000; as amended, the chapter intended to reaffirm and reinforce the Downtown Historic District (1980), Residential Historic District (1984), and Ellensburg Landmarks Register (2000), elevating consideration of these districts and other historically significant elements to the policy level of the comprehensive plan. In

addition, the amended element cited other related historic preservation activities, namely the new landmarks and design ordinance (2000), the attainment of Certified Local Government status (2001), and the ordinance allowing for special valuation of improvements to historic property (2002). This plan carries forward that work, including the historic preservation element in the plan update and including the downtown historic district, residential historic district, and landmarks register by reference.

In its 1998 amendment to the comprehensive plan, the City stated:

*“The City of Ellensburg recognizes that archaeological and significant historic sites and structures are a finite, irreplaceable, and non-renewable set of resources. The City further recognizes that the State of Washington has declared that the public has an interest in the identification and protection of these resources, as set forth in RCW 27.44 related to Indian Graves and Records, and RCW 27.53 relating to archaeological sites and resources, and has established an administrative procedure governing the issuance of archaeological excavation and removal permits in WAC25.48.”*

This underscores the importance the community places on historic resources and emphasizes the need to preserve and restore those resources as a fundamental part of maintaining the community’s identity.



**Figure 10.2** – Ellensburg’s remarkable historic district – and the preservation-minded community that has kept it largely intact over the years – faces new challenges as shopping habits reshape downtown’s tenant mix. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

**Issues**

Extensive public participation helped to define and clarify the various historic preservation issues listed below. Each is addressed in the goals, policies and programs in the following section.

Issue	Goal Reference
There is a lack of flexible or multi-use zoning alternatives within or around the Central Commercial zones	<b>HP - 2</b>
Multiple property ownerships and parcel configurations in the Central Commercial zones act as barriers to large-scale redevelopment or to reconfiguration of the commercial and industrial districts to accommodate large retail users	<b>HP - 3</b>
There is no compiled information to address the distinctiveness of the Downtown Historic District’s architectural features and how the different styles relate to each other	<b>HP - 1</b>
Not many local designers and contractors are experienced in the rehabilitation of historic structures in a manner that conforms with current life-safety building code requirements	<b>HP - 2</b>

## Goals, Policies and Programs

The following table provides goals, policies and programs that will help the City implement this element of the comprehensive plan. The programs are intended to be specific and task-oriented, allowing the City Council and City Manager to assign responsibility to various staff members or commissions for completion. Systematic undertaking and completion of the various programs will ensure that policies are implemented and will help achieve plan goals.

**Goal HP-1** - *Identify and protect archaeological and significant historic sites and structures*

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Identify and protect archaeological and significant historic sites and structures during the review process	<b>1</b>	Review and update the inventory of historic sites and structures
		<b>2</b>	Refer to historic and archaeological inventory and establish a review process that incorporates independent review process based on National, State and local standards for Historic Preservation
		<b>3</b>	Develop an historic sites and structures mitigation program for inclusion in appropriate policy documents
		<b>4</b>	Develop comprehensive criteria and review local guidelines to ensure continued adequacy of project review for demolition, remodels or infill development within historic district
		<b>5</b>	Develop and publicize a definition of archaeological and historic sites; create new guidelines that set forth appropriate materials and architectural design standards reflecting the spacing, scale, and architectural characteristics of the National Register Historic district
<b>B</b>	Retain downtown Ellensburg's historic character with an	<b>1</b>	Document and publicize the existing architectural styles,

**Goal HP-1** - Identify and protect archaeological and significant historic sites and structures

Policy	Program
education pamphlet or book that describes the distinctiveness of time and place in Ellensburg	building materials, rhythm, and massing within the historic districts
	2 Compile a narrative documenting the Downtown Historic District’s history and distinctiveness of its resources
	3 Create a pamphlet or book that describes the distinctiveness of time and place in Ellensburg

**Goal HP-2** - Maintain the integrity and reuse of historic buildings

Policy	Program
A Facilitate adaptive reuse of historic buildings	1 Develop and publicize program of incentives to apply to renovation, rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures
	2 Create a façade design assistance program
	3 Establish a revolving loan fund for work on historic structures
	4 Create a program that uses existing reinvestment incentives and institute and publicize other tax relief program, such as new market housing credits or property tax deferrals, and/or building fee credits to encourage development of housing in the Downtown Historic District in a manner consistent with the area’s historic character
	5 Adopt regulatory or zoning standards relief for work on historic structures in the historic districts

