



... the best of the best of the Northwest.

**WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL  
Work Session Agenda  
September 22, 2025 - 4:00 p.m.**

Members of the public are invited to view the live video stream of the electronic meeting from the City's website at <https://www.wallawallawa.gov/government/city-council>, may attend by clicking here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83706950665> or may listen to the meeting by calling 253-215-8782 and entering meeting ID 837 0695 0665#.

Individuals who need auxiliary aids for effective communication are encouraged to make their needs and preferences known by contacting the Human Resources Department at 509-527-4475.

Mission: Dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Walla Walla.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. ACTIVE AGENDA**

- A.** 30 Min. Presentation on the draft Walla Walla County 5-year Homeless Housing Plan
- B.** 45 Min. Ballot Proposition to Create a Metropolitan Park District
- C.** 45 Min. Review 2024-2028 Strategic Plan Implementation Status

**3. OTHER BUSINESS**

**4. MEETING ENDS**

**Values: Service, Integrity, Collaboration, Equity, Leadership, and Community**

**The City of Walla Walla complies with Title VI, ADA, and other applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex.**



ar-5765

30 Min.

**City Council - Work Session**

**Meeting Date:** 09/22/2025

**Item Title:** 5-year Homeless Housing Plan Update

**Submitted For:** Elizabeth Chamberlain, City Manager Office

**Add'l Contributors:**

**Project No:** **Funding/BARS No.:**

**Financial Comments:**

N/A

---

**Information**

**HISTORY:**

Washington state law requires that each local homeless housing task force develop and recommend to its local government legislative authority a five-year local homeless housing plan for its jurisdictional area aimed at eliminating homelessness (RCW 43.185C.050, RCW 43.185C.160). The local plan must be consistent with local plan guidance issued by the Department of Commerce (Commerce). Commerce published guidance for the planning period of 2025-2030 in October 2024 to support alignment between state and local homeless housing efforts. The state's Homeless Housing Strategic Plan and Local Plan Guidance can be found on Commerce's website (<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/homelessness-response/planning-and-reporting/strategic-plan/>). The local plan must provide goals, strategies/activities, performance measures and timelines to eliminate homelessness within the entire county.

The Council on Housing is a required body that provides expertise and support on the 5-year homeless housing plan, education, advocacy on homeless issues within the County, and recommendations on the allocation of homeless housing funds. The current by-laws outline the representatives on the Council on Housing. The City of Walla Walla is represented by the City Manager. The by-laws were adopted by the Walla Walla County Commissioners on November 5, 2018.

The Council on Housing is the body that will recommend the draft 2025-2030 Homeless Housing Plan to the Board of County Commissioners. A subgroup of the Council on Housing has been supporting the Dept. of Community Health staff on the development of the draft plan. The Dept. of Community Health is seeking feedback from the City Council on the draft as part of the public comment phase of the project.

**POLICY ISSUES:**

Review and discussion only. No action.

**PLAN COMPLIANCE:**

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Livability Key Focus Area; Objective 1: Address the housing needs within the community

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:**

Housing Policy 1.2: Address the causes of homelessness by working with local agencies and non-profits that provide services to this community.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Discussion only.

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:**

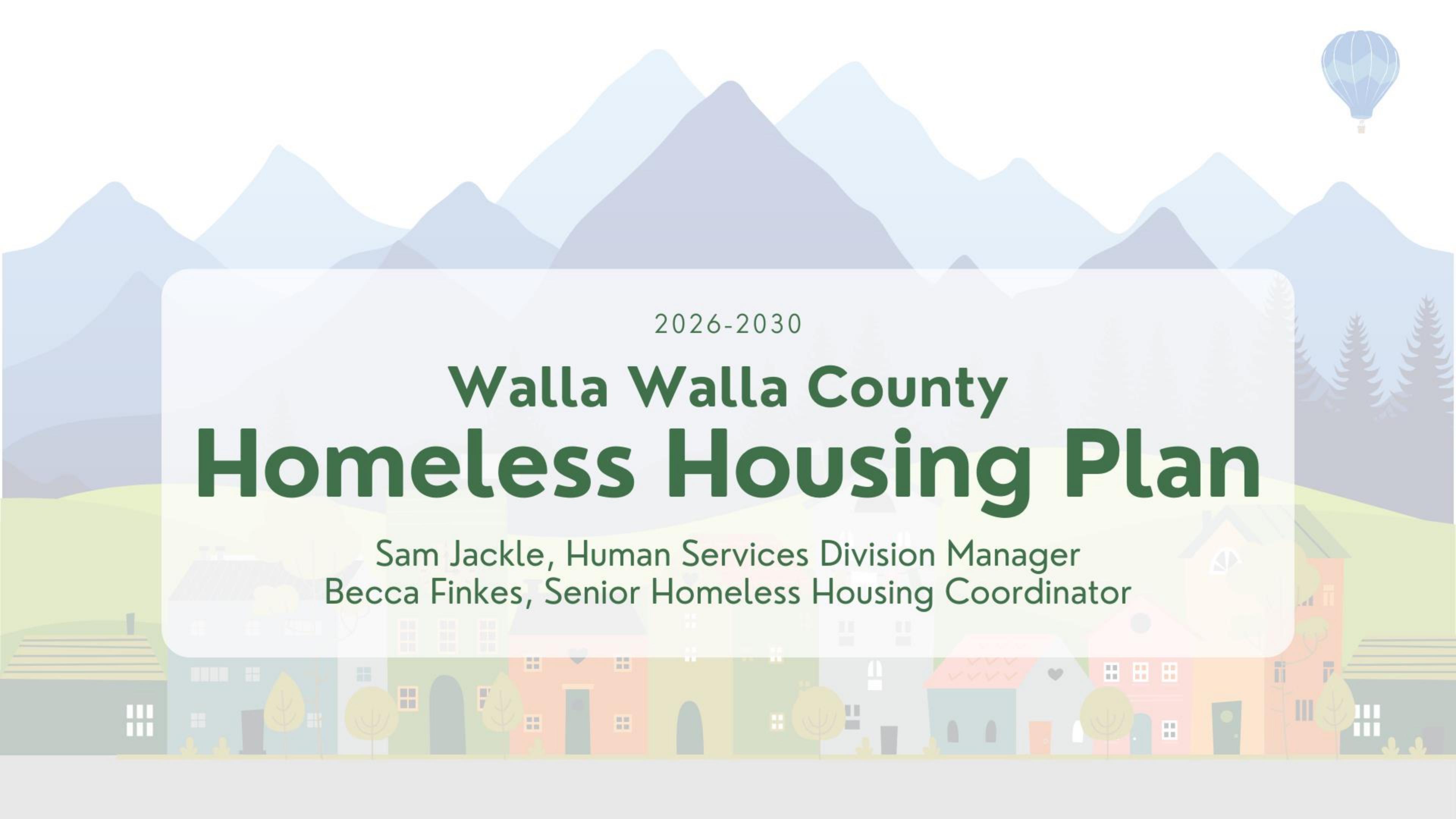
Approved for council work session discussion.

---

### **Attachments**

- 5 Year Plan Presentation
- 5-year Homeless Housing Plan Update Schedule
- Community Forum Flyer
- Draft Plan

---



2026-2030

# Walla Walla County **Homeless Housing Plan**

Sam Jackle, Human Services Division Manager  
Becca Finkes, Senior Homeless Housing Coordinator

# Acknowledgements

- Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners
- Walla Walla County Department of Community Health (DCH)
- 5 Year Plan Focus Group Participants
- Walla Walla Council on Housing
- 5 Year Plan Workgroup



## 5 Year Plan Workgroup

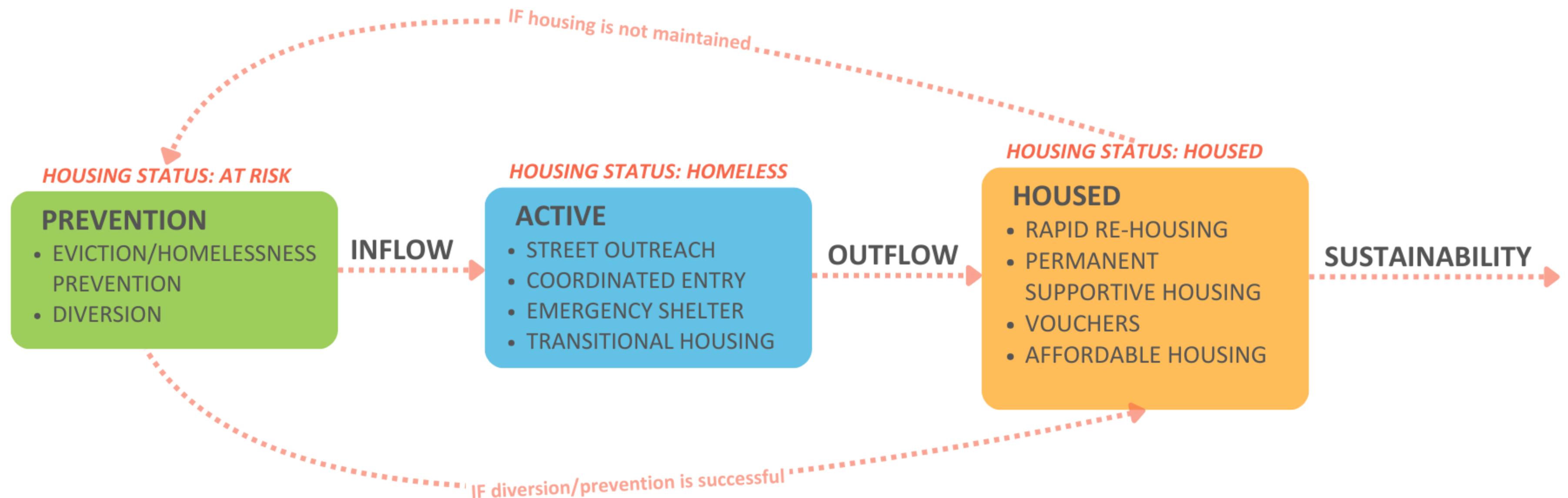
- Gina Sullivan, Blue Mountain Action Council
- Jordan Green, Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless
- Kristy Capps, Walla Walla Fire Department CARES Team
- Lydia Caudill, City of Walla Walla
- Meghan DeBolt, Blue Mountain Action Council
- Renée Rooker, Walla Walla Housing Authority
- Tim Meliah, Catholic Charities Walla Walla
- Anne-Marie Zell-Schwerin, YWCA (retired)
- Sam Jackle, DCH
- Becca Finkes, DCH

# Legislative Requirements & Role of the Plan



- Legislative Requirements
  - [RCW 43.185C.050](#) - Local Homeless Housing Plan Requirements
  - [RCW 43.185C.160](#) - County Homeless Housing Task Forces & Homeless Housing Plans
  - [RCW 43.185C.040](#) - State Plan & Local Guidance Requirements
- The plan is tool to guide decision making & foster accountability in the homeless crisis response system by:
  - Prioritizing use of limited funds/resources most effectively
  - Aligning investments and strategies with community values and priorities
  - Ensuring the local response to homelessness is coordinated, data driven, and adaptive to changes at the local, state, and federal level
  - Grounding decisions in the ultimate goal of reducing homelessness in Walla Walla County

# Homeless Housing Crisis Response System



# Planning Process

- DCH convened focus groups in Fall of 2024 to develop an understanding of community priorities, strengths, and challenges related to homelessness and housing
  - Homeless Housing Service Providers
  - Community Service Providers
  - Youth Action Board
  - Affordable Housing Collaborators
- The 5 Year Plan Workgroup drew on focus group findings to establish local priorities and actions included in the plan



## Focus Group Themes

- Case Management
- Staff Well-Being & Addressing Burnout
- Landlord Engagement & Relationships
- Challenges & Barriers Related to Other Systems
- After Care Support Services
- Behavioral Health Supports & Access
- Housing Stock & Affordability
- Scarcity of Resources

## Limitations of the Plan

- Homelessness is a complex issue that impacts individuals for many different reasons (economic instability, loss of family or community, domestic violence, and behavioral health challenges to name a few)
- Systemic structural pressures are primary contributors to higher rates of homelessness in communities (increasing housing costs largely driven by insufficient housing supply, continued divestment in a social safety net, racism)
- The homeless crisis response system is not sufficiently funded to appropriately address the scale of the homelessness and affordable housing crises we are facing in Walla Walla County, Washington State, and beyond
- **This plan alone will not solve homelessness** - will require larger scale system transformation in partnership with other sectors



# Homelessness in Walla Walla County

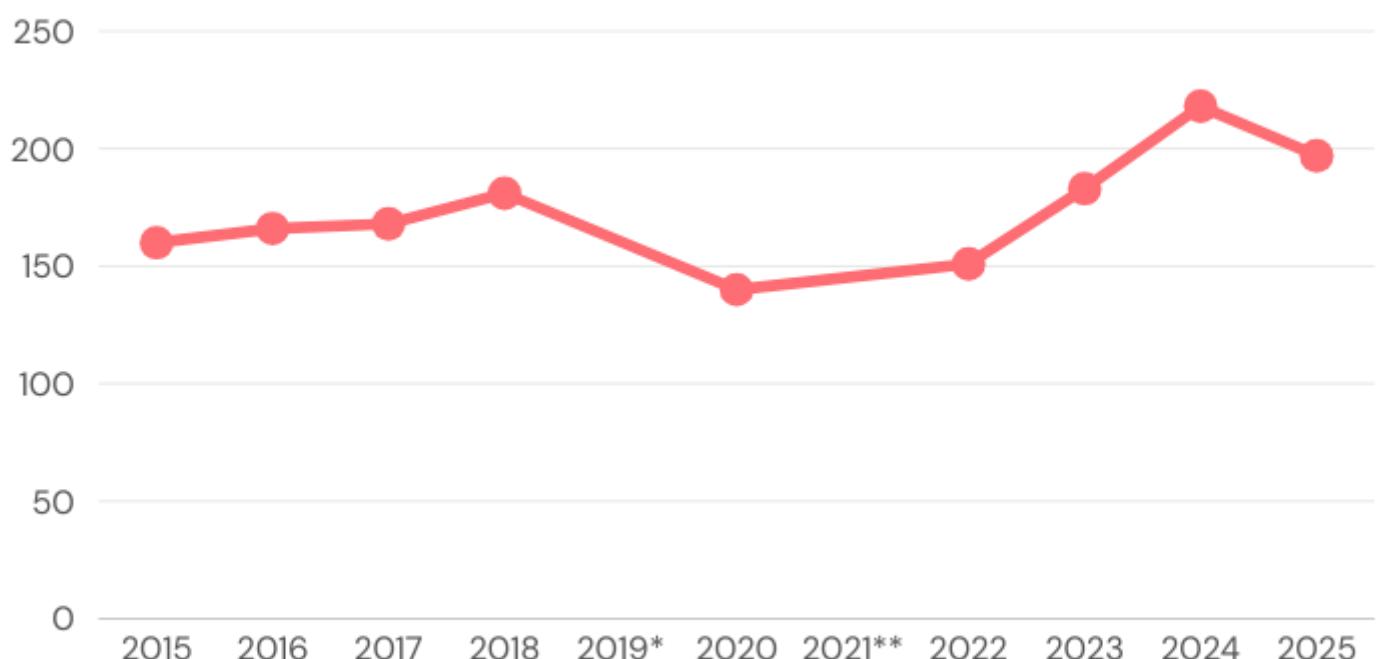
- Point in Time Count is a national one night count of all people experiencing homelessness in January required by HUD
  - Accounted for 197 people experiencing homelessness in Walla Walla County as of January 2025
  - PIT Count is helpful tool to review trends in homelessness year over year, but the total is widely understood to be an undercount
- WA Snapshot report compiles data from multiple state sources to supplement the PIT Count (HCA, DSHS, HMIS)
  - **Accounted for 1,127 people experiencing homelessness in Walla Walla County as of January 2025**
  - 1,613 people experiencing homelessness or housing instability in Walla Walla County as of January 2024

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness in Walla Walla County  
based on 2015-2025 Point In Time Count Data

Year	Number of People Experiencing Homelessness
2015	160
2016	166
2017	168
2018	181
2019	*
2020	140
2021	**
2022	151
2023	183
2024	218
2025	197

\*Total number was suppressed by Commerce because number of individuals in households with minors was less than 11

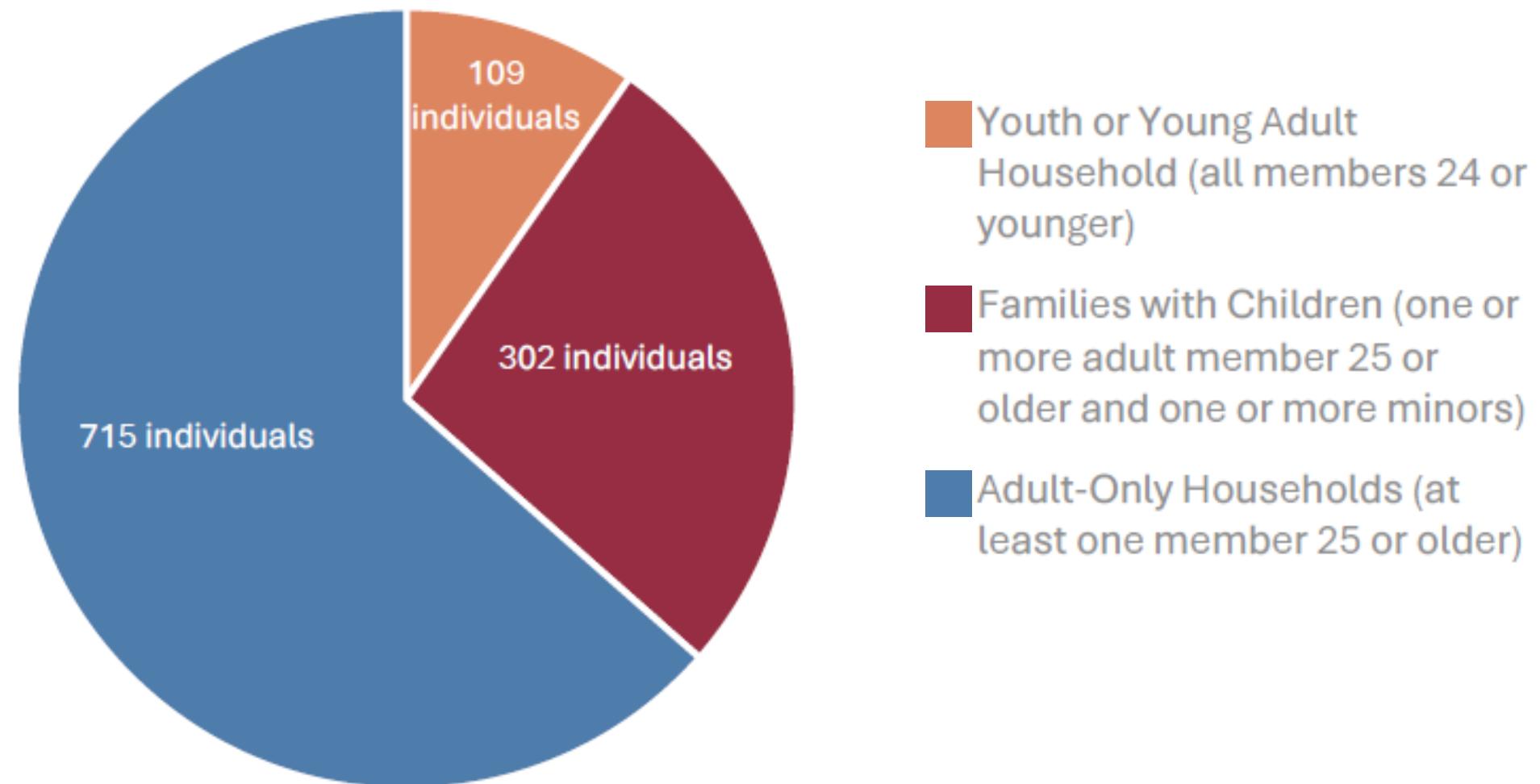
\*\*Unsheltered count did not take place in 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic



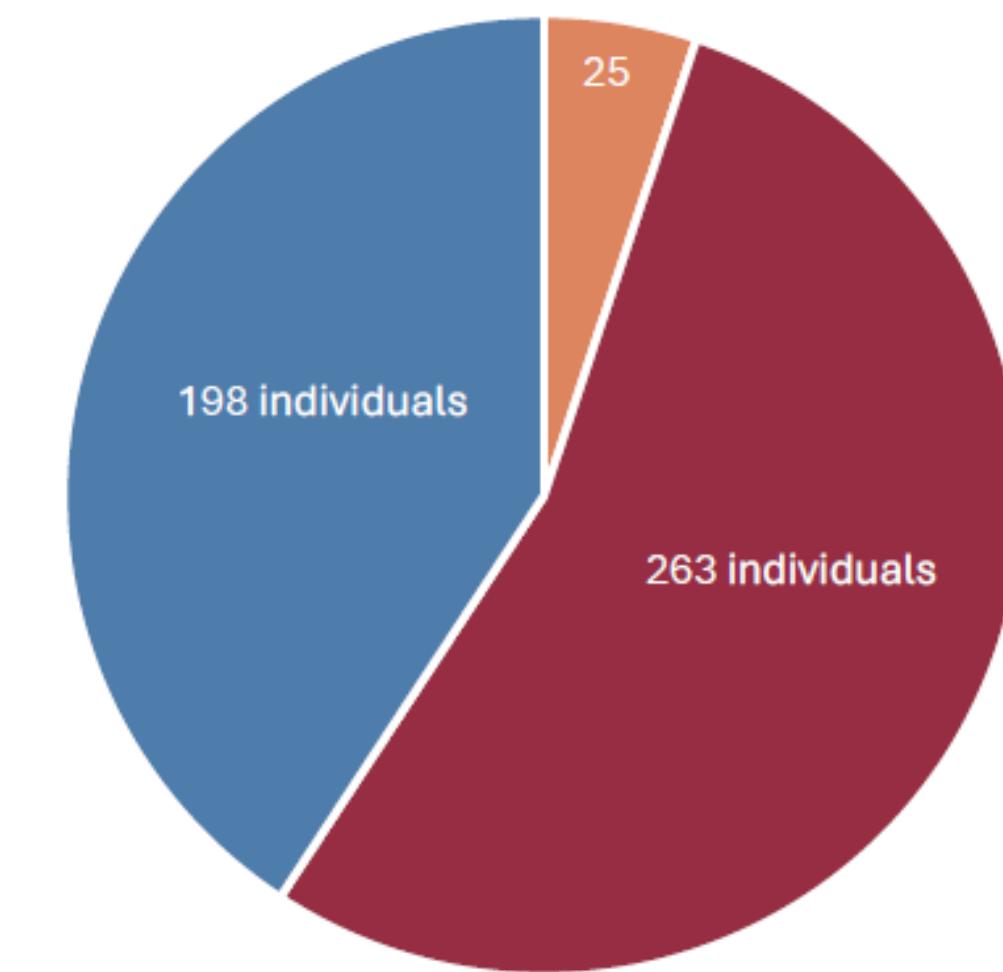
# Homelessness & Housing Instability by Household Type

Figure 3: Number of people experiencing homelessness or housing instability by household type Walla Walla County based on the January 2025 Commerce Snapshot Report

Number of People Experiencing *Homelessness*  
by Household Type in Walla Walla County



Number of People Experiencing *Housing Instability*  
by Household Type in Walla Walla County

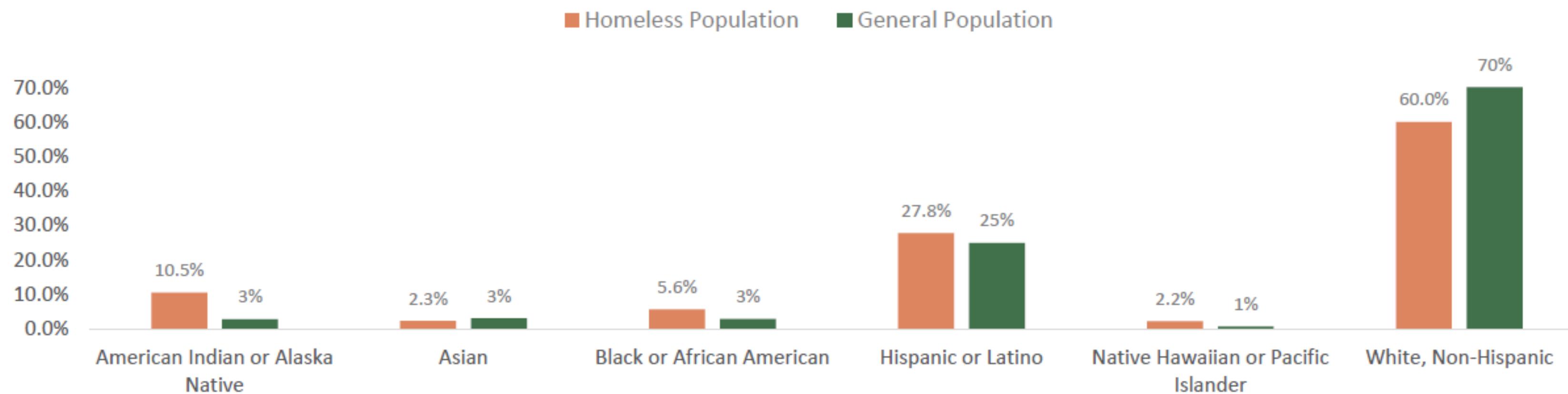




# Race/Ethnicity Breakdown of Homeless Population

Figure 4: Comparison of percentage of people experiencing homelessness and general population by race/ethnicity in Walla Walla County based on the January 2025 Commerce Snapshot Report and 2023 Census Bureau Estimates

Comparison of Percentage of People Experiencing Homelessness and General Population by Race/Ethnicity in Walla Walla County



## Housing Cost Burden in Walla Walla County

- Rising housing costs and low wages that have not kept up with the increasing cost of living put many more households in Walla Walla County at risk of homelessness
- Housing is considered affordable when a household pays no more than 30% of their gross income towards housing costs
  - A household is considered cost-burdened when it spends more than 30% of its income on housing costs including rent and utilities, and households that spend more than 50% of their income on housing costs are considered severely cost-burdened

**47.3%** of renter households in the Walla Walla metro area are cost-burdened (approximately 3,156 renters), and **21.2%** are severely cost-burdened. **22.1%** of total homeowners (approximately 3,362 homeowners) are cost-burdened.