**Goal HP-2** - *Maintain the integrity and reuse of historic buildings*

Policy	Program
	<p><b>6</b> Implement study results from other city building code requirements for historic structures to create solutions that address ways to manage fire suppression, exiting and access requirements</p>
	<p><b>7</b> Develop and publicize a training program to educate local designers and contractors in historic building renovation techniques and opportunities that adhere to Secretary of the Interior standards</p>
	<p><b>8</b> Revise zoning to permit mixing residential and non-residential uses in the Downtown Historic District</p>
	<p><b>9</b> Develop an assistance program which identifies appropriate resources for rehabilitation of historic buildings and funding mechanisms to do appropriate restoration on the historic structure</p>
	<p><b>10</b> Complete an informational packet outlining the benefits for historic preservation throughout the City and the necessary steps needed for a renovation project, for a restoration project, for a landscaping project, for a street/access permit project, for encouraging renovation, restoration or infill construction within the historic core and areas of transition near the Downtown Historic District and throughout the community</p>
	<p><b>11</b> Create an overlay zone for Registered Historic Housing in, near or adjacent to the core</p>

**Goal HP-2** - Maintain the integrity and reuse of historic buildings

Policy	Program
	<p><b>12</b> Create design standards that help to continue the existing façade patterns within the immediate neighborhood of a project building</p>
	<p><b>13</b> Encourage and support “Green Building Policies and Practices”, including but not limited to consideration of recycling requirements for demolition projects, and encouragement for “deconstruction” (the piece-by-piece disassembly of an existing building with reuse/recycling of much of the material</p>

**Goal HP-3** - Maintain the City of Ellensburg as the predominant center for commercial, financial, governmental and cultural activities. Retain clear physical evidence of our community's history, traditions and heritage

Policy	Program
<p><b>A</b> Retain the distinct rhythms, distinctive colors, spacing of details, and diversity of architectural textures which give the historic buildings their architectural styling when possible</p>	<p><b>1</b> Develop and publicize program of incentives to apply to renovation, rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures</p>
	<p><b>2</b> Review and publicize existing ordinances related to demolition and ensure they effectively discourage destruction of historic structures</p>
	<p><b>3</b> Establish a revolving loan fund for architectural, mechanical and structural work on historic structures</p>
	<p><b>4</b> Institute and publicize a tax relief program, such as new market housing credits or property tax deferrals, to encourage development of housing in the</p>

**Goal HP-3** - Maintain the City of Ellensburg as the predominant center for commercial, financial, governmental and cultural activities. Retain clear physical evidence of our community's history, traditions and heritage

Policy		Program	
			Downtown Historic District in a manner consistent with the area's historic character
<b>B</b>	Encourage development of new retail that contributes to the distinctive and mixed visual fabric of the architectural character within or adjacent to the Downtown Historic District	<b>1</b>	Identify historic buildings and land ownership of adequate size to accommodate large retail tenants
		<b>2</b>	Identify mechanisms or designs which can be used to accommodate larger retail tenants or connect them to the Downtown Historic District
		<b>3</b>	Review design guidelines for appropriateness and effectiveness to inform design of large retail projects in or adjacent to the Downtown Historic District
		<b>4</b>	Establish a design assistance program to aid project designers in proposing new buildings or façades that are compatible with the Downtown Historic District's character. Create a pattern book
<b>C</b>	Encourage multi-family residence construction that reflects the existing features of the larger residential housing around the Downtown Historic District	<b>1</b>	Create a program that uses existing reinvestment incentives and institutes other tax relief programs, such as new market housing credits or property tax deferrals and building fee credits to encourage development of housing in the Downtown Historic District in a manner consistent with the area's historic character

**Goal HP-4** - Maintain and create civic buildings that reflect sense of community and public purpose

Policy		Program	
A	Reuse existing public buildings in such a way that civic and historic design elements are preserved	1	Encourage school districts, CWU, City and County to reuse rather than tear down
		2	Prepare inventory and feasibility studies for future reuse of public buildings
B	New public structures should recognize historic design traditions within the community	1	Expand design standards to address public structures both within and outside the historic core