# Walla Walla County Housing Cost Burden

- Fair Market Rents (FMRs) are calculated by HUD annually each Fiscal Year (FY) and offer an estimate of rent for a modest, decent-quality rental home (FMR is the 40th percentile of gross rents, meaning 40% of typical, non-substandard rental units occupied by recent movers in a local housing market have rents at or below the FMR)

Table 1: Wages Needed to Afford Fair Market Rent in Walla Walla County (Fiscal Year 2026)

<b>Unit Size</b>	<b>Walla Walla County Fair Market Rent (FMR) for FY 2025</b>	<b>Hourly wage necessary to afford FMR</b>	<b>Annual income needed to afford FMR</b>	<b>Walla Walla County minimum wage</b>	<b>Full time jobs needed at minimum wage to afford FMR</b>
Studio	\$1,074	\$20.65	\$42,960	\$16.66	1.2
One-Bedroom	\$1,181	\$22.71	\$47,240	\$16.66	1.4
Two-Bedroom	\$1,550	\$29.81	\$62,000	\$16.66	1.8
Three-Bedroom	\$2,118	\$40.73	\$84,720	\$16.66	2.4

# Walla Walla County Affordable Housing Supply Shortage

- Data from the 2023 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment indicates that Walla Walla County has a 3,790 unit shortage of affordable and available rental units for low-income households making 80% of the Median Family Income and below
  - 80% of the Median Family Income was \$68,250 for a household of four in 2023 when the assessment was published
- As of September 2025, the Fair Market Rent is upwards of 50% higher than the pre-pandemic Fair Market Rent in 2019
  - FMR for a one-bedroom unit in FY 2019 was \$735 which has increased to \$1,181 in FY 2026

Figure 6: Walla Walla County Shortage of Affordable and Available Units for Low-Income Households (2023 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment)



% of MFI	Households	Affordable & Available	Gap
0 - 30%	2,000	315	-1,685
0 - 50%	3,510	1,715	-1,795
0 - 80%	5,160	4,850	-310

## Survey of Fund Sources

- Overview of fund sources available to local government to implement the homeless housing plan (whether actual or potential)
  - Table 2 - local, state, and federal funding available to specifically support the homeless crisis response system
  - Table 3 - fund sources that provide tenant-based housing vouchers for low-income households
  - Table 4 - fund sources that support community needs, including but not limited to the homeless crisis response system
  - Table 5 - fund sources that Walla Walla County is either not eligible for or not collecting

# 5 Year Plan Vision, Mission, and Values

## Vision

Everyone experiencing homelessness and housing instability has access to housing and services that meet their needs.

## Mission

Reduce homelessness and housing instability in Walla Walla County by fostering community collaboration and using a continuous quality improvement framework.

## Values

- Lean Local: cultivating local expertise and partnerships.
- Collaboration: building partnerships across organizations and systems.
- Quality: promoting individualized and consistent service provision.
- Co-Design: creating system improvements in partnership with people with lived experience and service providers.
- Respect: investing in the homeless housing workforce.
- Evidence-Based: grounding decisions in data and best practices.
- Abundance: embracing an abundance mindset over scarcity.
- Innovation: fostering system change rather than just system maintenance.
- Resilience: building momentum for lasting change.

## 5 Year Plan Objectives to Reduce Homelessness

**Objective 1:** Promote an equitable, accountable, and transparent homeless crisis response system.

**Objective 2:** Strengthen the homeless service provider workforce.

**Objective 3:** Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible.

**Objective 4:** Prioritize assistance based on the greatest barriers to housing stability and the greatest risk of harm.

**Objective 5:** Seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs.

## Objective 1: Promote an equitable, accountable, and transparent homeless crisis response system

Action	Measure	Timeline	Lead Entity	Partners
<b>1.1</b> Develop local written standards with shared definitions, policies, and procedures for the homeless housing system	Walla Walla County Homeless Housing Continuum of Care written standards are published	2026-Q1	DCH & Council on Housing	Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>1.2</b> Publish Annual Homeless Housing Fund & Performance Report	Homeless Housing Fund & Performance Report published annually	Annual, starting 2026-Q4	DCH	Council on Housing, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>1.3</b> Improve HMIS data quality to increase utility for data-informed decision making	Reduced error rates on Commerce's WA BoS HMIS Data Quality dashboard	Ongoing, starting 2026-Q2	DCH	Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>1.4</b> Evaluate and respond to disparities in homeless housing system access and outcomes	Reduced race/ethnicity disparities on Commerce's WA BoS Equitable Access Dashboard and CHG Performance Tracker Dashboard	Ongoing, starting 2027-Q2	DCH	Council on Housing, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>1.5</b> Achieve a comprehensive, real-time, quality By-Name List of people experiencing homelessness in Walla Walla County	Fulfill initial data quality threshold requirements for the Built For Zero Single Adults Quality Data Scorecard Rubric	2026-Q3	DCH & BMAC	BFZ Core Team, Homeless Housing Service Providers

## Objective 2: Strengthen the homeless service provider workforce

Action	Measure	Timeline	Lead Entity	Partners
<b>2.1</b> Develop community training curriculum for all homeless housing staff (including onboarding, recertification, and staff well-being)	Agreement on local homeless housing system training curriculum for direct service staff and supervisors	2027-Q4	DCH	Homeless Housing Service Providers, Council on Housing
<b>2.2</b> Establish local best practice tools and strategies to make case management more effective while honoring client choice	Agreed upon best practice case management tools and strategies are identified in written standards and training curriculum	2027-Q4	DCH	Homeless Housing Service Providers, Council on Housing
<b>2.3</b> Add case management capacity along homeless housing continuum, including through co-case management with other systems	Increase number of local homeless housing case managers by prioritizing funding for operations; Clear referral pathways and procedures established for coordinated co-case management	2028-Q2	DCH & Council on Housing	Homeless Housing Service Providers, Community Service Providers
<b>2.4</b> Launch by-name list homeless case conferencing for single adults with participation from representatives across systems	By-name list homeless case conferencing is occurring on a consistent basis	2026-Q3	BFZ Core Team	DCH, Homeless Housing Service Providers, Council on Housing
<b>2.5</b> Expand and/or sustain community building opportunities for direct service providers	Improved connection points between service providers through community events and co-case management	2028-Q4	BFZ Core Team	DCH, Council on Housing

## Objective 3: Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible

Action	Measure	Timeline	Lead Entity	Partners
<b>3.1</b> Expand after care case management services offered to clients exiting homelessness	Inclusion of after care case management as identified best practice in written standards & training curriculum; Housing recidivism - decline in clients returning to homelessness following housing move-in	2029-Q2	DCH & Council on Housing	Homeless Housing Service Providers, BFZ Core Team
<b>3.2</b> Leverage partnerships with other systems that interact with at-risk households to promote diversion	Homelessness diversion training available to all homeless housing service providers and relevant community partners; Homelessness diversion resources available in the community are identified and clearly communicated to providers and at risk households	2027-Q1	BMAC & DCH	Homeless Housing Service Providers, Community Service Providers, Landlords & Property Management Companies
<b>3.3</b> Expand supports for clients exiting homelessness to better understand lease compliance, landlord expectations and communication, and tenant rights and responsibilities	Expand Ready to Rent course offering to all clients enrolled in Coordinated Entry; Best practices for housing onboarding process included in local written standards and training curriculum	2030-Q2	DCH & Council on Housing	Homeless Housing Service Providers, BFZ Core Team

## Objective 4: Prioritize assistance based on the greatest barriers to housing stability and the greatest risk of harm

Action	Measure	Timeline	Lead Entity	Partners
<b>4.1</b> Develop evaluation criteria to assess effectiveness of local coordinated entry system	Established evaluation criteria, cadence for continuous evaluation, and clear process for improvements	2029-Q3	CE Workgroup	DCH, BMAC, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>4.2</b> Expand projects accepting referrals from Coordinated Entry	Increase in projects accepting Coordinated Entry referrals	2030-Q1	CE Workgroup	DCH, BMAC, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>4.3</b> Develop homeless outreach policies & procedures, including evaluation processes to expand/improve access for underserved populations	Clear, agreed upon definitions and implementation of outreach policies and procedures that are coordinated across programs	2027-Q2	BFZ Core Team	DCH, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>4.4</b> Improve the quality of Housing First and low-barrier philosophies in local homeless housing projects	Clear, agreed upon definitions, policies, and procedures for Housing First and low-barrier projects outlined in local written standards; Fidelity review for homeless housing projects to identify areas for improvement	2029-Q1	DCH	Council on Housing, Homeless Housing Service Providers

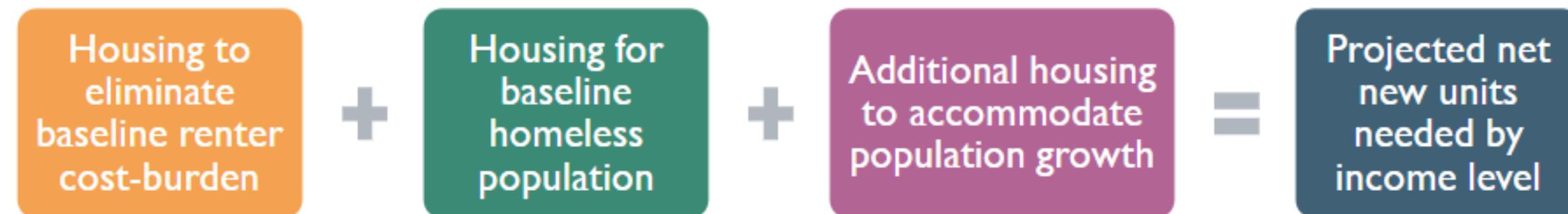
## Objective 5: Seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs

Action	Measure	Timeline	Lead Entity	Partners
<b>5.1</b> Launch system-wide landlord collaborative to build & strengthen relationships and maximize access to existing housing supply	Established cadence for meeting, clear goals and outline for discussion topics	2028-Q2	BMAC, WWHA	Landlords & Property Management Companies, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>5.2</b> Enhance permanent supportive housing, including existing and new projects	Launch local Supportive Housing Learning Collab to improve alignment with best practices and strategize on leveraging funds for PSH (existing and new projects)	2029-Q1	DCH	Permanent Supportive Housing Providers, Council on Housing
<b>5.3</b> Increase local funding to subsidize high development/preservation costs for projected housing needs (specifically units affordable to households making 0-80% AMI)	Release RFA for Fund 162 to provide local match dollars for projects to be awarded based on local prioritization criteria for capital projects; Continue to seek and advocate for revenue creation such as HB 1590	2028-Q1	Council on Housing	DCH, Affordable Housing Developers
<b>5.4</b> Increase coordination across local affordable housing development collaborators	Develop a local affordable housing project pipeline for strategic investment to increase Walla Walla County's competitiveness for state funds	2028-Q1	Council on Housing	DCH, Affordable Housing Developers, Housing Funders/Investors, City/County Planners

# Planning for Housing

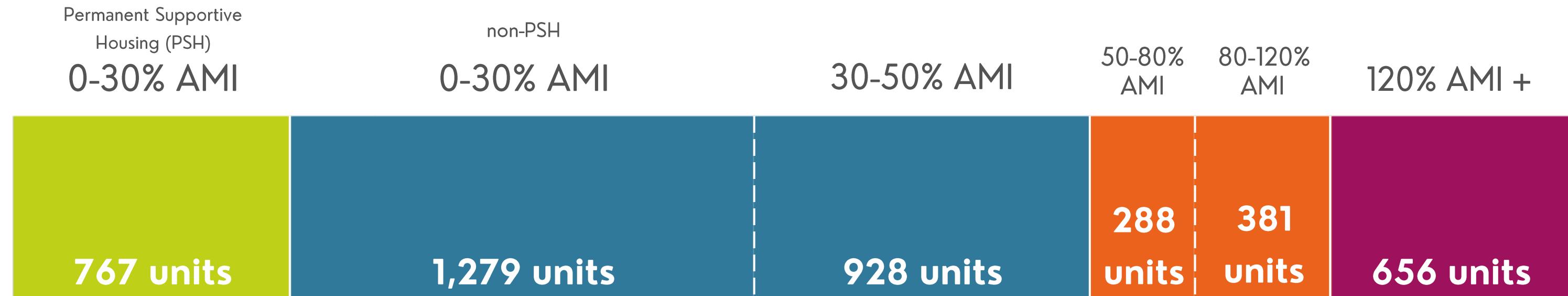
- Planning for sufficient affordable housing is essential to fulfill the vision that everyone experiencing homelessness and housing instability has access to the housing and services that meets their needs
- This work connects closely with comprehensive planning efforts guided by the Growth Management Act (GMA)
  - HB 1220 (2021) amended the GMA to require that local governments “plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments”
  - Commerce created the Housing All Planning Tool to project county-level housing needs by income level (the total projected need is allocated across each jurisdiction in the county)

## Exhibit 20. Overview of methodology to project net new housing needs by income level



# Walla Walla County 2046 Housing Projections

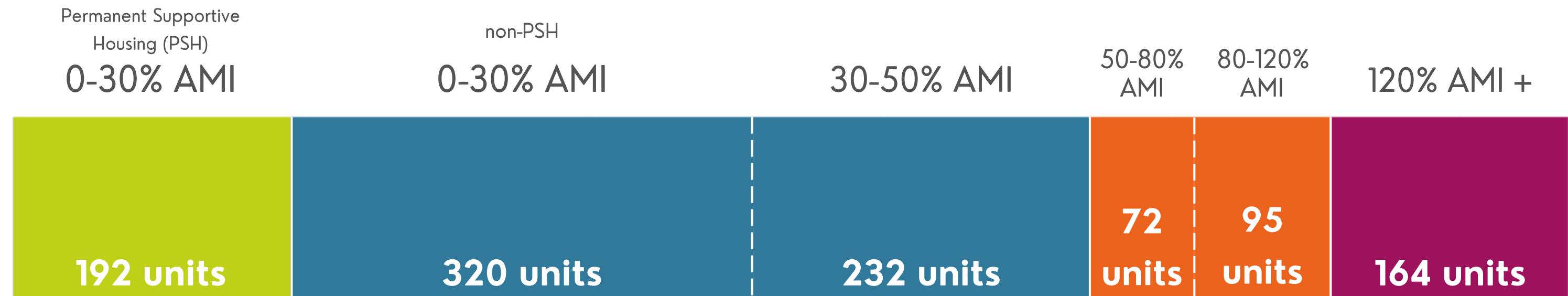
Per Commerce's Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) assuming 2046 projected population of 73,112 (medium/high growth)



# Walla Walla County 2026-2031 Housing Projections

Per Commerce's Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) assuming 2046 projected population of 73,112 (medium/high growth)

Walla Walla County is projected to need zero additional emergency housing beds.



# Prioritization Criteria of Homeless Housing Capital Projects

## Guiding Principles:

- Consistency with local plans and regulations (including comprehensive plans, countywide planning policies, and state/local laws)
- Consideration of compatible use, appropriate infrastructure, and necessary amenities
- Alignment with projected housing needs established in each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan

## Prioritization Criteria:

- Project Readiness
- Project Financing
- Operations, Maintenance, and Services Budget
- Size & Development Costs
- Creation of New Units
- Affordability
- Housing Service Model
- Populations Served
- Coordinated Entry
- Collaboration
- By & For
- Applicant Experience

## Next Steps

- Implementation of the plan will be led by DCH and the Council on Housing in close partnership with homeless housing service providers
- The 5 Year Plan workgroup will continue to meet 2-4 times per year throughout the five year timeframe of the plan to evaluate and monitor progress
- Annual Report will be brought forward to the Council on Housing and Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners each December to update progress made and any significant changes
- The plan will be used to determine priority funding areas for the Homeless & Housing Assistance Request for Applications (RFA) release every two years





WALLA WALLA COUNTY  
**HOMELESS HOUSING  
COMMUNITY FORUM**

Are you interested in learning about why homelessness and housing insecurity persists, as well as local responses to the issue? Register to join one or both days of Walla Walla County's 2025 Homeless Housing Community Forum with special guest, Gregg Colburn, co-author of *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*!

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2025 • 6:00PM - 7:30PM**

WHITMAN CAMPUS, OLIN HALL AUDITORIUM (ROOM 138)  
920 E ISAACS, WALLA WALLA, WA

---

Evening presentation by Gregg Colburn, co-author of *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*, followed by Q&A and service provider panel discussion.

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2025 • 9:00AM - 12:00PM**

WALLA WALLA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH  
314 W MAIN ST, WALLA WALLA, WA 99362

---

**9:00 AM:** Morning presentation by Gregg Colburn, co-author of *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*, followed by Q&A and service provider panel discussion (repeat from 9/30)

**10:30 AM:** Overview of Walla Walla County's draft 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan with opportunity to provide feedback



PLEASE RSVP USING THE QR CODE  
OR LINK BELOW:

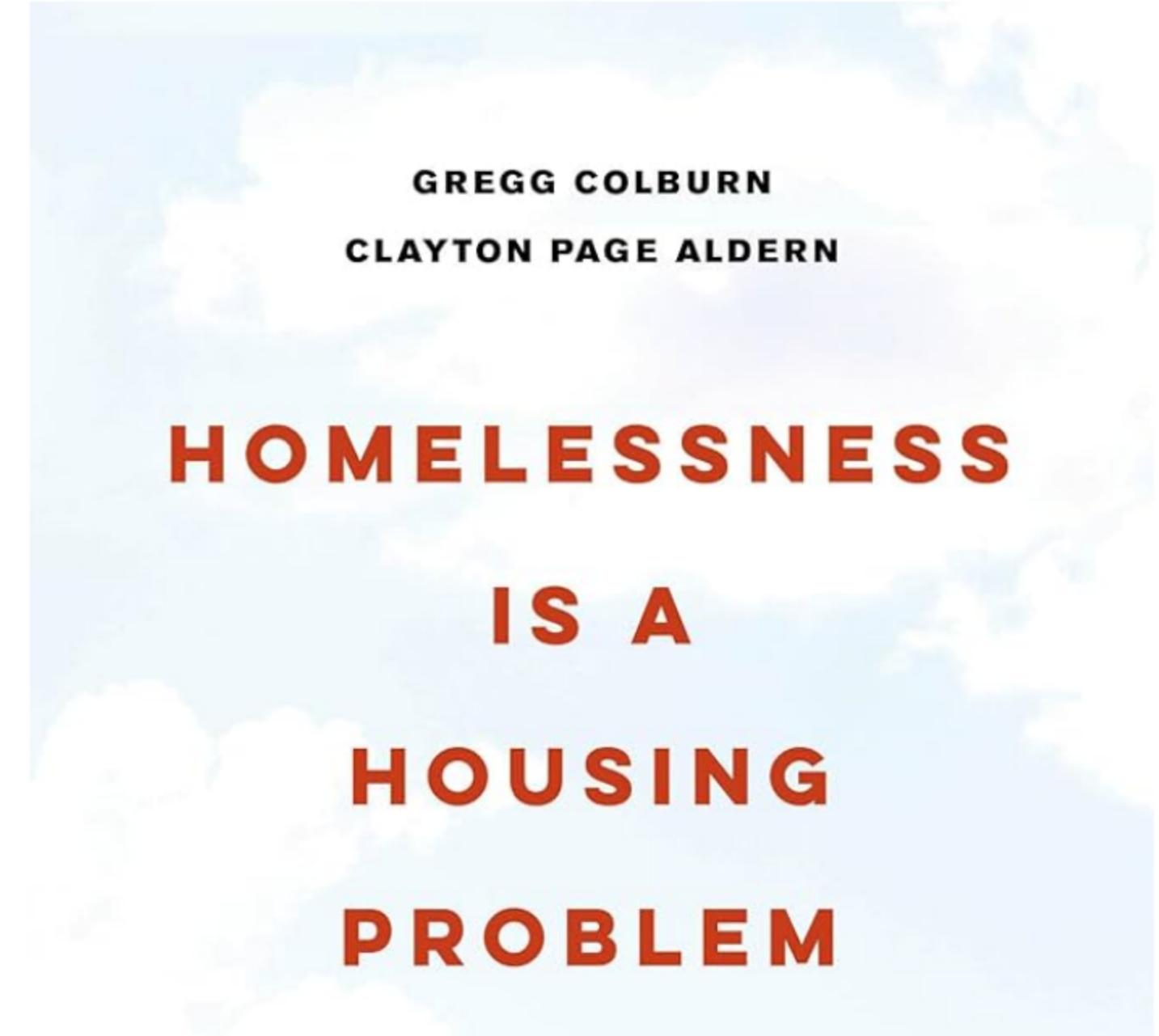
[https://wwcowagov.jotform.com/  
252385417856063](https://wwcowagov.jotform.com/252385417856063)

Reach out to Rebecca Finkes with questions: [r.finkes@wwcowa.gov](mailto:r.finkes@wwcowa.gov)



**GREGG COLBURN**

**CLAYTON PAGE ALDERN**



**HOMELESSNESS  
IS A  
HOUSING  
PROBLEM**

**HOW STRUCTURAL FACTORS  
EXPLAIN U.S. PATTERNS**





# Questions?

**Sam Jackle, Human Services Division Manager**

[sjackle@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:sjackle@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

(509) 730-7064

**Becca Finkes, Senior Homeless Housing Coordinator**

[rfinkes@co.walla-walla.wa.us](mailto:rfinkes@co.walla-walla.wa.us)

(509) 524-2634

The Gantt chart illustrates the timeline and dependencies for 15 actions across four categories. The timeline spans from Q1-2026 to Q4-2030. Actions are represented by colored bars, with purple indicating active phases and grey indicating inactive phases. Dependencies are shown as horizontal lines connecting the end of one action to the start of another.

**Legend:**

- Active Phase:** Purple
- Inactive Phase:** Grey
- Dependency:** Horizontal line connecting the end of one action to the start of another

**Actions and Timeline:**

- Foundation/Infrastructure:**
  - 1.1**: Q1-2026 to Q2-2026
  - 4.3**: Q2-2026 to Q3-2026
  - 1.3**: Q3-2026 to Q4-2026
  - 1.5**: Q4-2026 to Q1-2027
  - 1.2**: Q1-2027 to Q2-2027
  - 2.4**: Q2-2027 to Q3-2027
  - 3.2**: Q3-2027 to Q4-2027
  - 1.4**: Q4-2027 to Q1-2028
  - 2.1**: Q1-2028 to Q2-2028
  - 2.2**: Q2-2028 to Q3-2028
  - 2.3**: Q3-2028 to Q4-2028
  - 3.1**: Q4-2028 to Q1-2029
- Enhanced Coordination:**
  - 5.3**: Q1-2029 to Q2-2029
  - 5.4**: Q2-2029 to Q3-2029
  - 5.1**: Q3-2029 to Q4-2029
  - 2.5**: Q4-2029 to Q1-2030
  - 4.4**: Q1-2030 to Q2-2030
  - 5.2**: Q2-2030 to Q3-2030
  - 4.1**: Q3-2030 to Q4-2030
  - 4.2**: Q4-2030 to Q1-2031
  - 3.3**: Q1-2031 to Q2-2031
- Case Management:**
  - 1.1**: Q1-2026 to Q2-2026
  - 4.3**: Q2-2026 to Q3-2026
  - 1.3**: Q3-2026 to Q4-2026
  - 1.5**: Q4-2026 to Q1-2027
  - 1.2**: Q1-2027 to Q2-2027
  - 2.4**: Q2-2027 to Q3-2027
  - 3.2**: Q3-2027 to Q4-2027
  - 1.4**: Q4-2027 to Q1-2028
  - 2.1**: Q1-2028 to Q2-2028
  - 2.2**: Q2-2028 to Q3-2028
  - 2.3**: Q3-2028 to Q4-2028
  - 3.1**: Q4-2028 to Q1-2029
  - 5.3**: Q1-2029 to Q2-2029
  - 5.4**: Q2-2029 to Q3-2029
  - 5.1**: Q3-2029 to Q4-2029
  - 2.5**: Q4-2029 to Q1-2030
  - 4.4**: Q1-2030 to Q2-2030
  - 5.2**: Q2-2030 to Q3-2030
  - 4.1**: Q3-2030 to Q4-2030
  - 4.2**: Q4-2030 to Q1-2031
  - 3.3**: Q1-2031 to Q2-2031
- Housing Supply:**
  - 1.1**: Q1-2026 to Q2-2026
  - 4.3**: Q2-2026 to Q3-2026
  - 1.3**: Q3-2026 to Q4-2026
  - 1.5**: Q4-2026 to Q1-2027
  - 1.2**: Q1-2027 to Q2-2027
  - 2.4**: Q2-2027 to Q3-2027
  - 3.2**: Q3-2027 to Q4-2027
  - 1.4**: Q4-2027 to Q1-2028
  - 2.1**: Q1-2028 to Q2-2028
  - 2.2**: Q2-2028 to Q3-2028
  - 2.3**: Q3-2028 to Q4-2028
  - 3.1**: Q4-2028 to Q1-2029
  - 5.3**: Q1-2029 to Q2-2029
  - 5.4**: Q2-2029 to Q3-2029
  - 5.1**: Q3-2029 to Q4-2029
  - 2.5**: Q4-2029 to Q1-2030
  - 4.4**: Q1-2030 to Q2-2030
  - 5.2**: Q2-2030 to Q3-2030
  - 4.1**: Q3-2030 to Q4-2030
  - 4.2**: Q4-2030 to Q1-2031
  - 3.3**: Q1-2031 to Q2-2031



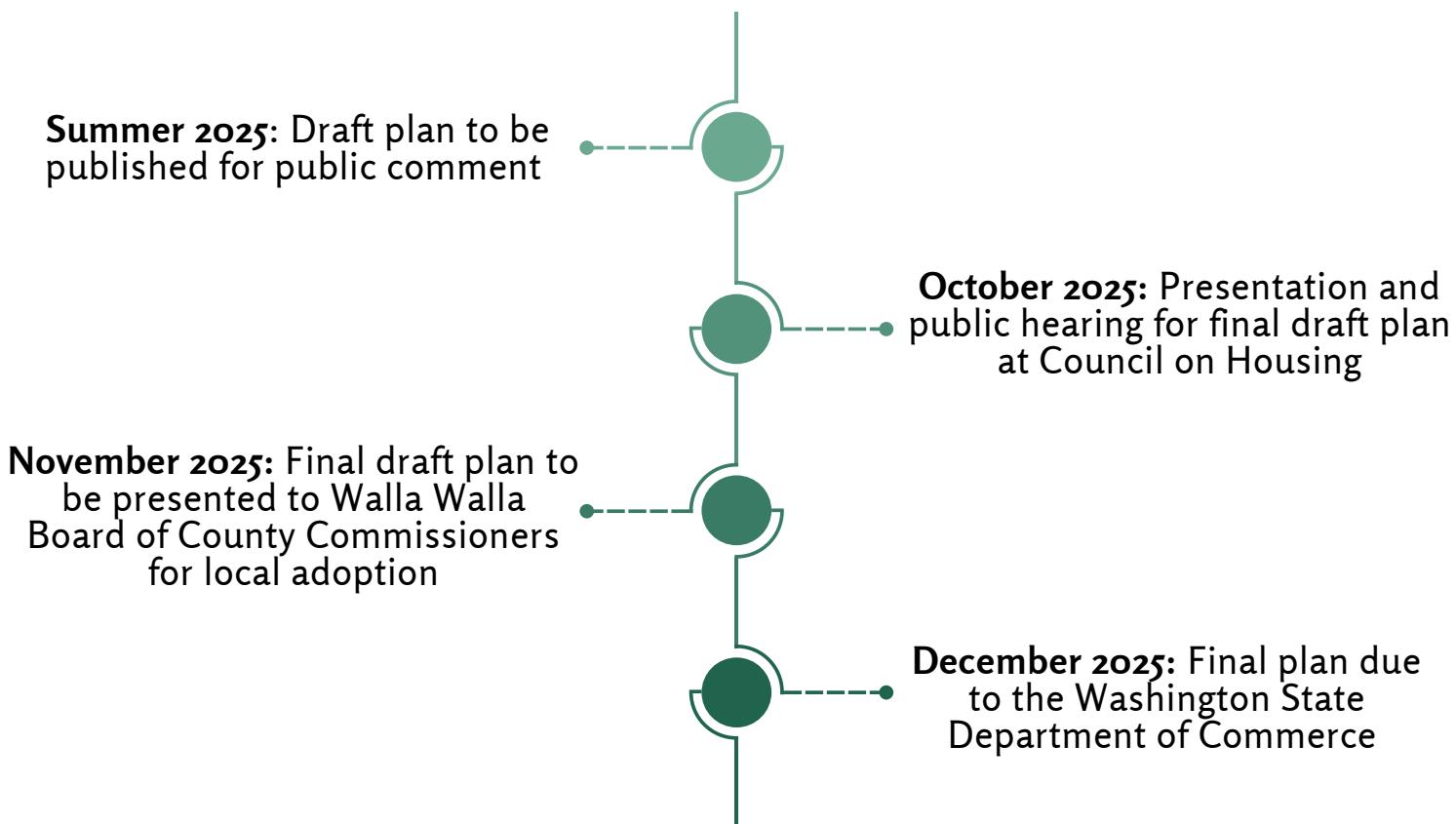
2025-2030  
**Walla Walla County  
Homeless Housing Plan**

## Notice of Development of the 2025-2030 Local Homeless Housing Plan

The Walla Walla County Department of Community Health is beginning development of the 2025-2030 Walla Walla County Homeless Housing Plan. The 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan will act as a roadmap to guide community decisions about funding and services related to homeless housing assistance and programs for the period of 2025 through 2030.

The local plan must provide goals, strategies/activities, performance measures, and timelines to reduce homelessness within the entire county in alignment with state homeless housing efforts. The state's Homeless Housing Strategic Plan and Local Plan Guidance can be found on [Commerce's website](#).

### Projected 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan Timeline:



*The timeline above is subject to change, but the final homeless housing plan is due to the Washington State Department of Commerce no later than December 2025.*



# WALLA WALLA COUNTY HOMELESS HOUSING COMMUNITY FORUM

Are you interested in learning about why homelessness and housing insecurity persists, as well as local responses to the issue? Register to join one or both days of Walla Walla County's 2025 Homeless Housing Community Forum with special guest, Gregg Colburn, co-author of *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*!

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2025 • 6:00PM - 7:30PM**

**WHITMAN CAMPUS, OLIN HALL AUDITORIUM (ROOM 138)  
920 E ISAACS, WALLA WALLA, WA**

Evening presentation by Gregg Colburn, co-author of *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*, followed by Q&A and service provider panel discussion.

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2025 • 9:00AM - 12:00PM**

**WALLA WALLA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH  
314 W MAIN ST, WALLA WALLA, WA 99362**

**9:00 AM:** Morning presentation by Gregg Colburn, co-author of *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*, followed by Q&A and service provider panel discussion (repeat from 9/30)

**10:30 AM:** Overview of Walla Walla County's draft 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan with opportunity to provide feedback



**PLEASE RSVP USING THE QR CODE  
OR LINK BELOW:**

**[https://wwcowagov.jotform.com/  
252385417856063](https://wwcowagov.jotform.com/252385417856063)**



Walla Walla County  
Department of  
Community Health

Reach out to Rebecca Finkes with questions: [rfinkes@wwcowa.gov](mailto:rfinkes@wwcowa.gov)



# Walla Walla County

## 2026-2030 Homeless Housing Plan

# Acknowledgments

Thank you to the many individuals and organizations that offered input and contributed to the development of this plan.

## **Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners**

Bertha Clayton, District 1

Todd Kimball, District 2

Gunner Fulmer, District 3

## **Walla Walla County Department of Community Health**

Sam Jackle, Human Services Division Manager

Rebecca Finkes, Senior Homeless Housing Coordinator

## **5 Year Plan Focus Group Participants**

Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC)

Catholic Charities Walla Walla

Christian Aid Center

City of Walla Walla

Common Roots Housing Trust

Community Council

Comprehensive Healthcare

Joe's Place

Pioneer United Methodist Church

Port of Walla Walla

STAR Project

Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless

Walla Walla County Department of Community Development

Walla Walla County Department of Community Health

Walla Walla Housing Authority

Walla Walla Public Schools

Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce

Youth Action Board Members

## **5 Year Plan Workgroup**

Gina Sullivan, Blue Mountain Action Council

Jordan Green, Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless

Kristy Capps, Walla Walla Fire Department CARES Team

Lydia Caudill, City of Walla Walla

Meghan DeBolt, Blue Mountain Action Council

Renée Rooker, Walla Walla Housing Authority

Tim Meliah, Catholic Charities Walla Walla

Anne-Marie Zell-Schwerin, YWCA

## **Walla Walla Council on Housing**

Elizabeth Chamberlain, City of Walla Walla (Chair)

Jordan Green, Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless (Co-Chair)

Bertha Clayton, Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners

Brooke Frazier, Realtor

Chad Hickox, Walla Walla Community College

Danielle Garbe Reser, Blue Mountain Action Council

Jay Potts, City of Prescott

Jerry Cummins, Veterans Representative

Kip Kelly, Port Commissioner

Mike Rizzitiello, City of College Place

Paul Mitchell, Faith-Based Representative

Randy Hinchliffe, City of Waitsburg

Renée Rooker, Walla Walla Housing Authority

Richard Best, Aging and Long Term Care Advisory Council

Tim Meliah, Catholic Charities Walla Walla

Timothy Barrett, Transportation Representative

*This plan is dedicated to the individuals and families that have previously and continue to experience homelessness and housing instability in Walla Walla County.*

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .....	0
5 Year Plan Vision, Mission, and Values .....	4
Introduction .....	5
Legislative Requirements & Role of The 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan .....	5
Planning Process .....	7
Limitations of the 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan .....	8
Current Conditions and Resources .....	9
Homelessness and Housing Instability in Walla Walla County .....	9
Housing Cost Burden & Affordable Housing Shortage in Walla Walla County .....	12
Estimates of Service Levels .....	15
Survey of Fund Sources .....	17
Objectives and Activities to Reduce Homelessness .....	21
Objective 1: Promote an equitable, accountable, and transparent homeless crisis response system .....	23
Objective 2: Strengthen the homeless service provider workforce .....	24
Objective 3: Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible .....	25
Objective 4: Prioritize assistance based on the greatest barriers to housing stability and the greatest risk of harm .....	26
Objective 5: Seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs .....	27
Planning for Affordable Housing .....	29
Prioritization Criteria of Homeless Housing Capital Projects .....	32
Next Steps .....	35
Implementation & Quarterly Review .....	35
Annual Report .....	35
Funding Priorities & Decisions .....	35
Figures and Tables .....	37
Appendices .....	38
Appendix A: Key Terms/Acronyms .....	38
Appendix B: Plan Development Process .....	45
Appendix C: Homeless Housing Focus Groups Summary .....	48
Appendix D: Estimates of Service Levels .....	56

DRAFT

*This plan was adopted by the Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners on XX/XX/2025.*

# 5 Year Plan Vision, Mission, and Values

A vision statement is what our community aspires to achieve in the long run. The mission identifies our commitment to how we work towards the vision. Values are the principles that guide the ethos of our community's work; these are the core standards we seek to uphold as we carry out our mission and vision.

## Vision

Everyone experiencing homelessness and housing instability has access to housing and services that meet their needs.

## Mission

Reduce homelessness and housing instability in Walla Walla County by fostering community collaboration and using a continuous quality improvement framework.

## Values

**Lean Local:** cultivating local expertise and partnerships.

**Collaboration:** building partnerships across organizations and systems.

**Quality:** promoting individualized and consistent service provision.

**Co-Design:** creating system improvements in partnership with people with lived experience and service providers.

**Respect:** investing in the homeless housing workforce.

**Evidence-Based:** grounding decisions in data and best practices.

**Abundance:** embracing an abundance mindset over scarcity.

**Innovation:** fostering system change rather than just system maintenance.

**Resilience:** building momentum for lasting change.

# Introduction

Homelessness is a persistent crisis impacting communities throughout Washington State and beyond. People experiencing homelessness are deprived of the basic human right of a safe space to not only sleep at night, but also somewhere to recover from illness, shower and use the bathroom, retreat from extreme weather, store their belongings, cook a warm meal, and convene with family, friends, and pets. Access to affordable and stable housing is one of the most significant health-related social needs (HRSN). HRSNs affect an individual's ability to maintain their health and well-being, and those without their needs met are at risk for worse health outcomes and increased healthcare use.<sup>1</sup> When people do not have a safe space to call home, it also impacts the community at large by straining emergency response, social services, and healthcare systems. Safe and decent housing is a fundamental human need that all of us deserve access to as well as a critical public health intervention.

Walla Walla County's 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan is a tool to guide our community in making decisions about how we prioritize the use of limited funding and resources most effectively to reduce homelessness. This plan lays the foundation for the ways our community will collaborate, allocate resources, and build accountability in the homeless crisis response system through coordinated and strategic action.

## Legislative Requirements & Role of The 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan

Washington state law requires that each county's homeless housing task force develop and recommend to its local government legislative authority a five-year local homeless housing plan for its jurisdictional area (RCW 43.185C.050, RCW 43.185C.160). The local plan must be consistent with local plan guidance issued by the Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce). Commerce published guidance for the planning period of 2025-2030 in October 2024 to support alignment between state and local homeless housing efforts. The local plan must provide goals, strategies/activities, performance measures and timelines to eliminate homelessness within the entire county.

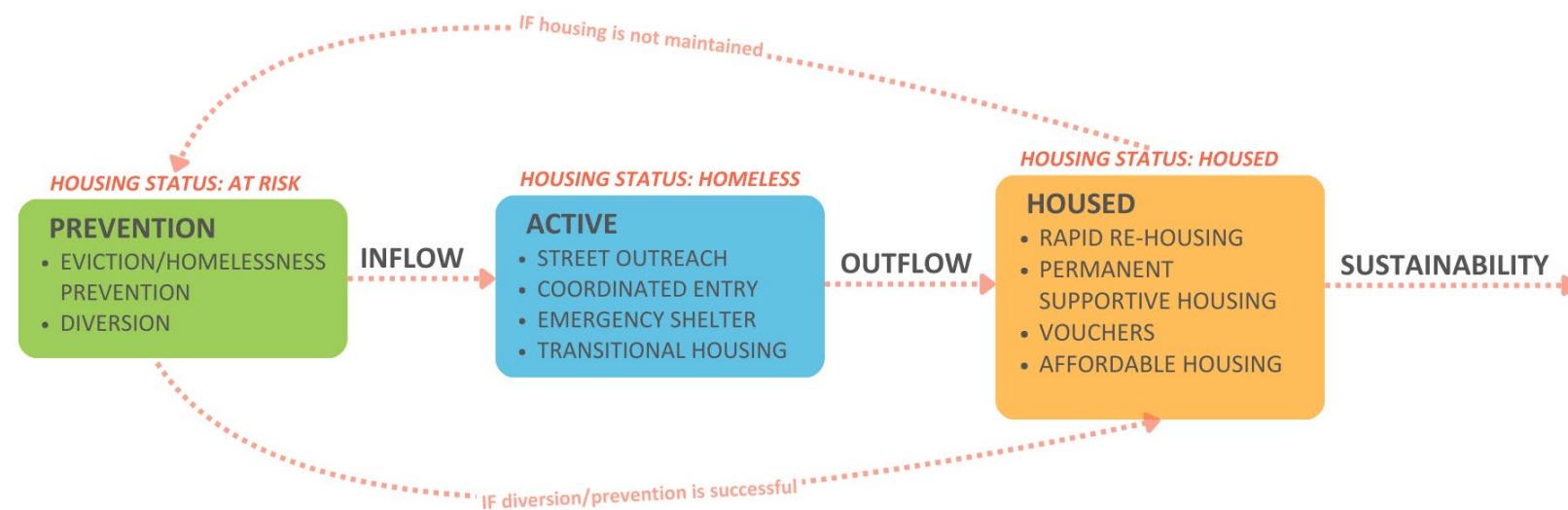
The scope of this plan is primarily focused on Walla Walla County's homeless housing crisis response system which is the coordinated system of services that our community provides to support households experiencing homelessness and housing

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Social Drivers of Health and Health-Related Social Needs (<https://www.cms.gov/priorities/innovation/key-concepts/social-drivers-health-and-health-related-social-needs>)

instability to access and maintain housing. Figure 1 provides a simplified overview of the continuum of programs and services available to prevent homelessness for households that are at risk, provide support to households that are homeless, and connect households with long-term affordable housing with or without supportive services depending on their needs. The definition of each intervention listed in Figure 1 can be found in the Appendices. These services are provided by several organizations in Walla Walla County that hold the shared goal of quickly identifying and connecting households with sustainable housing solutions that meet their individualized needs and goals.

Figure 1: Overview of how households flow through the homeless crisis response system



Beyond legislative requirements, system-level planning is critical to foster a responsive and resilient homeless crisis response system that is accountable to community needs as they change over time. The 5 Year Plan strives to ensure local response to homelessness is coordinated, data driven, and adaptive to changes at the local, state, and federal level.

## Planning Process

The 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan is grounded in valuable community insight. The Walla Walla County Department of Community Health convened a series of focus groups in Fall of 2024 with direct service providers, people experiencing homelessness, affordable housing collaborators, and community partners to develop an understanding of community priorities, strengths, and challenges related to homelessness and housing. During these community conversations, focus group participants were invited to provide feedback on existing strategies and homeless housing interventions, as well as share their ideas for how to improve the homeless housing system and reduce homelessness. The Homeless Housing Focus Group Summary (Appendix C) details the focus group findings. The following themes were identified as community priorities:

- Case Management
- Staff Well-Being & Addressing Burnout
- Landlord Engagement & Relationships
- Challenges & Barriers Related to Other Systems
- After Care Support Services
- Behavioral Health Supports & Access
- Housing Stock & Affordability

It is important to note that these themes are connected by an overarching theme of scarcity of the resources necessary to reduce homelessness and housing instability. Focus group participants acknowledged that there would need to be significant increases in both funding and staff capacity allocated towards solutions to make meaningful progress in addressing the barriers and challenges identified.

The development of the plan has been led by the 5 Year Plan workgroup, a committee of the Council on Housing which serves as the local homeless housing task force. The workgroup is composed of Walla Walla County Department of Community Health (DCH) staff, homeless housing system leadership, and local jurisdiction representation. The 5 Year Plan workgroup drew on the focus group findings to establish the local priorities and actions included in this plan. Appendix B summarizes the plan development and community engagement process.