**Goal HP-5** - Use historic preservation as a means to economic vitality

Policy		Program	
A	Consider preservation activity itself as economic development	1	Continue and strengthen partnerships with State and other government agencies and funding sources for preservation, infill, energy efficiency and revitalization
B	Create and provide resources for downtown businesses that take full advantage of the mixed historic character of the community	1	Create a long-range plan and provide design assistance and review for the creation, renovation, and installation of 1) public lighting 2) signage - commercial and public, including wall murals 3) parking 4) public art 5) landscaping 6) access, including ADA, elevator and fire suppression and escape

**11 Essential Public Facilities**





**Figure 11.1** – No public air transportation services currently operate from Bowers Field. (*Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.*)

## 11 Essential Public Facilities

The Growth Management Act requires comprehensive plans to include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. Essential public facilities include those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities and state and regional transportation facilities, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities, including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, secure community transition facilities (SCTFs), and group homes (RCW 36.70A.200).

Most of the public facilities and infrastructure corridors within the city are already identified and developed. In addition, the comprehensive plan's capital facilities and transportation chapters address future needs in the surrounding UGA for the city's growth, and the establish policies for identifying and protecting such facilities and corridors. Also, the countywide planning policies contain a chapter outlining the issues and policies for siting essential public facilities.

Some essential public facilities and infrastructure needs are the responsibility of entities other than the City of Ellensburg, and decisions as to site locations for those facilities and infrastructure will be made by those entities (including the Ellensburg School District #401, Kittitas County Hospital District #1, Central Washington University, Ellensburg Telephone Company, and Puget Power). The City will continue to work with those private and public entities in their master planning efforts to ensure that appropriate siting is planned for, both within the city and in unincorporated portions of the UGA.

### Goals, Policies, and Programs

The following table provides the goals, policies and programs that will help the City implement this comprehensive plan. The programs are intended to be specific and task-oriented, allowing the City Council and City Manager to assign responsibility to various staff members or commissions for completion. Systematic undertaking and completion of the various programs will ensure that policies are implemented and will help achieve plan goals.

**EPF-1** - *Maintain consistent countywide planning policies for siting of essential public facilities*

Policy		Program	
<b>A</b>	Continue to support and work with the Kittitas County Conference of Governments (COG) to establish a process for siting essential public facilities that are of a countywide or statewide nature as set forth in the countywide planning policies	<b>1</b>	Inventory needed facilities
		<b>2</b>	Develop a method to determine “fair share” allocation of facilities
		<b>3</b>	Develop a range of economic incentive options for jurisdictions receiving such facilities
		<b>4</b>	Develop a method for determining which jurisdiction is responsible for each facility
		<b>5</b>	Create a public involvement strategy
		<b>6</b>	Assure that the environmental and public health and safety are

**EPF-1** - Maintain consistent countywide planning policies for siting of essential public facilities

Policy	Program
	<p style="text-align: center;">protected</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>7</b></p> <p>Develop an evaluation process to assure policy and goals are met and to identify future needs as situations arise</p>
<p><b>B</b> Apply the siting process outlined by the programs for this policy to all essential public facilities identified by the City, the County, regional agreement or by State or federal government when such facilities are proposed within the City of the UGA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <p>Ensure public involvement through the use of timely press releases, newspaper notices, public information meetings, and public hearings</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></p> <p>Appoint an advisory project analysis and site evaluation committee composed of citizen members selected to represent a broad range of interest groups. The committee’s responsibility will be to develop specific siting criteria for the proposed project and to identify analyze and rank potential project sites</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></p> <p>Notify adjacent jurisdictions of the proposed project and solicit review and comment on the recommendations made by the advisory project analysis and site evaluation committee</p>
<p><b>C</b> Develop and adopt regulations that ensure that facility siting is consistent with all adopted City ordinances and the adopted City comprehensive plan</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <p>Review proposals against the adopted comprehensive plan land use map and zoning map</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></p> <p>Review proposals against the capital facilities element and budget</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></p> <p>Review proposals against the housing, economic development, land use and transportation elements</p>
<p><b>D</b> Coordinate with Kittitas County and other public and private</p>	

**EPF-1** - *Maintain consistent countywide planning policies for siting of essential public facilities*

Policy	Program
<p>entities to establish an “Official map” identifying precise arterial corridors, public parks and open spaces, and other public facility locations for current and future dedication and acquisition</p>	

### Priority Projects

The following priority projects represent immediate steps the City should take to implement this plan.

Project	Description and Goals
<p><b>Siting collaboration</b></p>	<p>Establish a process with Kittitas County to set criteria for the location and siting of essential public facilities</p>