## Limitations of the 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan

Homelessness impacts individuals for a multitude of reasons, including, but not limited to, economic instability, loss of family or community, domestic violence, and behavioral health challenges. While there are countless individualized reasons why someone may be at heightened risk of experiencing homelessness, there are systemic structural pressures that act as primary contributors to higher rates of homelessness for communities. These structural pressures include increasing housing costs largely driven by insufficient housing supply as well as the continued divestment in a social safety net intended to ameliorate harmful impacts of poverty, social exclusion, and the ongoing and legacy impacts of systemic racism.

The intersectionality and systemic nature of these structural pressures mean that no single approach or partner can fully resolve homelessness on its own. While this plan acknowledges the importance of coordination with other systems, it does not have the authority or power to transform those systems directly. Instead, this plan serves as a critical piece of the larger puzzle. The plan is intended to be implemented in partnership with other public and private sectors at the local, state, and federal level to support comprehensive, long-term solutions to reduce homelessness through larger scale system transformation that addresses structural pressures causing harm.

It is also important to note that the homeless crisis response system is not sufficiently funded to appropriately address the scale of the homelessness and affordable housing crises we are facing in Walla Walla County, Washington State, and beyond. Without substantial increases in investments for social services and affordable housing, the capacity to carry out the strategies and partnerships needed to end homelessness will continue to be strained.

### READING RECOMMENDATIONS:

Refer to the following books for more information on the complexities of homelessness and housing in the United States:

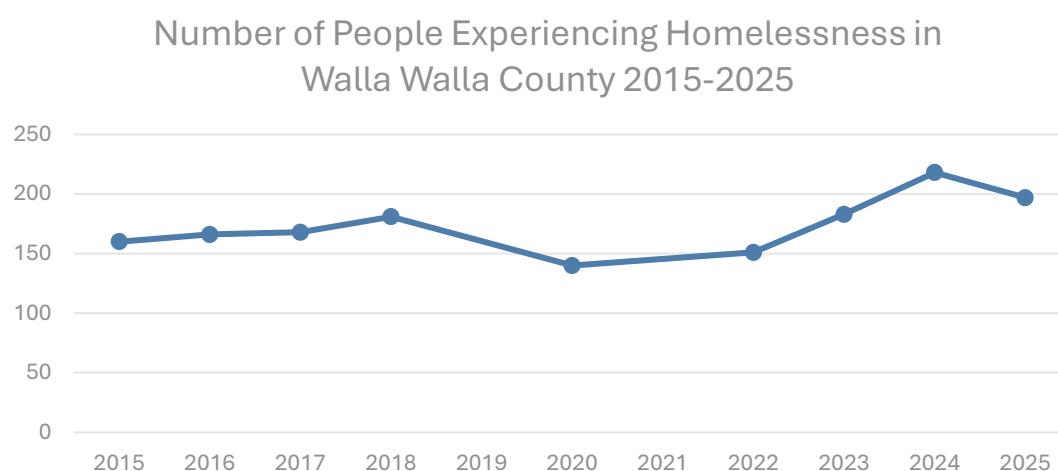
- *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, Matthew Desmond
- *Homelessness is a Housing Problem: How Structural Factors Explain U.S. Patterns*, Clayton Page Aldern and Gregg Colburn
- *Poverty, By America*, Matthew Desmond
- *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, Richard Rothstein

# Current Conditions and Resources

## Homelessness and Housing Instability in Walla Walla County

The Annual Point in Time (PIT) Count takes place nationwide in January to capture a snapshot of people experiencing homelessness across the country as required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). PIT Count data shows that homelessness has increased in Walla Walla County in recent years, peaking in 2024 with 218 people experiencing homelessness on the night of January 25th, 2024, a 19% increase from 2023.

Figure 2: Number of People Experiencing Homelessness in Walla Walla County based on 2015-2025 Point In Time Count Data



Year	Number of People Experiencing Homelessness
2015	160
2016	166
2017	168
2018	181
2019	*
2020	140
2021	**
2022	151
2023	183
2024	218
2025	197

\*Total number was suppressed by Commerce because number of individuals in households with minors was less than 11

\*\*Unsheltered count did not take place in 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic

It is important to note that the PIT Count is widely understood to be an undercount.<sup>2</sup> The methodology is reliant on volunteers identifying and engaging with people who are visibly experiencing homelessness throughout the county on one day. This results

<sup>2</sup> National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, Don't Count on It: How the HUD Point-in-Time County Underestimates the Homelessness Crisis in America (<https://homelesslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/HUD-PIT-report2017.pdf>)

in data that does not accurately reflect the total number of people experiencing homelessness in our community throughout the year. A more comprehensive source of data is the Washington State Department of Commerce Snapshot of Homelessness Report<sup>3</sup> which compiles information on housing status from Provider One (P1, Medicaid claims system administered by the Washington State Healthcare Authority), the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES, data system managed by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services), and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to provide population estimates of people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. **The Snapshot Report accounted for 1,127 people experiencing homelessness (staying in an emergency shelter or unsheltered) in Walla Walla County as of January 2025.** The number increases to 1,613 individuals when including people who are at risk of homelessness, or “couch surfing” or “doubled up” which is considered a form of housing instability rather than homelessness according to definitions established by Commerce and HUD.

Figures 2 and 3 provide additional information about the demographics of people experiencing homelessness and housing instability in Walla Walla County as of January 2025 based on data from the Commerce Snapshot Report. Most households experiencing homelessness in Walla Walla County consist of only adults with no children (63.4%), followed by families with children (26.8%) and youth or young adult households with all members aged 24 or younger (9.7%). However, families with children are most impacted by housing instability (54.1%), followed by adult-only households (40.7%) and youth or young adult households (5.1%).

Homelessness disproportionately impacts communities of color as demonstrated by Figure 3 which compares race/ethnicity data from the January 2025 Commerce Snapshot Report with 2023 Census Bureau Estimates<sup>4</sup>. Both datasets use an “alone or in combination” category approach for race/ethnicity data in that an individual is attributed to each group that they identify as a member of. As such, the sum of the five race groups may add to more than the total population because individuals may identify with more than one race. Hispanic origin is considered an ethnicity, so individuals included in that category may identify with any race; the only category that is mutually exclusive is “White, Non-Hispanic”. There were less than 11 individuals with unknown race/ethnicity data available in the Snapshot Report (not included in Figure 4).

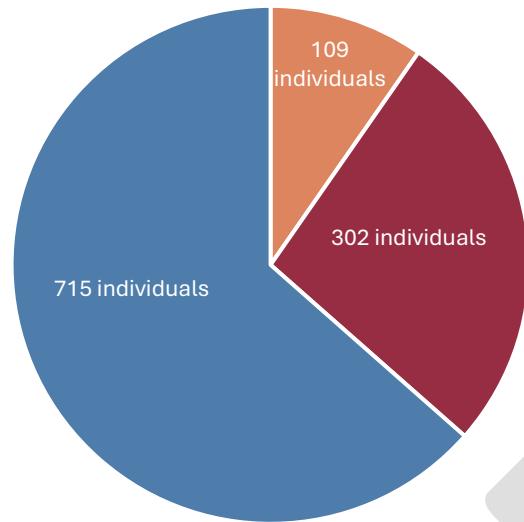
---

<sup>3</sup> Commerce, The Snapshot of Homelessness Report (<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/housing-data/reports-and-publications/>)

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2023 Annual Resident Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin ([https://data.census.gov/table/PEPCHARV2023.PEP\\_ALLDATA?q=Walla+Walla+County,+Washington&t=-02&y=2023](https://data.census.gov/table/PEPCHARV2023.PEP_ALLDATA?q=Walla+Walla+County,+Washington&t=-02&y=2023))

Figure 3: Number of people experiencing homelessness or housing instability by household type Walla Walla County based on the January 2025 Commerce Snapshot Report

Number of People Experiencing *Homelessness*  
by Household Type in Walla Walla County



Number of People Experiencing *Housing Instability*  
by Household Type in Walla Walla County

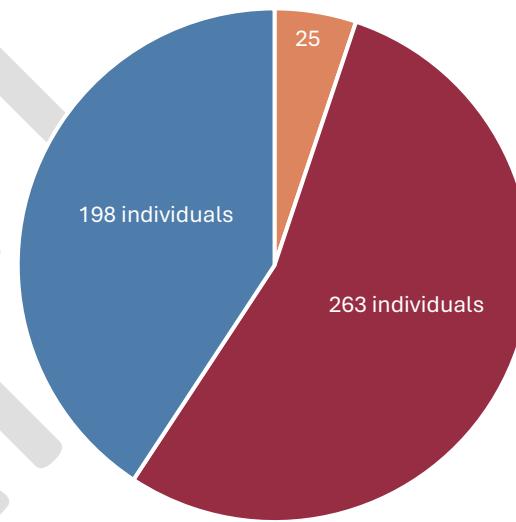
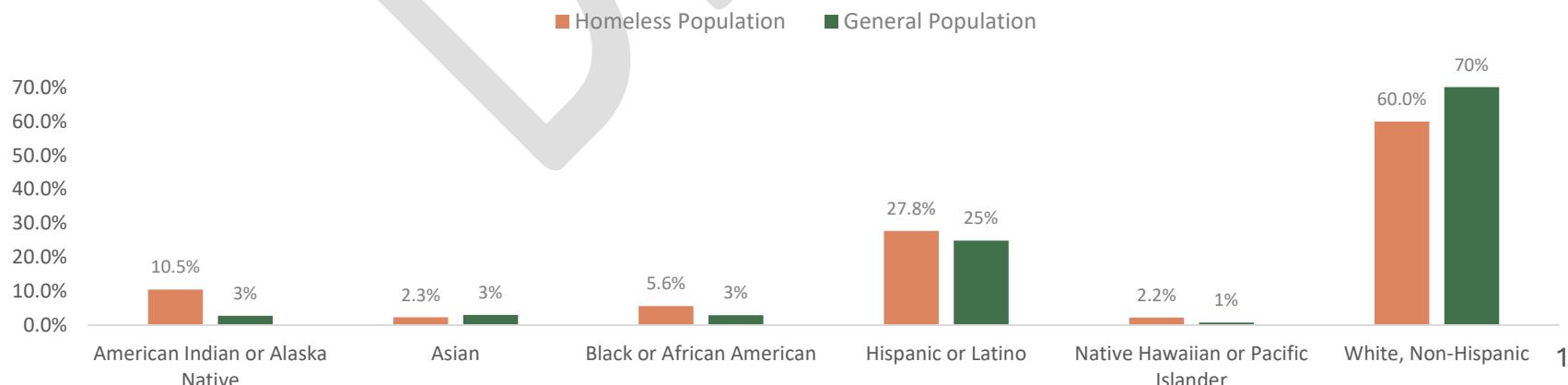


Figure 4: Comparison of percentage of people experiencing homelessness and general population by race/ethnicity in Walla Walla County based on the January 2025 Commerce Snapshot Report and 2023 Census Bureau Estimates

Comparison of Percentage of People Experiencing Homelessness and General Population  
by Race/Ethnicity in Walla Walla County



## Housing Cost Burden & Affordable Housing Shortage in Walla Walla County

Rising housing costs and low wages that have not kept up with the increasing cost of living put many more households in Walla Walla County at risk of homelessness. Housing is considered affordable when a household pays no more than 30% of their gross income towards housing costs (including rent/mortgage and utilities). The National Low Income Housing Coalition's 2025 publication of *Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing* highlights the significant gap between wages and the income necessary to afford housing. Table 1 outlines the hourly wage necessary to afford Fair Market Rent for various unit sizes in Walla Walla County as of Fiscal Year 2026. Fair Market Rents (FMRs) are calculated by HUD annually each Fiscal Year (FY) and offer an estimate of rent for a modest, decent-quality rental home (FMR is the 40th percentile of gross rents, meaning 40% of typical, non-substandard rental units occupied by recent movers in a local housing market have rents at or below the FMR).

Table 1: Wages Needed to Afford Fair Market Rent in Walla Walla County (Fiscal Year 2026)

Unit Size	Walla Walla County Fair Market Rent (FMR) for FY 2025	Hourly wage necessary to afford FMR	Annual income needed to afford FMR	Walla Walla County minimum wage	Full time jobs needed at minimum wage to afford FMR
Studio	\$1,074	\$20.65	\$42,960	\$16.66	1.2
One-Bedroom	\$1,181	\$22.71	\$47,240	\$16.66	1.4
Two-Bedroom	\$1,550	\$29.81	\$62,000	\$16.66	1.8
Three-Bedroom	\$2,118	\$40.73	\$84,720	\$16.66	2.4

For households making the minimum hourly wage in Walla Walla County (\$16.66 as of January 2025), the monthly rent affordable with full time employment is \$866. Senior households on fixed incomes such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) receive a monthly income of \$1,003, for which an affordable monthly rental rate is \$301. The wages needed to afford a two-bedroom unit at FMR in Walla Walla County exceed not just the local minimum wage but also the median wages of many

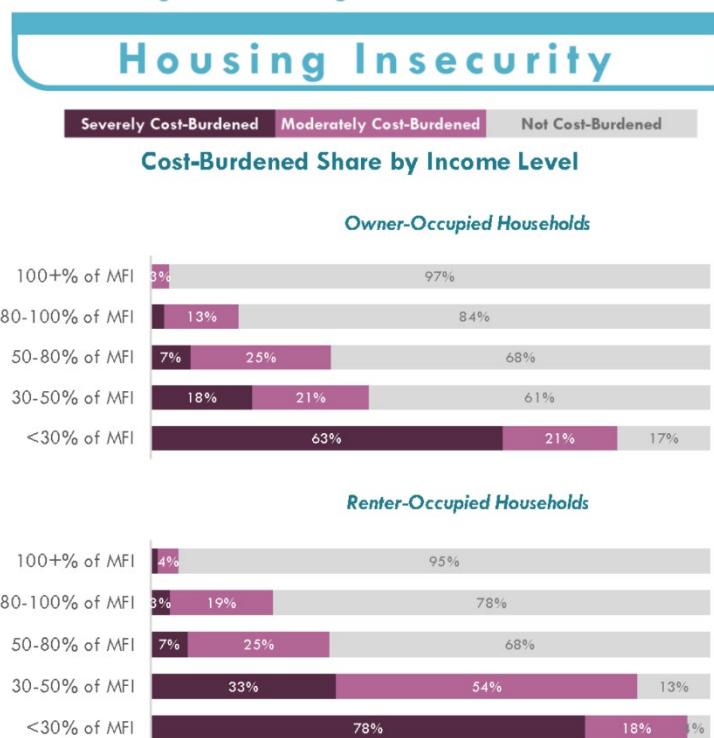
community members in Washington State's most common occupations such as nursing assistants, home health aides, cashiers, janitors, administrative assistants, and construction laborers.<sup>5</sup> Many direct service providers, including case managers, make less than the hourly wage necessary to afford housing at FMR as well. Households with children are especially affected due to the need for an oftentimes more costly unit with additional bedrooms to avoid overcrowding. With insufficient income to afford housing at Fair Market Rent, many households are living paycheck to paycheck, enduring harmful financial stress, and at heightened risk of homelessness due to cost-burden.

A household is considered cost-burdened when it spends more than 30% of its income on housing costs including rent and utilities. Households that spend more than 50% of their income on housing costs are considered severely cost-burdened. The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University's research<sup>6</sup> indicates that 47.3% of renter households in the Walla Walla metro area are cost-burdened (approximately 3,156 renters), and 21.2% are severely cost-burdened. The share of homeowners experiencing cost-burden is 22.1% of total homeowners (approximately 3,362 homeowners). Cost-burdened households are forced to make difficult decisions about how to apply their limited income after rent towards groceries, healthcare, childcare, and other essential needs.

Cost-burden is significantly more likely to impact low-income households as evident by the Cost-Burdened Share by Income Level data from the 2023 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment (developed by the Washington State Affordable Housing Advisory

Figure 5: Walla Walla County Cost-Burdened Share by Income Level<sup>7</sup>

2023 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment



<sup>5</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, Median Wages for Washington State's Most Common Occupations (<https://nlihc.org/oor/state/wa>)

<sup>6</sup> Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, Renter Cost Burden Map (<https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/son-2025-renter-cost-burden-map>)

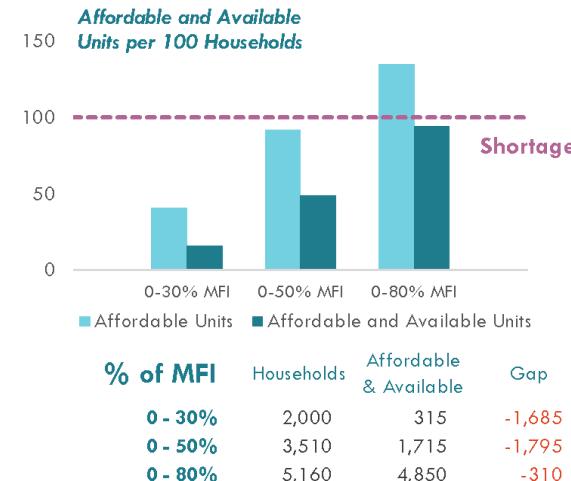
Board).<sup>7</sup> With more than 30-50% of a household's limited income committed to housing costs, low-income households struggle to afford basic necessities and save for emergencies, keeping them at a continued risk of housing instability. Many households fall into homelessness as a result of this unsustainable financial situation or reside in overcrowded or substandard housing in an attempt to reduce cost-burden.

The primary contributor to the significant rates of homelessness and housing cost burden is the insufficient availability of affordable housing units. Data from the 2023 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment indicates that Walla Walla County has a 3,790 unit shortage of affordable and available rental units for low-income households making 80% of the Median Family Income and below (80% of the Median Family Income was \$68,250 for a household of four in 2023 when the assessment was published). With a demand for housing that far outpaces supply, rents have continued to rise in recent years. As of September 2025, the Fair Market Rent is upwards of 50% higher than the pre-pandemic Fair Market Rent in 2019 (FMR for a one-bedroom unit in FY 2019 was \$735 which has increased to \$1,181 in FY 2026).

The limited availability of affordable housing also weakens the capacity to quickly move people out of homelessness, resulting in a strained homeless crisis response system. Households often rely on housing subsidies such as rental vouchers or rapid re-housing programs to afford to move out of homelessness and into housing, but with limited funding these programs cannot help all households in need.

The Planning for Housing section of this plan on page 29 provides additional insight into the projected housing needed in Walla Walla County to accommodate additional population growth and eliminate renter cost burden and homelessness.

Figure 6: Walla Walla County Shortage of Affordable and Available Units for Low-Income Households<sup>7</sup>

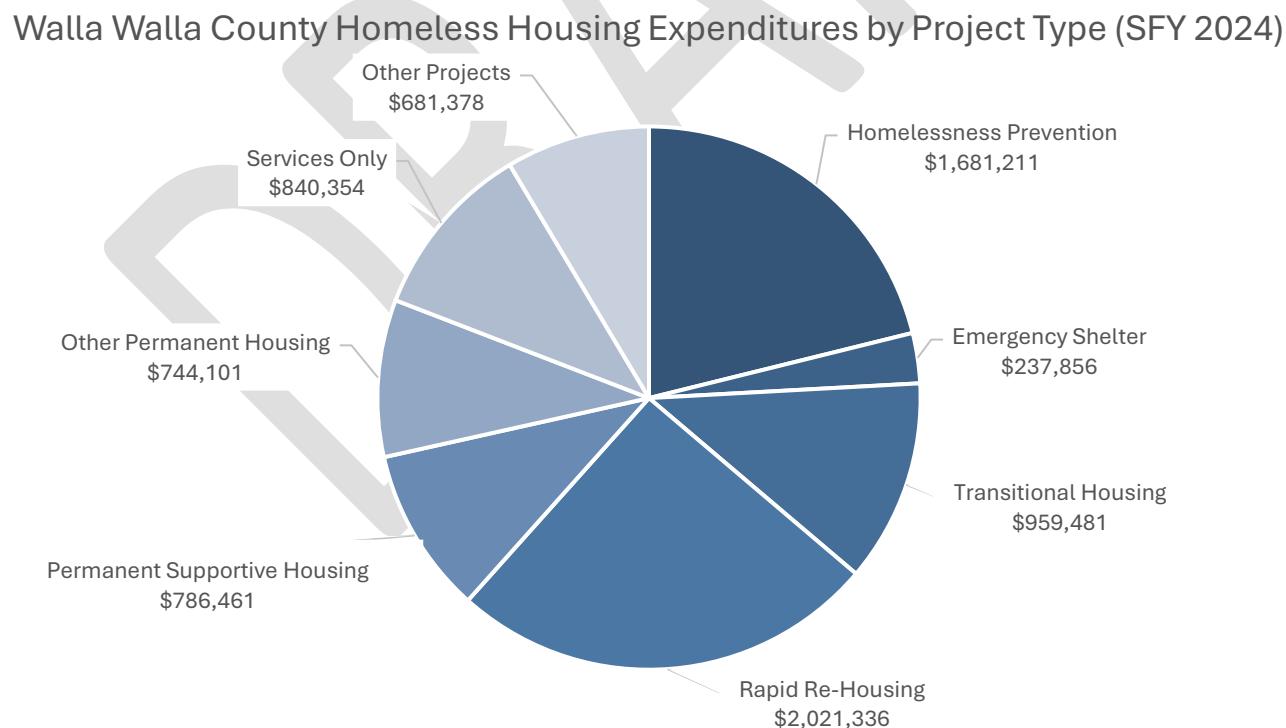


<sup>7</sup> Washington State Affordable Housing Advisory Board, 2023 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment (<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/housing-policy/ahab/>)

## Estimates of Service Levels

Local, state, and federal funding is invested in Walla Walla County to maintain a homeless crisis response system consisting of interventions that prevent homelessness, respond and support people actively experiencing homelessness, and offer long-term assistance and case management to help households maintain housing once they have exited homelessness. To capture investments and service levels, each county in Washington is required to report all expenditures by funding source for each homeless housing project in their community annually. Commerce combines expenditures data with HMIS data to create the Annual Expenditure Report (otherwise known as The Golden). This report does not fully capture all investments in the homeless crisis response system as projects that do not receive public funding do not have a contractual obligation to submit details about expenditures, often resulting in gaps in information. According to the State Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Expenditure Report, \$7,952,179 local, state, and federal dollars were dedicated to homeless services and housing assistance projects in Walla Walla County from July 2023 to June 2024. Figure 6 details expenditures by project type.

Figure 7: Walla Walla County Homeless Housing Expenditures by Project Type based on the SFY 2024 Commerce Annual Expenditure Report



Most funding (59.7% of total expenditures) went to housing interventions including emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and other permanent housing. Homelessness prevention (21.1% of total expenditures) includes projects that offer financial assistance and/or case management support to support households that are at risk of homelessness to maintain or obtain stable housing and avoid homelessness. Services only projects (10.6% of total expenditures) include coordinated entry, street outreach, YYA diversion funding, and services-only projects such as peer support or case management. Other projects (8.6% of total expenditures) include operations funding for the Sleep Center (specifically the Conestoga huts section of the shelter), Community Behavioral Health Rental Assistance (CBRA) vouchers, and system of care outreach and supportive services.

Appendix D (Walla Walla Estimates of Service Levels Tool) provides an overview of investments and service levels dedicated to homeless housing projects using Annual County Expenditure Report data from state fiscal years 2023 and 2024. Details about project level expenditures can be found in the Golden Report published on Commerce's website.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Commerce, Annual Expenditures Report (“Golden Report”) (<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/homelessness-response/planning-and-reporting/strategic-plan/>)

## Survey of Fund Sources

Per the Local Plan Guidance developed by Commerce, the local plan must include a list of fund sources available to local government, whether actual or potential, to implement the local homeless housing plan and support the local homeless crisis response system. It is important to note that not all fund sources detailed in this section are managed by the Walla Walla County Department of Community Health (DCH), in other words, not all fund sources are required to align with this plan when determining funding strategies or program models. Additional information about homeless housing funding managed by the DCH can be found in Walla Walla County's Annual Homeless Housing Fund Report.<sup>9</sup>

Table 2 outlines local, state, and federal funding available to Walla Walla County to specifically support the local homeless crisis response system. The primary revenue stream available to local governments for homeless housing programs in Washington State is document recording fees (DRFs). DRF surcharges are collected by the county auditor as documents are recorded, primarily through home sales and the refinancing of homes. A percentage of the DRF surcharges are retained by the county for local use and the remaining amount is transferred to the state. The portion of those dollars returned to the state are then added into the Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG) and other statewide programs. Several federal fund sources are awarded by HUD and the VA to support the local homeless crisis response system as well.

Walla Walla County also receives an allocation of several types of housing vouchers to provide a long-term rental subsidy for low-income households (Table 3). Vouchers typically cover the remaining portion of rent after a household pays 30% of their income which supports moving households out of homelessness and prevents homelessness caused by cost-burden. Table 4 details additional fund sources (CDBG and Mental Health Sales and Use Tax) that are available to support homeless housing adjacent programs and services but are not allocated to solely support the homeless crisis response system. A portion of CDBG dollars have consistently been awarded to support homeless housing programs in alignment with the priority need of affordable housing identified in the local CDBG Consolidated Plan. Table 5 details fund sources that our community does not currently utilize to support the local homeless crisis response system.

---

<sup>9</sup> Walla Walla County Department of Community Health, Homeless Housing Fund Report ([https://dch.wwcowa.gov/human\\_services/homeless\\_housing/index.php](https://dch.wwcowa.gov/human_services/homeless_housing/index.php))

Table 2: Fund sources available to support the local homeless crisis response system

Fund Source	Source	Status	Allowable Uses	Amount Received SFY 2024	Amount Received SFY 2025	Current Use
Document Recording Surcharge, Local Portion (Fund 160 & 161)	Local	Receiving/Collecting	Operations & Capital	\$267,567	\$282,979	Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Transitional Housing, Emergency Shelter (Sleep Center)
Affordable and Supportive Housing Sales and Use Tax (Fund 162)	Local	Receiving/Collecting	Operations & Capital	\$96,062	\$96,062	N/A - no subaward currently in place; funds can be used for acquiring, rehabilitating, or constructing affordable housing as well as funding operations/maintenance for new units of affordable housing, and rental assistance
Consolidated Homeless Grant including Housing and Essential Needs (CHG & HEN)	State	Receiving/Collecting	Operations	\$2,083,905	\$2,414,484	Rapid Re-Housing, Homelessness Prevention, Housing and Essential Needs (HEN), Emergency Shelter (Sleep Center), Street Outreach, Coordinated Entry
HUD Continuum of Care Grant	Federal	Receiving/Collecting	Operations	\$392,798	\$418,762	Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing
HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project Grants	Federal	Receiving/Collecting	Operations	\$200,000	\$200,000	Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Rapid Re-Housing, YYA Peer Support
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	Federal	Receiving/Collecting	Operations	\$1,751,307	TBD – pending response from local orgs that receive funding	Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Corps of Recovery Discovery (CORD) Transitional Housing, Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program

Table 3: Fund sources available to provide tenant-based housing vouchers for low-income households

Fund Source	Source	Status	Allowable Uses	Amount Received SFY 2024	Amount Received SFY 2025	Current Use
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	State/ Federal	Receiving/Collecting	Operations	\$315,668	\$137,106	Rental assistance for very low-income households (50% AMI or below) that are experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness
Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)	Federal	Receiving/Collecting	Operations	\$9,331,487	\$9,634,723	Rental assistance for very low-income households (50% AMI or below)
Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)	Federal	Receiving/Collecting	Operations	\$624,769	\$773,390	Rental assistance & case management for low-income veteran households (80% AMI or below) that are experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness
Community Behavioral Health Rental Assistance (CBRA)	State	Receiving/Collecting	Operations	\$131,815	\$179,224	Rental assistance for low-income households (50% AMI or below) that are high-risk with documented behavioral health condition(s)
Foster Youth to Independence (FYI)	Federal	Receiving/Collecting	Operations	\$27,385	\$96,417	Rental assistance for very low-income households (50% AMI or below) that are experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness and exited the foster care system

Tenant-based vouchers are tied to the household, allowing them to choose housing that meets program requirements with the option to retain the voucher even if they move. In addition to tenant-based vouchers, several local organizations manage properties with project-based vouchers. Project-based vouchers are tied to a specific unit, meaning the subsidy remains with the unit even if the resident moves. These properties are largely managed by the Walla Walla Housing Authority, Blue Mountain Action Council, and Catholic Charities Walla Walla.

Table 4: Fund sources available to support community needs, including but not limited to the local homeless crisis response system

Fund Source	Source	Status	Allowable Uses	Amount Received SFY 2024	Amount Received SFY 2025	Current Use
HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Federal	Receiving/Collecting	Operations & Capital	\$390,580	\$408,743	Public infrastructure improvements (sidewalks, parks), home repair (rental units and homeowner housing), Coordinated Entry
Mental Health Sales and Use Tax (1/10 of 1%)	Local	Receiving/Collecting	Operations	\$1,733,666	\$1,720,514	Operation and delivery of substance use dependency and mental health treatment programs and services

Table 5: Fund sources to support the homeless crisis response system that Walla Walla County is not collecting or eligible for

Fund Source	Source	Status	Allowable Uses	Amount Received SFY 2024	Amount Received SFY 2025	Allowable Use (if eligible/collecting)
Housing and Related Services Sales and Use Tax (HB 1590)	Local	Not Receiving/Collecting	Operations & Capital	N/A	N/A	Construction/acquisition and operations/maintenance/services for affordable housing and behavioral health-related facilities
HUD Emergency Solutions Grant	Federal	Not Eligible	Operations	N/A	N/A	Street outreach, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, homelessness prevention
Local Housing Levies	Local	Not Eligible	Operations & Capital	N/A	N/A	Affordable housing, affordable homeownership, owner-occupied home repair, and foreclosure prevention

There is a workgroup of the Council on Housing that has been meeting since 2023 to explore the possibility of implementing HB 1590 locally. If passed county-wide, HB 1590 would impose an additional 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% local sales and use tax that would generate an estimated \$1.1 million annually for housing and behavioral health capital projects and related services.

# Objectives and Actions to Reduce Homelessness

The five objectives included in this plan were established in the 2024-2029 Washington State Homeless Housing Strategic Plan and are required to be included in local 5-Year Homeless Housing Plans. The local intention for each objective as established by the 5 Year Plan workgroup is included below, followed by the actions, measures, timeline, and responsible partners identified to carry out each objective. Each objective and accompanying actions are in pursuit of the ultimate vision and mission of this plan: *reduce homelessness and housing instability in Walla Walla County by fostering community collaboration and using a continuous quality improvement framework so that everyone experiencing homelessness and housing instability has access to housing and services that meet their needs.*

## **Objective 1: Promote an equitable, accountable, and transparent homeless crisis response system.**

Walla Walla County will evaluate progress towards goals and outcomes at both a program and a system-level. Reports that outline how funds are invested throughout the homeless crisis response system and how those programs and services are performing will be made available in clear and accessible language. Data will be evaluated to identify and respond to disparities in access to services and housing outcomes based on race, ethnicity, and other marginalized identities.

## **Objective 2: Strengthen the homeless service provider workforce.**

Case managers, service navigators, peer support specialists, advocates, and others that make up the homeless service provider workforce are a critical component of the homeless crisis response system. Walla Walla County is committed to investing in the well-being and training of homeless service staff. Strengthening the workforce also includes expanding the overall capacity of the homeless service provider workforce to reduce burden on existing staff.

**Objective 3: Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible.**

Walla Walla County will promote programs, partnerships, and efforts that prevent homelessness. Diverting households from homelessness and ensuring households that exit homelessness maintain their housing will reduce exposure to trauma and alleviate strain on the homeless crisis response system.

**Objective 4: Prioritize assistance based on the greatest barriers to housing stability and the greatest risk of harm.**

Walla Walla County is committed to ensuring those with the greatest barriers to housing stability and greatest risk of harm are prioritized for the limited homeless housing assistance available. Coordinated entry is a system designed to streamline access and assessment to determine prioritization based on greatest barriers and risk of harm so those households can be connected to the appropriate housing resources. Walla Walla County strives to strengthen the coordinated entry system by improving access, evaluating effectiveness of prioritization criteria and processes, and expanding the quantity and quality of projects receiving referrals for assistance.

**Objective 5: Seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs.**

Walla Walla County will prioritize community efforts that advance the vision that everyone experiencing homelessness and housing instability has access to the housing and services that meet their needs. This will require an increase in the quantity and variety of affordable housing available, with special attention to subpopulation specific needs for services (youth and young adults, aging population, migrant farmworkers, chronically homeless, veterans, people with disabilities, students, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and so on). Walla Walla County values the right to housing choice and believes efforts to connect households with housing resources and services should be driven by the self-identified needs of each household.

## Objective 1: Promote an equitable, accountable, and transparent homeless crisis response system

Action	Measure	Timeline	Lead Entity	Partners
<b>1.1</b> Develop local written standards with shared definitions, policies, and procedures for the homeless housing system	Walla Walla County Homeless Housing Continuum of Care written standards are published	2026-Q1	DCH & Council on Housing	Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>1.2</b> Publish Annual Homeless Housing Fund & Performance Report	Homeless Housing Fund & Performance Report published annually	Annual, starting 2026-Q4	DCH	Council on Housing, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>1.3</b> Improve HMIS data quality to increase utility for data-informed decision making	Reduced error rates on Commerce's WA BoS HMIS Data Quality dashboard	Ongoing, starting 2026-Q2	DCH	Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>1.4</b> Evaluate and respond to disparities in homeless housing system access and outcomes	Reduced race/ethnicity disparities on Commerce's WA BoS Equitable Access Dashboard and CHG Performance Tracker Dashboard	Ongoing, starting 2027-Q2	DCH	Council on Housing, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>1.5</b> Achieve a comprehensive, real-time, quality By-Name List of people experiencing homelessness in Walla Walla County	Fulfill initial data quality threshold requirements for the Built For Zero Single Adults Quality Data Scorecard Rubric	2026-Q3	DCH & BMAC	BFZ Core Team, Homeless Housing Service Providers

## Objective 2: Strengthen the homeless service provider workforce

Action	Measure	Timeline	Lead Entity	Partners
<b>2.1</b> Develop community training curriculum for all homeless housing staff (including onboarding, recertification, and staff well-being)	Agreement on local homeless housing system training curriculum for direct service staff and supervisors	2027-Q4	DCH	Homeless Housing Service Providers, Council on Housing
<b>2.2</b> Establish local best practice tools and strategies to make case management more effective while honoring client choice	Agreed upon best practice case management tools and strategies are identified in written standards and training curriculum	2027-Q4	DCH	Homeless Housing Service Providers, Council on Housing
<b>2.3</b> Add case management capacity along homeless housing continuum, including through co-case management with other systems	Increase number of local homeless housing case managers by prioritizing funding for operations; Clear referral pathways and procedures established for coordinated co-case management	2028-Q2	DCH & Council on Housing	Homeless Housing Service Providers, Community Service Providers
<b>2.4</b> Launch by-name list homeless case conferencing for single adults with participation from representatives across systems	By-name list homeless case conferencing is occurring on a consistent basis	2026-Q3	BFZ Core Team	DCH, Homeless Housing Service Providers, Council on Housing
<b>2.5</b> Expand and/or sustain community building opportunities for direct service providers	Improved connection points between service providers through community events and co-case management	2028-Q4	BFZ Core Team	DCH, Council on Housing

## Objective 3: Prevent episodes of homelessness whenever possible

Action	Measure	Timeline	Lead Entity	Partners
<b>3.1</b> Expand after care case management services offered to clients exiting homelessness	Inclusion of after care case management as identified best practice in written standards & training curriculum; Housing recidivism - decline in clients returning to homelessness following housing move-in	2029-Q2	DCH & Council on Housing	Homeless Housing Service Providers, BFZ Core Team
<b>3.2</b> Leverage partnerships with other systems that interact with at-risk households to promote diversion	Homelessness diversion training available to all homeless housing service providers and relevant community partners; Homelessness diversion resources available in the community are identified and clearly communicated to providers and at risk households	2027-Q1	BMAC & DCH	Homeless Housing Service Providers, Community Service Providers, Landlords & Property Management Companies
<b>3.3</b> Expand supports for clients exiting homelessness to better understand lease compliance, landlord expectations and communication, and tenant rights and responsibilities	Expand Ready to Rent course offering to all clients enrolled in Coordinated Entry; Best practices for housing onboarding process included in local written standards and training curriculum	2030-Q2	DCH & Council on Housing	Homeless Housing Service Providers, BFZ Core Team

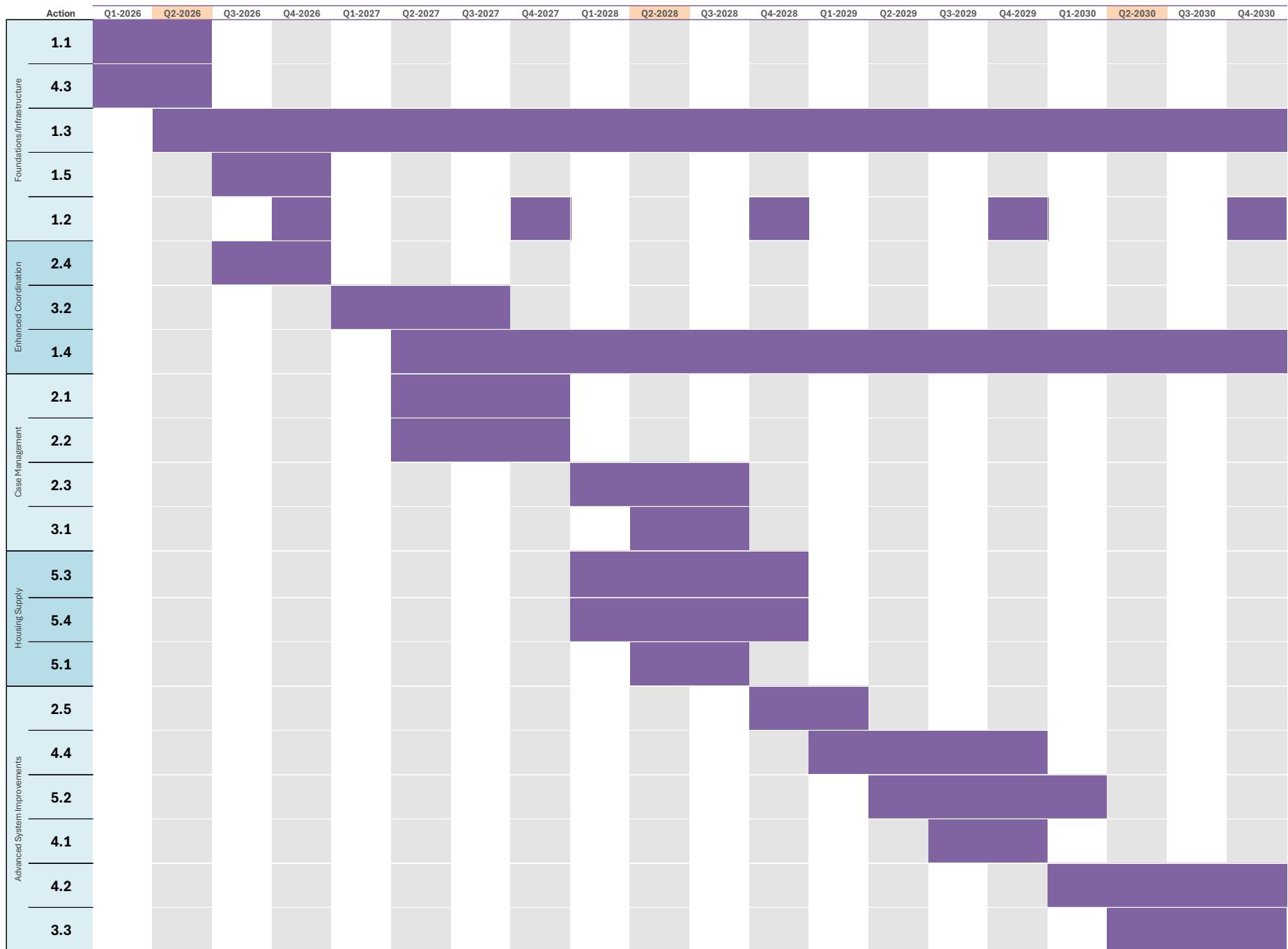
## Objective 4: Prioritize assistance based on the greatest barriers to housing stability and the greatest risk of harm

Action	Measure	Timeline	Lead Entity	Partners
<b>4.1</b> Develop evaluation criteria to assess effectiveness of local coordinated entry system	Established evaluation criteria, cadence for continuous evaluation, and clear process for improvements	2029-Q3	CE Workgroup	DCH, BMAC, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>4.2</b> Expand projects accepting referrals from Coordinated Entry	Increase in projects accepting Coordinated Entry referrals	2030-Q1	CE Workgroup	DCH, BMAC, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>4.3</b> Develop homeless outreach policies & procedures, including evaluation processes to expand/improve access for underserved populations	Clear, agreed upon definitions and implementation of outreach policies and procedures that are coordinated across programs	2027-Q2	BFZ Core Team	DCH, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>4.4</b> Improve the quality of Housing First and low-barrier philosophies in local homeless housing projects	Clear, agreed upon definitions, policies, and procedures for Housing First and low-barrier projects outlined in local written standards; Fidelity review for homeless housing projects to identify areas for improvement	2029-Q1	DCH	Council on Housing, Homeless Housing Service Providers

## Objective 5: Seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs

Action	Measure	Timeline	Lead Entity	Partners
<b>5.1</b> Launch system-wide landlord collaborative to build & strengthen relationships and maximize access to existing housing supply	Established cadence for meeting, clear goals and outline for discussion topics	2028-Q2	BMAC, WWA	Landlords & Property Management Companies, Homeless Housing Service Providers
<b>5.2</b> Enhance permanent supportive housing, including existing and new projects	Launch local Supportive Housing Learning Collab to improve alignment with best practices and strategize on leveraging funds for PSH (existing and new projects)	2029-Q1	DCH	Permanent Supportive Housing Providers, Council on Housing
<b>5.3</b> Increase local funding to subsidize high development/preservation costs for projected housing needs (specifically units affordable to households making 0-80% AMI)	Release RFA for Fund 162 to provide local match dollars for projects to be awarded based on local prioritization criteria for capital projects; Continue to seek and advocate for revenue creation such as HB 1590	2028-Q1	Council on Housing	DCH, Affordable Housing Developers
<b>5.4</b> Increase coordination across local affordable housing development collaborators	Develop a local affordable housing project pipeline for strategic investment to increase Walla Walla County's competitiveness for state funds	2028-Q1	Council on Housing	DCH, Affordable Housing Developers, Housing Funders/Investors, City/County Planners

Figure 8: Gantt chart outlining the implementation timeline for all actions identified in the 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan



# Planning for Affordable Housing

The vision of this plan is that everyone experiencing homelessness and housing instability has access to housing and services that meet their needs. While the scope of this plan is primarily focused on the homeless crisis response system, planning for substantial expansion of affordable housing is essential to fulfill that vision.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) is a series of statutes that require cities and counties to develop comprehensive plans and development regulations to manage growth. This work is led locally by the Development Departments for Walla Walla County, City of Walla Walla, City of College Place, and City of Waitsburg.

In 2021, the Washington Legislature amended language in the Growth Management Act (GMA) as it relates to planning for housing. House Bill 1220 updated the GMA to require that local governments “plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments”. This language strengthened the previous goal to “encourage the availability of affordable housing” in planning efforts. HB 1220 also included a new requirement that directed Commerce to create projections for housing needs including units for moderate, low, very low, and extremely low-income households as well as emergency housing, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing.

Commerce developed the Housing All Planning Tool (HAPT)<sup>10</sup> to project county-level housing needs by income level based on the established countywide population projection. The projections are intended to both plan for new population growth and address the existing undersupply of housing resulting in cost-burdened renter households and people experiencing homelessness. Counties are required to use these 20-year projections to establish housing allocations for each jurisdiction to plan for and accommodate with their comprehensive plan and development regulations. Figure 8 details the projected housing needed in Walla Walla County over the next 20 years according to the Housing All Planning Tool (HAPT). Figure 9 splits the projected housing needs into a five-year interval to align with the timeframe of this plan. It is notable that Walla Walla County is projected to need zero additional emergency shelter beds over the next 20 years.

---

<sup>10</sup> More details about the methodology used to establish the housing projections can be found in Book 1: Establishing Housing Targets for Your Community under the GMA housing guidance and statutes section on Commerce’s website (<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/housing-planning/housing-guidance/>)

Figure 9: Walla Walla County 2046 Housing Projections based on the Commerce Housing All Planning Tool (HAPT)

## Walla Walla County 2046 Housing Projections

*Per Commerce's Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) assuming 2046 projected population of 73,112 (medium/high growth)*

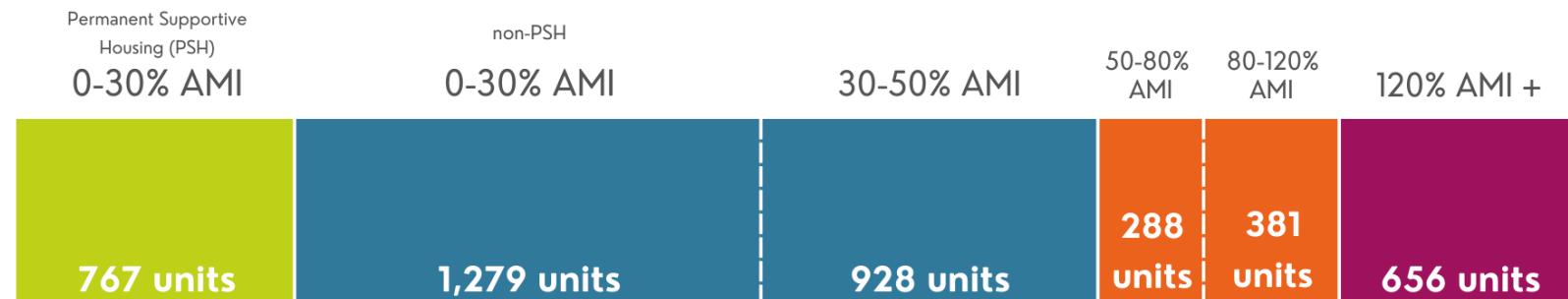
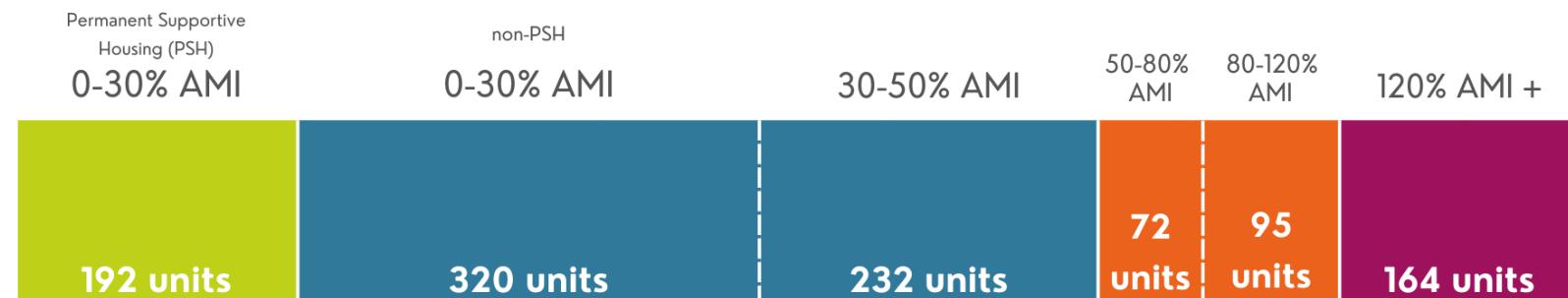


Figure 10: Walla Walla County 5 Year Housing Projections based on the Commerce Housing All Planning Tool (HAPT)

## Walla Walla County 2026-2031 Housing Projections

*Per Commerce's Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) assuming 2046 projected population of 73,112 (medium/high growth)*



While jurisdictions must plan for and accommodate the projected housing needs, there is not a requirement that jurisdictions build or guarantee the construction of the housing needed. Developing housing that is affordable to households making below 80% Area Median Income requires public subsidy as lower rents impact the project's net operating income and limit the funding available to pay back large loans typical with market rate development.<sup>11</sup> Table 6 outlines the maximum income and affordable rental rate for low, very low, and extremely low-income households to correspond with Figures 8 and 9. For additional context, a one person household working full time at minimum wage in Walla Walla County (\$16.66) would have an annual income of \$33,986 (just below 50% AMI).

Table 6: Walla Walla County maximum Income and Affordable Rental Rates for 0-80% AMI (Fiscal Year 2025)<sup>12</sup>

	1 Person Household		2 Person Household		3 Person Household		4 Person Household	
Area Median Income	Max Income	Affordable Rent						
0-30% AMI	\$20,550	\$514	\$23,500	\$588	\$26,650	\$666	\$32,150	\$804
30-50% AMI	\$34,300	\$858	\$39,200	\$980	\$44,100	\$1,103	\$48,950	\$1,224
50-80% AMI	\$54,850	\$1,371	\$62,650	\$1,566	\$70,500	\$1,763	\$78,300	\$1,958

As indicated in the survey of fund sources (page 17), there is limited local funding available to invest in the development of the projected housing needed. There will be substantial coordination required across the public and private sectors to actualize the projected housing needs, including significant funding to subsidize high development, operations, maintenance, and service costs associated with housing affordable to people with low incomes. Without intentional and strategic investment, homelessness and housing instability will continue to perpetuate in Walla Walla County due to the shortage of affordable and available housing.

<sup>11</sup> Shelterforce, Affordable Housing Finance 101 (<https://shelterforce.org/2025/05/28/affordable-housing-finance-101/>)

<sup>12</sup> HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, Income Limits (<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html>)

## Prioritization Criteria of Homeless Housing Capital Projects

Local homeless housing plans that identify actions related to the development or construction of homeless housing capital projects must include the criteria and procedure used to evaluate prospective projects for funding consideration. This criteria includes all relevant factors the Council on Housing and local government would take into consideration when prioritizing projects for public investment including new construction, expansion, renovation, rehabilitation, or preservation. Actions 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 included in this plan may include capital investments in homeless housing projects to carry out Objective 5: seek to house everyone in a stable setting that meets their needs.

### Guiding Principles

All homeless housing capital projects must be consistent with local plans and regulations including comprehensive plans, countywide planning policies, and state/local laws to be considered for funding. This requires prior consideration of compatible use, appropriate infrastructure, and necessary amenities for siting of projects. All capital investments will align with the preservation or development of housing to meet the projected housing needs established by the Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) and included in each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.

### Procedure

Local funding for homeless housing capital projects will be made available through a competitive request for applications process. Applications will be reviewed by a scoring committee composed of Council on Housing members and other relevant community partners. This committee will score applications according to the prioritization criteria outlined below. Scoring recommendations will be presented to the Council on Housing for further review and discussion. The Council on Housing will provide a final recommendation to the relevant local governing body for consideration (this may include the Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners or City Councils). The Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners have final authority on the distribution of local funds managed by Walla Walla County.

Once the prioritization of applications has been established, funding will be awarded at a sufficient level to complete the financing package necessary for the applicant to move forward with the project, so long as the project's proposed capital stack is not unduly reliant on local funding. Walla Walla County may maintain a waitlist for projects which meet the threshold for readiness when insufficient funding is available during the funding round. The waitlist will be a way for applicants to be

considered for the forthcoming funding rounds without having to complete an entirely new application. The waitlist applications may require some updates based on changes in scope of work or budget for the project. Waitlisted projects are not guaranteed funding and will be evaluated against the total pool of submitted applications for the following funding round.

#### Prioritization Criteria

Local funding available for capital projects is limited and will largely be leveraged as local match dollars to leverage state/federal funding available through the Washington State Department of Commerce Multifamily Housing Unit (Commerce) and Washington State Housing Finance Commission (WSHFC). As such, Walla Walla County's established prioritization criteria aligns with that of Commerce and WSHFC to ensure projects are competitive for those funding opportunities.

Walla Walla County will prioritize capital projects that align with the projected housing needs by income level identified in local comprehensive plans, with specific priority for low-income housing serving 80% AMI and below that is paired with supportive services. The following prioritization criteria will be considered to determine capital investments:

- Project Readiness: Anticipated project development timeline and readiness of project to move forward. Considerations will include progress of project's capital stack and funding commitments, status of site control, feasibility, permitting process, and expected construction and service start dates.
- Project Financing: Diversity of fund sources identified in the capital stack for the project. Applicants should have a deliberate investment strategy that is not wholly reliant on one or two fund sources. Applicants that include Commerce Multifamily Housing Unit funding (Housing Trust Fund, Apple Health and Homes) and/or Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in the proposed capital stack will be prioritized.
- Operations, Maintenance, and Services Budget: Funding stream(s) identified for sustainable project operations, maintenance, and services. Projects with funding commitment (or established intent to apply for additional fund sources) such as rental assistance and/or Commerce O&M or OMS will be prioritized.
- Size & Development Costs: Total development costs per unit for new construction in comparison to median per unit costs outlined in the Housing Trust Fund Affordable Housing Cost Data Report<sup>13</sup> most recently published by Commerce per RCW 43.185A.190 (with consideration of regional variation for rural/urban projects).

---

<sup>13</sup> Commerce, Housing Trust Fund Affordable Housing Cost Data Report (<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/housing-policy/housing-reports/>)

- Creation of New Units: Number of additional units that will be created in alignment with projected housing needs established in comprehensive plans for the jurisdiction the project will be sited in. Projects that preserve existing affordable units may also be prioritized if units would otherwise become unfit for habitation or no longer subsidized.
- Affordability: Portion of units that are affordable (rent is no more than 30% of household income) to households making 80% AMI and below.
- Housing Service Model: Housing that is low barrier, Housing First, and offers ongoing case management is an established priority of the 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan. Permanent supportive housing in alignment with the definition established in RCW 36.70A.030 will be prioritized. Feasibility of project's capacity to sustainably fulfill proposed service model based on operations and services budget will be considered.
- Populations Served: Number of set aside units that are affordable and accessible to marginalized populations with insufficient access to existing housing resources. This may include set aside units for people experiencing homelessness, youth and young adults, seniors with fixed income, migrant farmworkers, people with disabilities, etc. Applicants will have the opportunity to justify the value of serving identified target populations not included in this list as well.
- Coordinated Entry: Portion of units that will accept referrals through the local coordinated entry system. Consideration will be made for any eligibility restrictions placed on referrals other than income level and subpopulation.
- Collaboration: Identified partnerships with local community organizations to support on-site services for residents including case management, behavioral health services, and culturally relevant programming.
- By and For: By and For organization applicants may be prioritized for projects that will support the population they serve. If an applicant is not a By and For organization, an established partnership with By and For organization(s) relevant to the populations served for the design of the project and service model is encouraged.
- Applicant Experience: Experience administering local, state, and federal funding for development and/or operations of similar projects. Engagement in pre-application consultation with Commerce for applicants that have limited experience administering Commerce funding, and/or partnership with experienced development consultant.

# Next Steps

## Implementation & Quarterly Review

The implementation of this plan will be led by the Department of Community Health (DCH) and Council on Housing (COH) in partnership with homeless housing service providers and the Built for Zero core improvement team. The Built for Zero core team will be made up of direct service providers at local homeless housing agencies and will apply a continuous quality improvement model to test small scale changes to move actions identified in the plan forward.

The 5 Year Plan Workgroup will meet on a quarterly basis throughout 2026-2030 to evaluate and monitor progress. The Department of Community Health will be responsible for convening and planning for these quarterly meetings. These meetings will focus on the actions within each of the objectives and will also incorporate reviewing relevant components of the Annual Homeless Housing Fund and Performance Report that the Department of Community Health publishes. The workgroup will take into consideration current progress on the plan, pertinent information in the fund reports, as well as performance measures to determine whether any adjustments to the plan are needed.

## Annual Report

This plan is a living document that will be updated annually to track progress, celebrate successes, and respond to the ever-changing homelessness landscape. Per RCW 43.185C.045, local governments are responsible for providing an annual report to Commerce on the status of their local plan and its activities. This report must include the current condition of homelessness in Walla Walla County, progress around objectives and related actions in the local homeless housing plan, and any significant changes made to the plan. The quarterly review conducted by the Walla Walla County 5-Year Plan Workgroup will help to strengthen the annual report. The annual report will be presented to the Walla Walla County Council on Housing prior to being adopted by the Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners.

## Funding Priorities & Decisions

The objectives and actions in this plan along with the quarterly review and Annual Homeless Housing Fund and Performance Report will also be used to determine priority funding areas for the Homeless & Housing Assistance Request for Applications

(RFA) released every two years. The Department of Community Health will propose an RFA process based on this information and present it to the Council on Housing for discussion and to seek recommendations. Recommendations made by the Council on Housing will be brought before the Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners.

DRAFT

# Figures and Tables

## Figures

- Figure 1: Overview of homeless crisis response system
- Figure 2: Number of people experiencing homelessness in Walla Walla County based on 2015-2025 Point In Time Count data
- Figure 3: Number of people experiencing homelessness or housing instability by household type in Walla Walla County based on the January 2025 Commerce Snapshot Report
- Figure 4: Comparison of percentage of people experiencing homelessness and general population by race/ethnicity in Walla Walla County based on the January 2025 Commerce Snapshot Report and 2023 Census Bureau Estimates
- Figure 5: Cost-burdened share by income level in Walla Walla County based on 2023 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment
- Figure 6: Shortage of affordable and available units for low-income households in Walla Walla County based on 2023 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment
- Figure 7: Walla Walla County homeless housing expenditures by project type based on the SFY 2024 Commerce Annual Expenditure Report
- Figure 8: Gantt chart outlining the implementation timeline for all actions identified in the 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan
- Figure 9: Walla Walla County 2046 housing projections based on the Commerce Housing All Planning Tool (HAPT)
- Figure 10: Walla Walla County 5-year housing projections based on the Commerce Housing All Planning Tool (HAPT)

## Tables

- Table 1: Wages needed to afford Fair Market Rent (FMR) in Walla Walla County (Fiscal Year 2025)
- Table 2: Fund sources available to support the local homeless crisis response system
- Table 3: Fund sources available to provide tenant-based housing vouchers for low-income households
- Table 4: Fund sources available to support community needs, including but not limited to the local homeless crisis response system
- Table 5: Fund sources to support the homeless crisis response system that Walla Walla County is not collecting or eligible for
- Table 6: Maximum income and affordable rental rates for 0-80% Area Median Income (AMI) in Walla Walla County (Fiscal Year 2025)
- Table 7: Summary of the plan development and community engagement process
- Table 8: Summary of key collaborators that participated in development of the local plan as required by Commerce's Local Plan Guidance

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Key Terms/Acronyms

- 2SLGBTQIA+: Acronym used to refer to the larger queer community, which stands for: two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and other identities including but not limited to: non-binary, pansexual, agender, etc.
- Affordable Housing: Housing is considered affordable when a household pays no more than 30% of their gross income towards housing costs (including rent/mortgage and utilities).
- After Care Case Management: Long-term follow-up with households after they have been housed to ensure their stability and prevent returns to homelessness.
- Area Median Income (AMI): The median family income in an area, meaning half of the households in the region earn more than the AMI, and half earn less. HUD publishes updated AMI limits for a range of household sizes (one to eight household members) annually each April.
  - Extremely Low-Income (ELI): Households with incomes at or below the federal poverty guideline or 30% of AMI, whichever is higher.
  - Very Low-Income: Households with incomes between ELI and 50% of AMI.
  - Low-Income: Households with incomes between 51% and 80% of AMI.
  - Moderate-Income: Households with incomes between 81% and 100% of AMI.
- At Risk of Homelessness: Households are considered at risk of homelessness if they meet one of the following conditions:
  - Have a missed rent payment and currently owe all or part of a rent payment (current month or past months); OR
  - Has moved because of economic reasons 2 or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for assistance; OR
  - Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship; OR
  - Has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance; OR

- Lives in a hotel/motel and the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals; OR
  - Lives in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than 2 persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than one and a half persons per room; OR
  - Is exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care
- By and For: A By and For organization is a part of a community of people that see themselves as unique and defined by the members' identities, traditions, and values. A By and For organization is one where leadership and staff belong to the same community they serve, promote, and work to preserve. By and For organizations build trust, advocate, respond, and solve problems specific to community members. By and For organizations have roots in their respective communities as change agents and providers of mitigating systems of community service. They invest in and work with community members to improve their quality of life.
- Chronically Homeless: Individuals with a disability (physical, development, mental, or emotional impairment) that have been literally homeless continuously for at least 12 months or on at least four separate occasions in the last three years where the combined occasions must total at least 12 months.
- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI): A cyclical way of working focused on improving outcomes through small recurring tests of change. A CQI framework uses shared data to test ideas, scaling up successful ones and learning from those that don't through a continuous "act, plan, do, study" cycle.
- Continuum of Care (CoC): HUD designation for the group organized to carry out the responsibilities of a program designed to promote a community-wide commitment to ending homelessness for a defined geographic area. Walla Walla County is part of the Balance of State CoC, which serves as the federal CoC providing leadership and coordination for 34 counties (all but the five largest counties in Washington) toward preventing and ending homelessness in the region. The Council on Housing serves as the local CoC for Walla Walla County.
- Coordinated Entry (CE): The process through which people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness can access the homeless crisis response system in a streamlined way through a single point of entry. Through CE, households are not referred to available housing resources on a first come, first served basis, but rather according to each household's level of need, vulnerability, and risk of greatest harm. This is achieved through CE's four core elements:

access, assessment, prioritization, and referral. Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC) is the sole coordinated entry access point in Walla Walla County.

- Cost-Burdened: Households that spend more than 30% of household income on housing costs are considered cost-burdened.
  - Severely Cost-Burdened: Households that spend more than 50% of household income on housing costs are considered severely cost-burdened.
- Disparity: Significant differences in outcomes, experiences, or conditions across different groups or populations (including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socioeconomic status, etc.). Disparities in access to services and housing outcomes indicate inequities in the system.
- Diversion: A service strategy that uses creative problem solving and personal advocacy to help households identify practical solutions for resolving their housing crisis quickly and safely. Households are encouraged to identify safe housing options and solutions using their available resources to divert them from the homeless crisis response system. Diversion can help prevent homelessness and alleviate the strain on the homeless crisis response system by reducing the demand for emergency shelters and size of waitlists for housing assistance.
- Emergency Shelter (ES): Short-term temporary shelter (lodging) for people experiencing homelessness. Households staying in an emergency shelter, regardless of their length of stay, are considered homeless.
- Fair Market Rent (FMR): FMR is calculated by HUD annually and offers an estimate of rent for a modest, decent-quality rental home. FMR is the 40th percentile of gross rents, meaning 40% of typical, non-substandard rental units occupied by recent movers in a local housing market have rents at or below the FMR. Publicly funded housing subsidies are required to use FMR to determine the amount of rental assistance that can be paid and rent limits.
- Global Leasing: A type of lease that gives the lessee the right to control and sublease the property during the lease, while the owner retains the legal title. In many cases, a service provider takes on the role of the lessee and to sublease a unit to an individual experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
- Homeless: Households are considered homeless if they meet one of the following conditions:
  - Unsheltered Homeless:

- Living outside or in a place that is not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a vehicle, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or campground.
- Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the household member(s), including children, that have either taken place within the household's primary nighttime residence or has made the household member(s) afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence.
- Sheltered Homeless:
  - Residing in a temporary housing program including shelters, transitional or interim housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or government programs.
  - Exiting a system of care or institution where they resided for 90 days or less AND who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that system of care or institution.
  - Residing in a trailer or recreational vehicle that is parked illegally or in a location that is not intended for long-term stays (i.e. parking lots).
- Homeless Crisis Response System: Coordinated system of services to support moving households experiencing homelessness and housing instability towards sustainable housing solutions. The continuum includes services to prevent homelessness, meet the immediate needs of households that are actively homeless, and provide ongoing assistance and supportive services to support households in maintaining their housing.
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS): A local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to households at risk of and experiencing homelessness. HMIS data is used by Walla Walla County, Commerce, and HUD to assess performance of programs and services. HMIS data entry is required for all organizations that receive local, state, or federal public funding for homeless housing programs and services.
- Homeless Prevention (HP): Support to households who are at risk of homelessness to maintain or obtain stable housing and avoid homelessness. HP services may include housing-focused case management and temporary rent subsidies.
- Household: One or more individuals seeking to obtain or maintain housing together.

- Housing and Essential Needs (HEN): Program that provides access to essential needs items and potential rental assistance for low-income individuals who are unable to work for at least 90 days due to a physical and/or mental incapacity. The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) determines eligibility and refers eligible households to HEN providers for ongoing support (service provision is contingent on funding available).
- Housing First: An approach to homeless assistance that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness without preconditions and barriers to entry such as sobriety or mandated participation in services. The Housing First philosophy is grounded in the belief that meeting the basic human need of a safe and decent place to live offers people the stability to work on their goals which may include employment, recovery, and developing a stronger social network. Housing First includes voluntary supportive services to facilitate housing stability planning and prevent returns to homelessness.
- Low Barrier: Low barrier projects operate with as few barriers as possible, so people are not excluded from accessing and maintaining services. Low barrier projects have minimal eligibility requirements, a flexible intake process, realistic and clear expectations, and rules are narrowly focused on maintaining a safe environment and avoiding exits to homelessness.
- Marginalized: Marginalized communities are those that have been historically and systematically excluded from access, opportunity, and representation.
- Outreach: A strategy for engaging people experiencing homelessness who are otherwise not accessing services for the purpose of connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, or other critical services.
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH): Subsidized, leased housing with no limit on length of stay that prioritizes people who need comprehensive support services to retain tenancy. PSH is paired with on-site or off-site voluntary services designed to support a person living with a complex and disabling behavioral health or physical health condition who was experiencing homelessness prior to moving into housing to retain their housing and be a successful tenant in a housing arrangement, improve the resident's health status, and connect the resident of the housing with community-based health care, treatment, or employment services. PSH is offered to households on a long-term basis, and households are considered permanently housed upon enrollment.
- Project-Based Voucher: Rental subsidy tied to specific properties, meaning the subsidy remains with the unit even if the resident moves.

- Rapid Re-Housing (RRH): Housing model designed to provide temporary (typically two years but can be longer for some fund sources) rental assistance to households experiencing homelessness, moving them quickly out of their experience of homelessness and into housing. Households receive case management support to develop financial independence throughout their program enrollment so they can afford rent without subsidy upon completion of the program. RRH clients hold the lease with the landlord and can remain in the same housing unit upon completion of the program.
- Social Exclusion: The social, economic, political, and cultural exclusion from systems that determine the social integration of a person in society.
- State Fiscal Year (SFY): The fiscal year in Washington State, around which budgeting occurs, runs from July 1 through June 30.
- Technical Assistance (TA): The process of providing resources, tools, and support to an organization with the goal of streamlining or improving services and operations.
- Tenant-Based Voucher: Rental subsidy tied to the recipient, allowing them to choose housing that meets program requirements with the option to retain the voucher even if the resident moves.
- Transitional Housing (TH): Facility-based housing model that is designed to provide long-term temporary (typically up to two years) subsidized housing, offering households experiencing homelessness with the interim stability and support to successfully move onto and maintain permanent housing. Unlike Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), transitional housing clients are expected to move out to different housing at the end of the program. Households are still considered to be homeless while enrolled in TH.
- Trauma Informed: A trauma informed approach is grounded in recognition of the lasting adverse effects of trauma and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization in service provision.
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): The U.S. federal department in charge of national-level housing and homelessness programs and funding.
- Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce): The primary state-level funder for homeless and housing assistance in Washington State. Commerce primarily supports the state's homeless and housing assistance needs through the Housing Division which includes the Homelessness Response, Multifamily Rental Housing, Homeownership, Permanent Supportive Housing, Housing Data and Systems Performance, and Housing Policy and

Strategic Initiatives units. The Growth Management Services unit within the Local Government Division supports planning for housing through the Growth Management Act.

- Youth and Young Adults (YYA): Individuals between the ages of 12-17 (youth) and 18-24 (young adults). Commerce's Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) leads statewide efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness for youth and young adults by partnering with community programs to establish ongoing and future funding, policy, and best practices.

## Appendix B: Plan Development Process

Table 7: Summary of the plan development and community engagement process

Timeline	Activity
March 2024	5 Year Plan workgroup convened for the first time to discuss plan development timeline/process, roles and responsibilities, and other local/state plans to consider.
April - July 2024	DCH planned for focus groups with the 5 Year Plan and Coordinating Low Income Housing Planning workgroups.
August - October 2024	Walla Walla County Department of Community Health (DCH) convened the following focus groups: Homeless Housing Service Providers, Youth Action Board, Affordable Housing Development, Community Services. Focus group participants were invited to provide feedback on existing strategies and homeless housing interventions, as well as share their ideas for how to improve the homeless housing system and reduce homelessness
December 2024	DCH presented a 5 Year Plan update to the Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on 12/2/24.
January 2025	Notice of Plan Development published on Walla Walla County's <a href="#">website</a> and <a href="#">Facebook page</a> . 5 Year Plan workgroup met to discuss summary of focus group findings.
February - August 2025	5 Year Plan workgroup used the focus group findings to establish the plan's vision, mission, and values as well as actions, measures, and timeline to carry out each objective in the plan. DCH provided recurring updates to the Council on Housing for feedback.
September 2025	DCH presented draft 5 Year Plan to BOCC as well as Walla Walla and College Place City Councils (tentatively 9/16/25, 9/22/25, and 9/23/25, respectively). Notice of public hearing and public comment period published in local newspaper of record (Union Bulletin), as well as Walla Walla County's website and Facebook page (tentatively 9/29/25).
October 2025	Public comment period open 9/29/25 - 10/27/25. Walla Walla County Homeless Housing Community Forum with guest speaker Gregg Colburn to take place 9/30/25 - 10/1/25. DCH to host listening sessions for people with lived experience to provide input on the plan during the public comment period.
November 2025	Public hearing to be held during November Council on Housing meeting (tentatively 11/20/25) prior to the adoption of the final plan.
December 2025	5 Year Plan to be adopted by Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners (tentatively 12/1/25).

Table 8: Summary of key collaborators that participated in development of the local plan as required by Commerce's Local Plan Guidance

Collaborator Group	Representative(s)	Participation Method
Walla Walla County	Walla Walla County Department of Community Health	Staff support for Council on Housing (local homeless housing taskforce), facilitator for 5 Year Plan workgroup, Coordinating Low Income Housing Planning workgroup, and focus groups
Walla Walla County	Walla Walla Board of County Commissioners	Member of Council on Housing (local homeless housing taskforce), authorized local government legislative body for adoption of the plan
City of Walla Walla (largest city within county)	City Manager, Deputy City Manager & Development Services Director, CDBG Coordinator	Member of Council on Housing (local homeless housing taskforce), participation in 5 Year Plan workgroup, Coordinating Low Income Housing Planning workgroup, and affordable housing development focus group
City of College Place (second largest city within county)	City Administrator	Member of Council on Housing (local homeless housing taskforce)
City of Waitsburg (third largest city within county)	City Administrator	Member of Council on Housing (local homeless housing taskforce), participation in Coordinating Low Income Housing Planning workgroup
Individuals with lived experience of homelessness	Youth Action Board (YAB)	Participation in YAB focus group
Individuals with lived experience of homelessness		Tentative – listening sessions at Sleep Center and BMAC during October public comment period
Representative of a Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization OR a Managed Care Organization	Greater Columbia Behavioral Health (BHASO) and Community Health Plan of Washington (MCO)	Invited to provide feedback on draft plan via email.
Representative from a By and For organization within the local government's jurisdiction	Walla Walla Immigrant Rights Coalition	Invited to provide feedback on draft plan

Emergency shelter operators	Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless, Catholic Charities Walla Walla, Christian Aid Center	Member of Council on Housing (local homeless housing taskforce), participation in 5 Year Plan workgroup and focus groups
Domestic violence shelter provider	YWCA	Member of Council on Housing (local homeless housing taskforce), participation in 5 Year Plan workgroup
Homeless outreach providers	Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless, Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC), Catholic Charities Walla Walla, Walla Walla Fire Department CARES Team	Member of Council on Housing (local homeless housing taskforce), participation in 5 Year Plan workgroup and focus groups
Rental subsidy administrators	Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC), Walla Walla Housing Authority	Member of Council on Housing (local homeless housing taskforce), participation in 5 Year Plan workgroup, Coordinating Low Income Housing Planning workgroup, and focus groups
Permanent supportive housing providers and operators	Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC), Walla Walla Housing Authority, Catholic Charities Walla Walla	Member of Council on Housing (local homeless housing taskforce), participation in 5 Year Plan workgroup, Coordinating Low Income Housing Planning workgroup, and focus groups
Coordinated entry staff	Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC)	Member of Council on Housing (local homeless housing taskforce), participation in 5 Year Plan workgroup and focus groups

## Appendix C: Homeless Housing Focus Groups Summary

### FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Focus group participants were invited to provide feedback on existing strategies and homeless housing interventions, as well as share their ideas for how to improve the homeless housing system and planning for housing in Walla Walla County. The following topics are the primary themes identified across the focus groups DCH convened in Fall 2024:

- Case Management
- After Care Support Services
- Staff Well-Being & Addressing Burnout
- Behavioral Health Supports & Access
- Landlord Engagement & Relationships
- Housing Stock & Affordability
- Challenges & Barriers Related to Other Systems

It is important to note that these themes are connected by an overarching theme of scarcity of the resources necessary to reduce homelessness and housing instability. There will need to be significant increases in both funding and staff capacity allocated towards solutions to make meaningful progress in addressing the barriers and challenges focus groups identified.

### SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The following summary organizes focus group discussions by theme and outlines what we learned, as well as what we need. For greater detail regarding the focus groups that we convened and a complete list of questions that were asked, please refer to the Focus Groups Project Plan document.

#### CASE MANAGEMENT

What did we learn?

- Case management is a critical component of our homeless crisis response system at all points along the continuum including prevention, housing search and placement, resource navigation, and ongoing after care supports.
- There is not enough case management available. People who need case management struggle to access it and existing case management has limited caseload capacity.

- Additional barriers to accessing case management sometimes include language, hours of availability, and eligibility criteria.
- Case management tools, strategies, and frameworks do not feel sufficient to meaningfully resolve homelessness and housing instability.
- Due to scarcity of resources, homeless housing case managers often operate beyond capacity with unmanageable caseloads, as well as supporting clients outside the scope of homeless housing services in an attempt to make up for shortages in other systems of care, such as behavioral health, without the necessary tools and skills to do so.

What do we need?

- Additional case management capacity – more funding to expand case management staff.
  - Additional peer support (staff with lived experience) embedded within organizations.
  - Culturally relevant services that meet the needs of populations that are not sufficiently served by existing resources (this includes improvements to staff representation and language accessibility).
- Resource map of existing case management available across systems to better understand current capacity and gaps.
- Tools and shared strategies to make case management more effective while honoring client choice.
  - Case conferencing meetings with representation across systems to support co-case management and community collaboration.
  - Strategies to support folks that are not choosing to use existing resources.
  - Strategies to support folks that need access to higher levels of care that is either unavailable and/or that they are not choosing.

## AFTER CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

What did we learn?

- Clients often need ongoing support with life skills to remain successfully housed.
  - Most housing does not include a substantial onboarding process for what to expect as a renter (support to better understand lease compliance, landlord expectations and communication, tenant rights and responsibilities).
  - Many clients experience loneliness, isolation, and loss of community upon moving into housing from homelessness. This can lead to clients breaking their lease to allow friends/family to stay with them.
  - Many clients need support with mediation to resolve challenges with roommates and/or their landlord.

- After care support is a critical form of case management to ensure clients exiting homelessness do not lose connections to services and resources once connected with housing. Many clients lose access to case management shortly after being housed resulting in an abrupt end to services they may still need to maintain their housing.
  - Program guidelines often limit length of time case management support can be offered after a client is housed so clients become ineligible for services.
  - Limited case management capacity results in prioritization of clients still experiencing homelessness instead of those who are now housed, even if support is still needed.
- There is not enough supportive housing with built-in case management offered.
  - Clients that express interest in housing with built-in case management may accept options without ongoing support to more quickly resolve their homelessness due to limited and/or no availability of permanent supportive housing.
- There is not a clear system-wide understanding of and alignment with best practices related to quality permanent supportive housing. This makes it challenging to understand what services are offered across various supportive housing programs, and what service gaps may still exist for clients upon move-in.
- There is not a standardized structure of what after care support case management is – there is no clear guidance regarding length of time support is offered, how to evaluate effectiveness, and what training and skills are needed for staff.

What do we need?

- Case management tools that are housing-focused and align with best practices (housing stability plans and/or goal setting templates, life skills classes/supports, tools to evaluate caseload capacity, improved referral process).
- Additional permanent supportive housing units. This will require additional capital funding to develop more units as well as additional operational, maintenance, and services funding to maintain units and ensure sufficient case management services are provided.
- Improved community understanding of what permanent supportive housing is and how to align with best practices for existing and future permanent supportive housing.
  - Assessment of quality of existing permanent supportive housing units as well as a process for continued fidelity review and improvement strategies.
- Co-location of housing and behavioral health supports to improve access and effectiveness of behavioral health services for those needing ongoing support to maintain housing.

## STAFF WELL-BEING & ADDRESSING BURNOUT

What did we learn?

- Homeless housing staff struggle with maintaining balance, which impacts their overall well-being. The work is challenging and at times traumatic. It is difficult to set and maintain boundaries, especially given the scarcity of resources and support for people they are case managing.
- Staff feel pressure from leadership and funders to bear the responsibility of performance standards/expectations in a system with limited resources.
- High level of turnover further increases work-related stress as staff are at times expected to fulfill responsibilities of open positions.
  - Turnover is often related to burnout, lack of clear advancement opportunities for direct service staff, low pay for high-stress and sometimes high-risk work.
- There is insufficient training and/or lack of institutional knowledge to onboard and support staff in doing their job.
- There are limited opportunities to debrief and talk through difficult situations.

#### What do we need?

- Additional training that addresses staff well-being, including setting and maintaining healthy boundaries, processing and managing secondary trauma, and self-care.
  - Training for leadership so they are more equipped to help support staff in setting boundaries, navigating exposure to trauma, and establishing methods for self-care.
- Onboarding practices that help staff feel prepared and confident to navigate their roles.
- Improved practices to document policies and procedures to capture and retain institutional knowledge and reduce decision fatigue experienced by direct service staff when faced with difficult decisions (i.e., prioritizing who gets assistance, length of time of assistance, rent determination when program assistance is offered, etc.).
- Community-building opportunities that increase peer support for case managers and provide a space to grieve losses and celebrate successes.
- Better compensation and pathways for advancement for direct service staff.
- Leadership engagement with two statewide homeless housing workforce studies to identify potential local improvements.

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUPPORTS & ACCESS

#### What did we learn?

- Homelessness and housing instability are traumatizing and can lead to and/or exacerbated mental health and/or substance use challenges. However, there are not enough behavioral health resources to connect clients with to address these challenges.

- There is also insufficient understanding of what resources do exist as well as how to navigate and access the behavioral health crisis response system (including prevention and postvention tools and resources). It is unclear what to expect regarding follow-up when making referrals and how to confirm whether a client will get the support they need.
- There are limited low-barrier housing options available for people that struggle with mental health and/or substance use disorder(s). This leads to extended periods of homelessness due to the challenge in finding appropriate housing, which can further exacerbate behavioral health challenges.
- There is a lack of system-wide support for Housing First (ex. many housing providers are enforcing sobriety requirements). There is also insufficient funding to support Housing First programs which may require more intensive case management.
- There are no/limited on-site behavioral health supports at shelters and homeless housing locations.
  - Living in proximity to others struggling with mental health and/or substance use disorder(s) can be triggering, further substantiating the need for co-located behavioral health and homeless housing services.
- There are limited and/or not appropriately equipped resources to respond to sexual trauma and domestic violence, especially clients experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges.

What do we need?

- Additional funding as well as more clearly outlined priorities for existing funding to enhance Housing First and supportive housing programs so people struggling with mental health and/or substance use disorder(s) can readily access housing and receive services on-site.
- Improved coordination across homeless housing and behavioral health programs and staff, including role clarity around case management needs (referrals, follow-up, navigation, support to follow through on established care plans).
- Training to better equip homeless housing staff to support clients experiencing behavioral crisis and/or navigating mental health/substance use challenges.

## LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT & RELATIONSHIPS

What did we learn?

- There is no system-wide collaborative landlord engagement effort – engagement happens primarily at the organization level if at all, often due to the competitive rental environment.
- Standard practices of many landlords and property management companies often screen out households with higher barriers (poor credit, eviction history, criminal history, low-income) making it more difficult to access housing.

- There are several other concerning practices carried out including: landlords not understanding landlord/tenant law, landlords not meeting habitability standards due to competitive rental environment that disempowers renters from seeking alternative units, and rental companies advertising free and/or reduced rent to get folks to sign a lease before increasing rent and/or adding additional fees.
- Some landlords that do reduce barriers and partner with homeless housing programs do not have a clear understanding of program capacity and requirements leading to unrealistic expectations, communication challenges, and some landlords that take advantage of programs.

What do we need?

- System-wide landlord collaborative to build and strengthen relationships with landlords with the goal of maintaining and increasing the quantity and quality of landlords that are willing to work with and be flexible for clients that may have higher needs. This could also serve as a mechanism to educate landlords on homeless housing programs and foster productive dialogue about challenges and strategies such as the landlord mitigation fund.
- Exploratory conversations on whether more global leasing by nonprofits would help to expand the number of units with flexible eligibility criteria.
- Community education for renters regarding tenant rights and responsibilities such as expansion of the Ready to Rent course.
- Creation of a rental registry with a single application (one fee) as recommended by the Regional Housing Action Plan.

## HOUSING STOCK & AFFORDABILITY

What did we learn?

- There are not enough affordable housing units available in our community to house everyone. People who are housed are experiencing significant cost burden due to high cost of rent.
- Housing development costs are high including but not limited to land, infrastructure, labor/trade, materials, interest rates, adherence to rules and regulations.
- Maintenance costs are high for an aging housing stock, especially with growing deferred maintenance.
- There is insufficient subsidy to accommodate the high housing development and maintenance costs.
  - Specifically, there is insufficient local match dollars available to access state/federal dollars.
- Local capacity to develop projected housing needs is constrained as there are a limited number of experienced local affordable housing developers.

- NIMBY-ism impacts feasibility of housing development both regarding density/infill development and expansion of the urban growth area.
- There is no consensus on projected housing needs based on income, making it challenging to develop effective strategies to fulfill projections.
- Limited amount of affordable housing stock that is available in perpetuity, so affordable housing may be lost when units are sold or lost due to deferred maintenance.

What do we need?

- Dedicated coalition of folks that hold the responsibility for having ongoing conversations about the abovementioned needs and establishing clear community priorities and strategies to implement solutions.
- Improved coordination and increased local government support to decrease costs and reduce regulatory burden for affordable housing development/maintenance (local match dollars to diversify fund sources and make local projects more competitive, surplus land, waiving permitting fees and capital facility charges, development of stock plans).
- Increased coordination across local affordable housing development collaborators (developers, funders/investors, City/County) to develop a local project pipeline and align strategy.
- Community education and engagement about what affordable housing is and why it matters through human-centered and accessible story telling.
- Homeowner/landlord education and incentives to support maintenance of aging housing stock to retain naturally occurring affordable housing.
- Education and incentives for first-time homeowners.

## CHALLENGES & BARRIERS RELATED TO OTHER SYSTEMS

What did we learn?

- More support with accessing and maintaining income/employment is needed.
  - People face challenges finding stable employment with steady hours and are often reliant on employment with low wages.
  - It is difficult to navigate and receive income if unable to work due to disability, absence of childcare, behavioral health challenges, etc.
  - Many people rely on seasonal farmwork and as such, do not have consistent year-round income.
  - Cost of living is high (rent, utilities, groceries, cleaning supplies). There is additional need for support with budgeting and education on managing limited income. This is especially challenging for households on fixed income.

- There is a need for more benefits planning resources to support decision making on how increased income may impact benefits.
- There are challenges with access and/or eligibility criteria for supportive employment services.
- Educational barriers limit employment opportunities and earning capacity.
- It is difficult to save for emergencies with low wages and high cost of living, heightening risk of homelessness.
- Transportation is a barrier to accessing services within and outside of the community. It can be challenging to rely solely on public transportation for grocery shopping, laundry, employment, and healthcare needs (including behavioral healthcare).
- Healthcare is expensive and difficult to access. Experiencing homelessness can increase risk to negative health related outcomes, and unmet healthcare needs can lead to ongoing issues that impact employment/income and result in unexpected emergency expenses.
- People experiencing homelessness have limited access to personal hygiene resources including year-round public restrooms, showers, and laundry facilities.
- There is an aging population that experiences additional challenges due to fixed incomes and increasing health related needs. It can be difficult to navigate existing resources through Aging and Long Term Care (ALTC) and DSHS.

#### What do we need?

- Improved resource map to better understand what services are available as a tool both for individuals seeking services and case managers to reference. Clear understanding of referral processes and points of contact for accessing services.
- Case conferencing meetings with representation across systems to support co-case management and community collaboration.
- Expansion of culturally relevant services that meet the needs of population(s) not sufficiently served by existing resources.
- Community conversations about potential strategies to better support aging population of people experiencing homelessness and housing instability. This may include additional case management as well as increased financial support for this population.

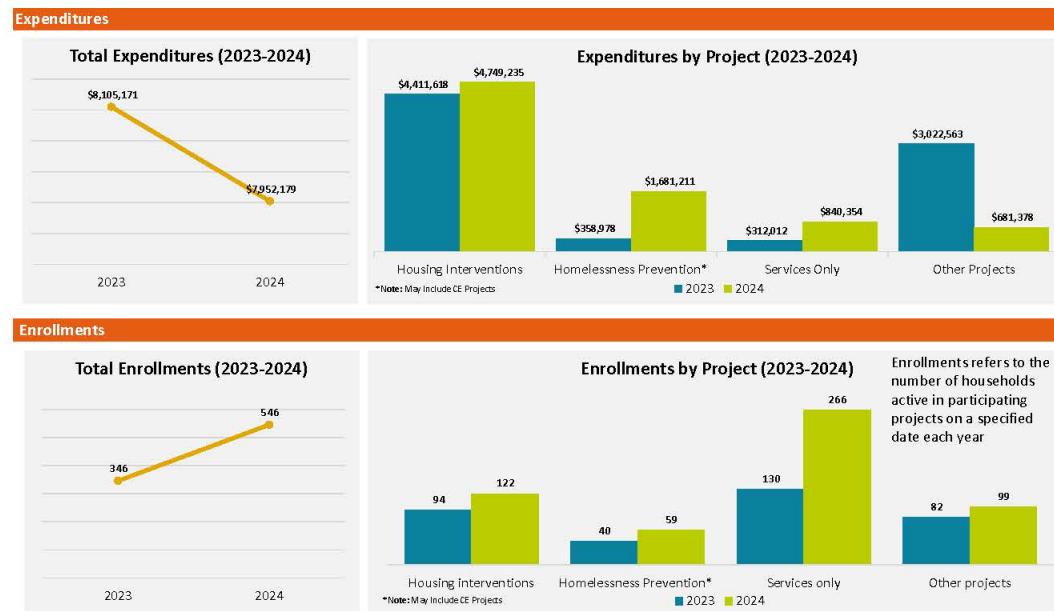
## Appendix D: Estimates of Service Levels

The Walla Walla Estimates of Service Levels data provides an overview of recent investments and service levels dedicated to eliminating homelessness in Walla Walla County by compiling data from the Department of Commerce's 2023 and 2024 Annual Expenditures Reports ("Golden Reports"), which detail expenditures by funding source for each homeless housing project in the state. County staff submit the data reported by local organizations providing services, and Commerce publishes this data in the Golden Report by December of each year. The reporting period follows the state fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). Disclaimer: Please note that data quality errors may be present due to inaccuracies in data entry within the Golden Reports. Common discrepancies include significant year-over-year fluctuations. As you review the dashboard, it is recommended to refer to the original Golden Report data and carefully analyze any trends in service levels by county:

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/housing-data/reports-and-publications/>.

### Walla Walla Estimates of Service Levels Tool

This dashboard provides an overview of recent investments and service levels dedicated to eliminating homelessness in Walla Walla County. It compiles data from the Department of Commerce's 2023 and 2024 Annual Expenditures Reports ("Golden Reports"), which detail expenditures by funding source for each homeless housing project in the state. County staff submit the data to Commerce, and Commerce publishes this data in the Golden Report by December of each year. The reporting period follows the state fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).



The significant variation between SFY23 and SFY24 expenditures can be attributed to the following changes:

1. Homelessness Prevention – COVID-19 pandemic response homelessness prevention funding did not require HMIS data collection and entry so was not included in this report in SFY23. State funded homelessness prevention services following the expiration of COVID funds in SFY24 is required to use HMIS so was captured in this report, explaining the significant increase between SFY23 and SFY24.
2. Services Only – There were increases in funding for youth and young adult services. Additionally, a project that has been operating in Walla Walla County was added to HMIS in SFY24 (this project is not new but had not been reporting data in HMIS prior to SFY24).
3. Other Projects – \$2.4M of one-time funding was invested in capital funding for an affordable housing project in SFY23, causing a significant drop in SFY24. This drop in funding is also detailed in the drop of local funds outlined in the "Funding Breakdown" section on the following page.

## Housing Interventions

### Expenditures on Housing Interventions Only (2023-2024)

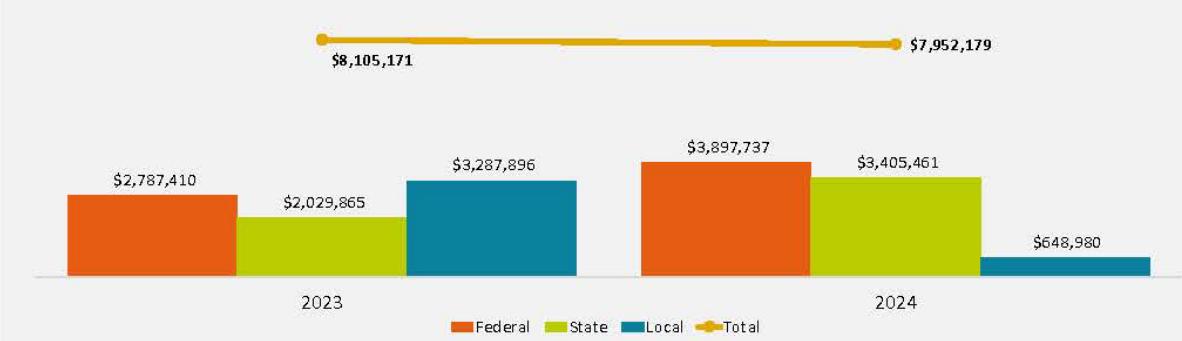


### Beds By Housing Interventions Only (2023-2024)



## Funding Breakdown

### Annual Expenditures By Funding Source (2023-2024)





ar-5646

45 Min.

**City Council - Work Session**

**Meeting Date:** 09/22/2025

**Item Title:** Ballot Proposition to create a Metropolitan Park District

**Submitted For:** Andy Coleman, Parks and Recreation, Parks Administration

**Add'l Contributors:**

**Project No:** **Funding/BARS No.:**

**Financial Comments:**

Based on the current assessed value within the City, a levy of \$0.75 per \$1,000 would mean \$3.4 million in annual revenue that could only be used for parks and recreation purposes.

---

**Information**

**HISTORY:**

There are over \$35 million in identified future parks and recreation projects with no identified funding source for these projects. Staff worked with a 21-person citizen task force earlier this year to help prioritize future projects and evaluate the viability of asking voters to approve a Metropolitan Park District (MPD). Creating such a District would provide dedicated funding to enhance, improve and maintain Walla Walla's park system.

Parks and Recreation Director Andy Coleman and Parks & Rec Visioning Task Force Member Amanda Nelson presented Task Force recommendation to City Council in work session on April 7, 2025. It was the recommendation of the Parks & Rec Visioning Task Force to place a proposition on the February 10, 2026 ballot to create a Metropolitan Park District at the levy amount of \$0.75 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Over the last five months, staff and members of the Parks, Recreation and Urban Forestry Advisory Board have worked to educate the community on the plan recommended by the Parks & Rec Visioning Task Force. Staff estimate that there have been over 1,000 personal contacts with citizens during this time. You will find attached a schedule of public engagement opportunities that have been held between May 21 and August 20. A webpage was created with information regarding the MPD plan that has received nearly 1,500 views. As part of this webpage, visitors were able to leave feedback. Please find attached the 18 comments that were left after viewing the plan.

Please find the attached presentation for further information on the plan to improve, expand and maintain Walla Walla's parks. For more information on what a Metropolitan Park District is, see the attached flyer.

**POLICY ISSUES:**

It takes City Council action to place a ballot measure before the voters.

**PLAN COMPLIANCE:**

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Strategic Objective 1: Address current and long-term projected gap between available revenue and resources, what is required to meet service levels and the objectives of the strategic plan. Initiative: Explore implementation of a Metropolitan Parks District.

**2024 PARKS AND RECREATION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:**

Objective 1.8: Explore the feasibility of establishing a Metropolitan Parks District for the purpose of creating dedicated funding for the Parks and Recreation Department.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Choose not to ask voters to create a Metropolitan Park District or select a levy amount different from what the Parks & Rec Visioning Task Force recommends.

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:**

Approved for council work session discussion.

---

**Attachments**

Presentation  
Informational flyer  
Engagement Schedule  
Feedback via web form

---

Improve,  
expand and  
maintain Walla  
Walla's parks

Creation of a  
metropolitan  
Park District



Parks & Rec Visioning Task Force recommendation was presented to City Council on April 7, 2025, by Amanda Nelson.

- **Next steps (from 4/7/25 meeting):**
  - Create a communications plan
  - Spend the next nine months educating Walla Walla citizens
  - City Council pass a resolution in the fall of 2025 to place ballot proposition on February 10, 2026 ballot



# Parks & Rec Visioning Task Force



## Parks & Rec Visioning Task Force Members

Amanda Nelson	Parks, Recreation & Urban Forestry Advisory Board
Amanda Trejo	Commitment to Community/BMAC
Angie Witt	Parent to Parent/Walla Walla Diasability Network
Brian Berry	Senior Center
Chris Ferenz	Walla Walla Public Schools
Dennis McKee	Golf/Parks, Recreation & Urban Forestry Advisory Board
Doug Hayes	Youth Soccer
Heidi McFarley	Pioneer Park Playground
Isaac Long	Parks, Recreation & Urban Forestry Advisory Board
John Czarneki	Pickleball
Jose Martinez	Youth Soccer
Laurie Fairbanks	Pioneer Park Playground/Former PRUFAB Member
Leslie Snyder	Swimming
Mike Lemma	Lacrosse
Reuben Hernandez	Campfire/Youth Sports Coach
Robert Foster	Walla Walla Public Schools
Tessa Herres	Pioneer Park Playground
Tom Holt	Ice Rink
Troy Williams	Ice Rink
Tyson Kaup	WW Summer Theather
Kol Medina	Blue Mtn Community Foundation

## **Staff / City Council / Others**

Elizabeth Chamberlain	City Manager
Andy Coleman	Parks & Recreation Director
Liz Moeller	Finance Director
Angela Potts	Recreation Supervisor
Wes Walker	Park Maintenance Supervisor
Jarrod Evensen	Facility Maintenance Supervisor
Kailey Newhouse	Administrative Specialist
Rick Eskil	City Council
Monte Willis	City Council
Bryan Cole	Mackay Sposito (consultant)

# Parks & Rec Visioning Task Force

Considered 31 future projects



# Parks & Rec Visioning Task Force

## Top 9 projects

Rank	Project
1	Mill Creek Sportsplex soccer field/parking improvements/Garrison Sidewalks
1	Add Park in South Walla Walla
3	Pioneer Park accessibility improvements(pond walls, Mckinley st, internal paths)
3	Fort Walla Walla Amphitheater Rehabilitation
3	Seasonal Ice Rink
6	Trails (Master Plan & Construction)
7	Martin Field Artificial Turf
8	Pioneer Park Playground
8	Howard-Tietan multi-use path

# How much revenue would an MPD generate?

**Total assessed value within city: \$4,606,816,783**

Levy Rate	\$0.25/1,000	\$0.50/\$1,000	\$0.75/\$1,000
Annual Revenue	\$1,151,704	\$2,303,408	\$3,455,113

# Potential Budgets

Levy Amount	0.25/1,000	0.50/1,000	0.75/1,000	
Cost for \$400,000 house	\$8.33/month	\$16.67/month	\$25.00/month	
Annual Revenue	\$1,151,900	\$2,303,802	\$3,455,702	
Financed Amount	\$5 million	\$10 million	\$15 million	10-year term
<u>Budget</u>				
Retire Debt	\$603,000	\$1,217,613	\$1,850,000	Annual payments for 10 years
Staffing	\$225,000	\$300,000	\$350,000	Project Mgr/Grant Writer, Facility Tech, GMW
Grant Match	\$100,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	
Maintenance Supplies	\$223,900	\$300,000	\$400,702	
small projects	\$0	\$156,189	\$405,000	Trails, playgrounds, splashpads, shelters, etc
Golf Course	\$0	\$40,000	\$100,000	
Senior Center	\$0	\$40,000	\$100,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,151,900</b>	<b>\$2,303,802</b>	<b>\$3,455,702</b>	

Metropolitan Park District Funding Option

<u>Top 9 projects</u>	50A	50B	75A	75B
	.50/1000 \$10 million - financed	.50/1000 \$10 million - financed	.75/1000 \$15 million - financed	.75/1000 \$15 million - financed
Pioneer Park Playground	\$2.5	\$2.5	\$2.5	\$2.5
Pioneer Park accessibility	\$1.5	\$1.5	\$1.5	\$1.5
Mill Creek Sportsplex	\$1.5	Parking, sidewalks	\$5.0	\$8.5
Add Park in South Walla Walla	\$1.0	purchase land	\$1.0	\$1.0
Fort Walla Walla Amphitheater	-	-	\$1.0	\$1.0
Seasonal Ice Rink	\$1.5	1/2 sheet w/ hockey package	\$1.5	-
Trails	-	\$1.5	\$0.2	\$0.2
Martin Field Artificial Turf	\$2.0	-	\$2.0	-
Howard-Tietan multi-use path	-	\$0.3	\$0.3	\$0.3
Total	\$10.0 million	\$10.0 million	\$15.0 million	\$15.0 million
Annual funding for Golf Course	X (40K)	X (40K)	X (100K)	X (100K)
Annual funding for Senior Center	X (40K)	X (40K)	X (100K)	X (100K)
<b>Small projects (to be completed over 10 years)</b>				
Memorial Pool Shade	X	X	X	X
MCSP Pickleball lights	X	X	X	X
Trail Construction		X	X	X
Picnic Shelters		X	X	X
Replace Aviary Net		X	X	X
Dog Park - east ward			X	X
Park Safety			X	X
Parking Lot Rehabilitation			X	X
Urban Forestry Enhancements			X	X
Martin Field Restroom			X	X
Vista Terrace parking improvements			X	X
Splashpad at Eastgate Lions Park			X	X
Restroom at Eastgate			X	X
FT WW road/parking improvements			X	X
Playgrounds	X(1)	X(1)	X(3)	X(3)
Splashpad at Jefferson Park			X	X

**Package  
recommended by  
Task Force**

# What will it cost property owners?

Cost for home assessed at \$400,000

Levy Rate	\$0.25/1,000	\$0.50/\$1,000	\$0.75/\$1,000
Annual Cost	\$100	\$200	\$300
Monthly Cost	\$8.33	\$16.67	\$25.00

Levy rate  
recommended by  
Task Force



# Property Taxes @ \$0.75/\$1,000



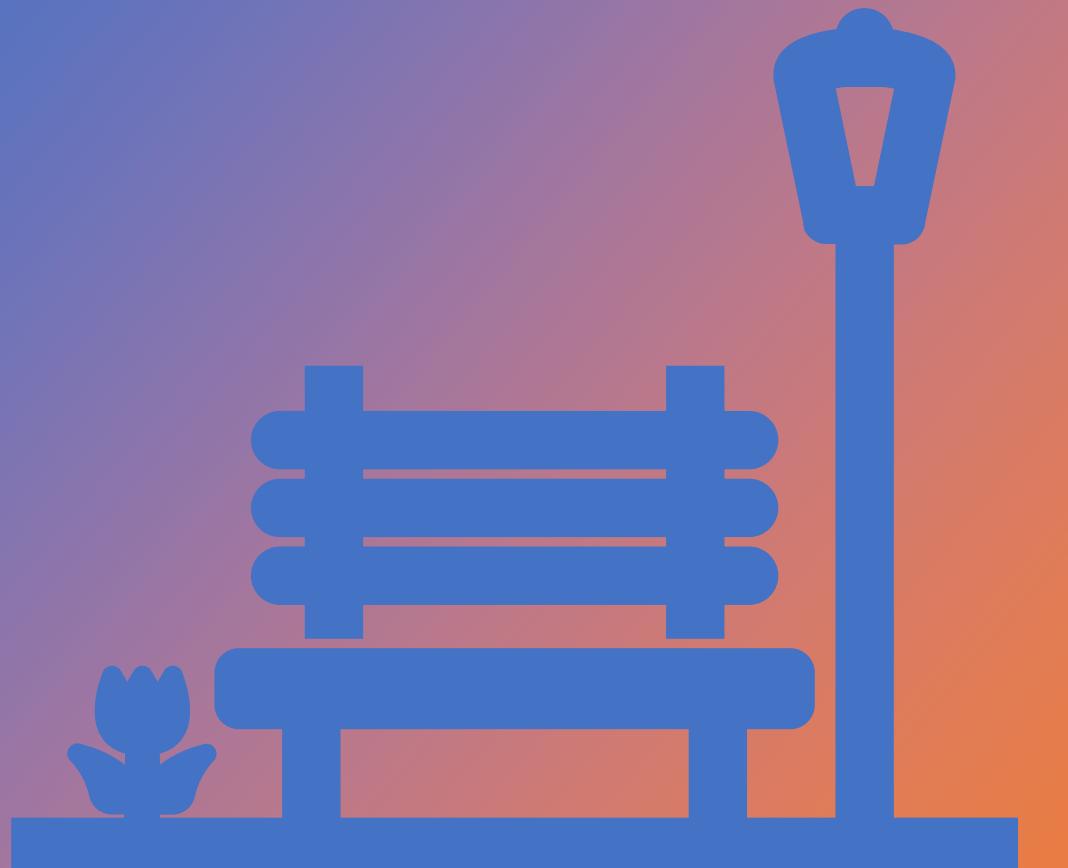
## 2025 Property Tax Breakdown

\*Source Walla Walla County Property Tax Guide

	City of College Place	Walla Walla County	City of Walla Walla
<b>Jurisdiction Taxes:</b>			
City General Fund	1.4217	-	1.64203
Metropolitan Park District			0.75000
City Debt Service	0.3891	-	0.02761
<b>Total Jurisdiction Taxes</b>	<b>1.81084</b>	-	<b>2.41964</b>
<b>County Resident Taxes:</b>			
Rural Library	0.3711	0.3687	-
Fire District 4	-	1.2600	-
County Public Roads	-	1.6315	-
<b>Total County Taxes</b>	<b>0.3711</b>	<b>3.2602</b>	-
<b>All Resident Taxes:</b>			
County Current Expense	1.0387	1.0387	1.0387
Port of Walla Walla	0.2415	0.2415	0.2415
EMS Levy	0.3754	0.3754	0.3754
State School Fund	1.6907	1.6907	1.6907
School Fund	0.9098	0.9098	0.9098
Local School General Fund	2.4927	2.5000	2.5000
	1.4369	1.1696	1.1696
<b>Total County Resident Taxes:</b>	<b>8.1857</b>	<b>7.9256</b>	<b>7.9256</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10.3676</b>	<b>11.1858</b>	<b>10.3453</b>
<b>2025 Property Taxes Based on \$400,000 Assessed Value</b>	<b>4,147.05</b>	<b>4,474.33</b>	<b>4,138.11</b>



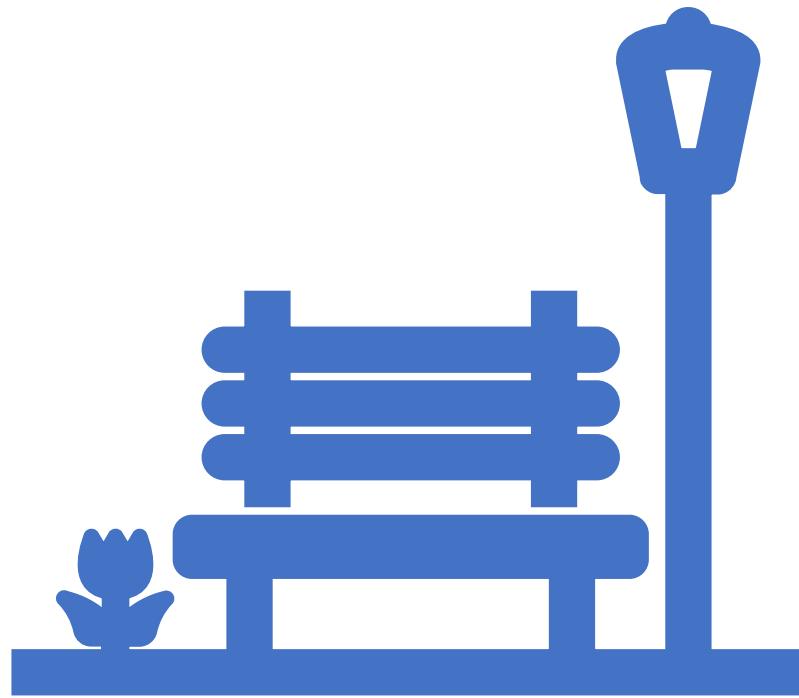
# Parks & Rec Visioning Task Force



Ballot timing  
recommended by  
Task Force

When should this proposition  
go before the voters?

- 2025 primary election (Aug 5)
- or
- 2026 special election (Feb 10)



It is important to assure continued City general fund support of Parks & Recreation

**Language in the resolution:**

“....the intent is that these funds will supplement, and not supplant, existing parks and recreation funding”

# What will be delivered if approved?

- ✓ Improved park and facility maintenance
- ✓ Golf Course annual funding
- ✓ Senior Center annual funding
- ✓ Funds to match future grants

- ✓ **Projects completed in 3 years:**

Pioneer Park improvements - Playground, pond walls, internal paths, ADA accessibility

Mill Creek Sportsplex improvements - Playfield expansion, parking, sidewalks, trails(west buildout)

Seasonal Ice Rink

Artificial turf at Martin Field

Trails - Plan & construction

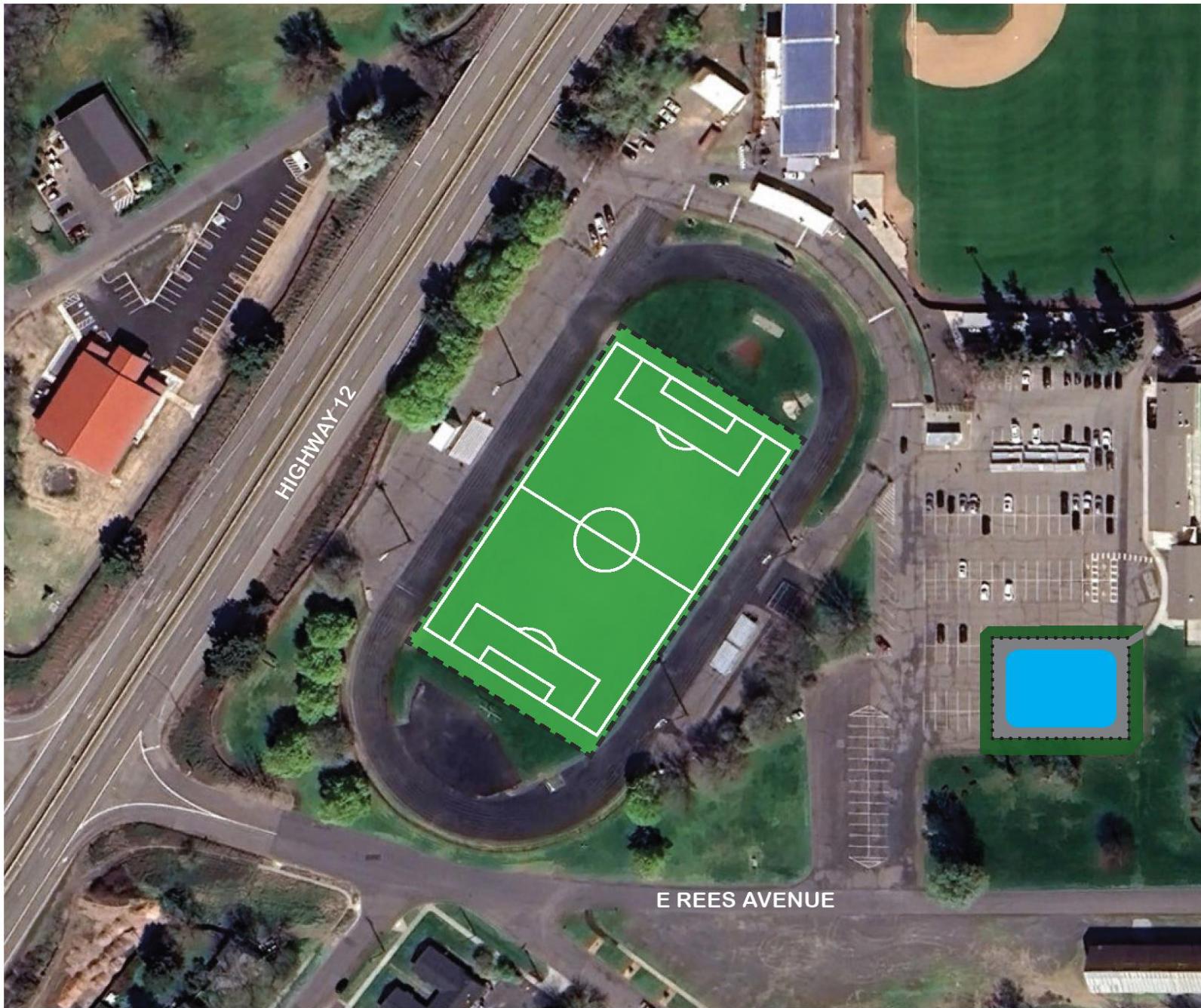
Howard-Tietan multi-use path

Funds to purchase property for a park in south Walla Walla

Funds to assist with amphitheater reconstruction

# Seasonal Ice Rink



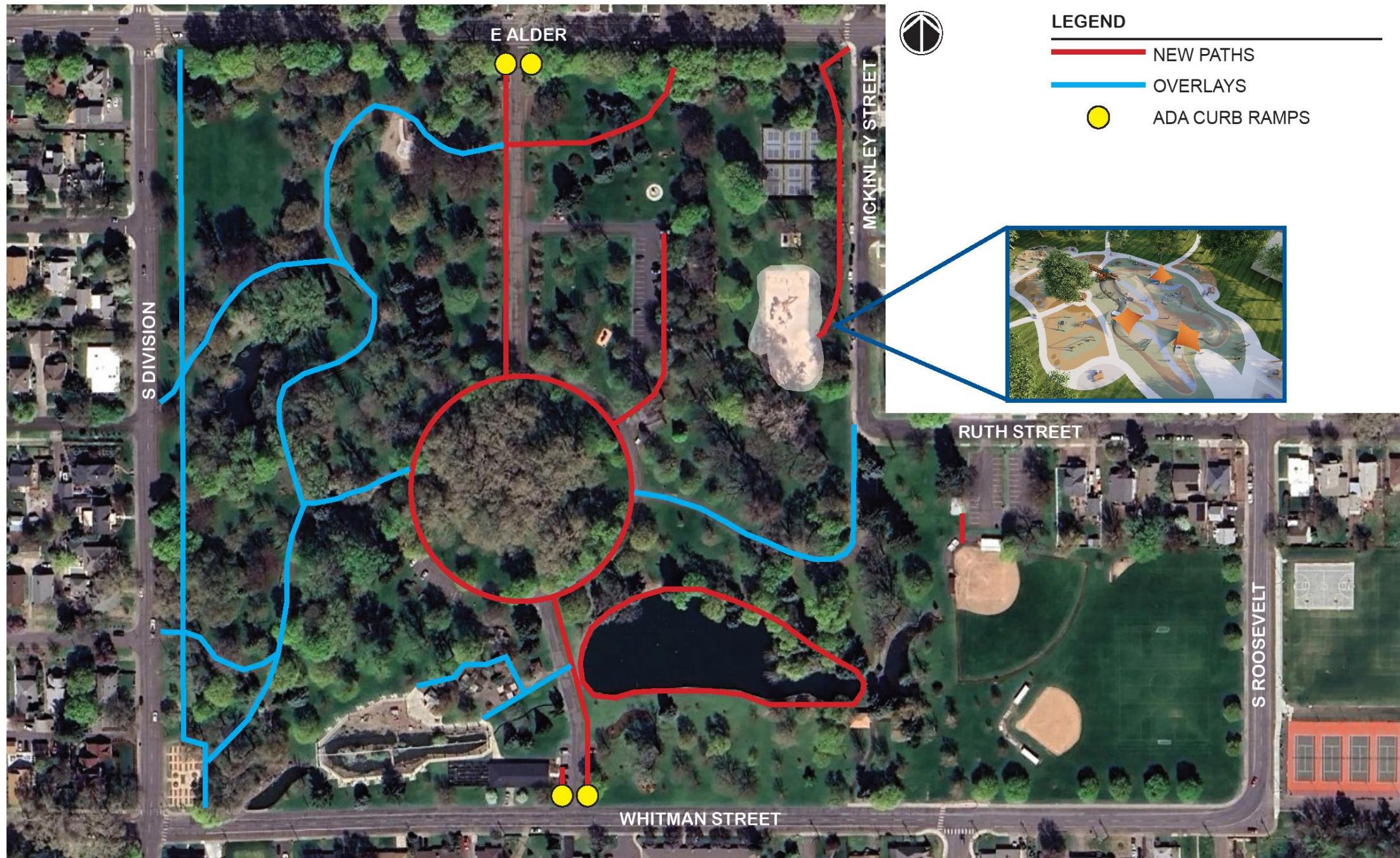


## LEGEND

- MULTI-USE FIELD
- ICE RINK

# Pioneer Park Playground





**Pioneer Park Improvements**  
MARCH 2025

# Pioneer Park Pond Wall Project

Option #1, Flattened Slope with Riprap Protection



Photograph 5: Option #2, Gabion Baskets



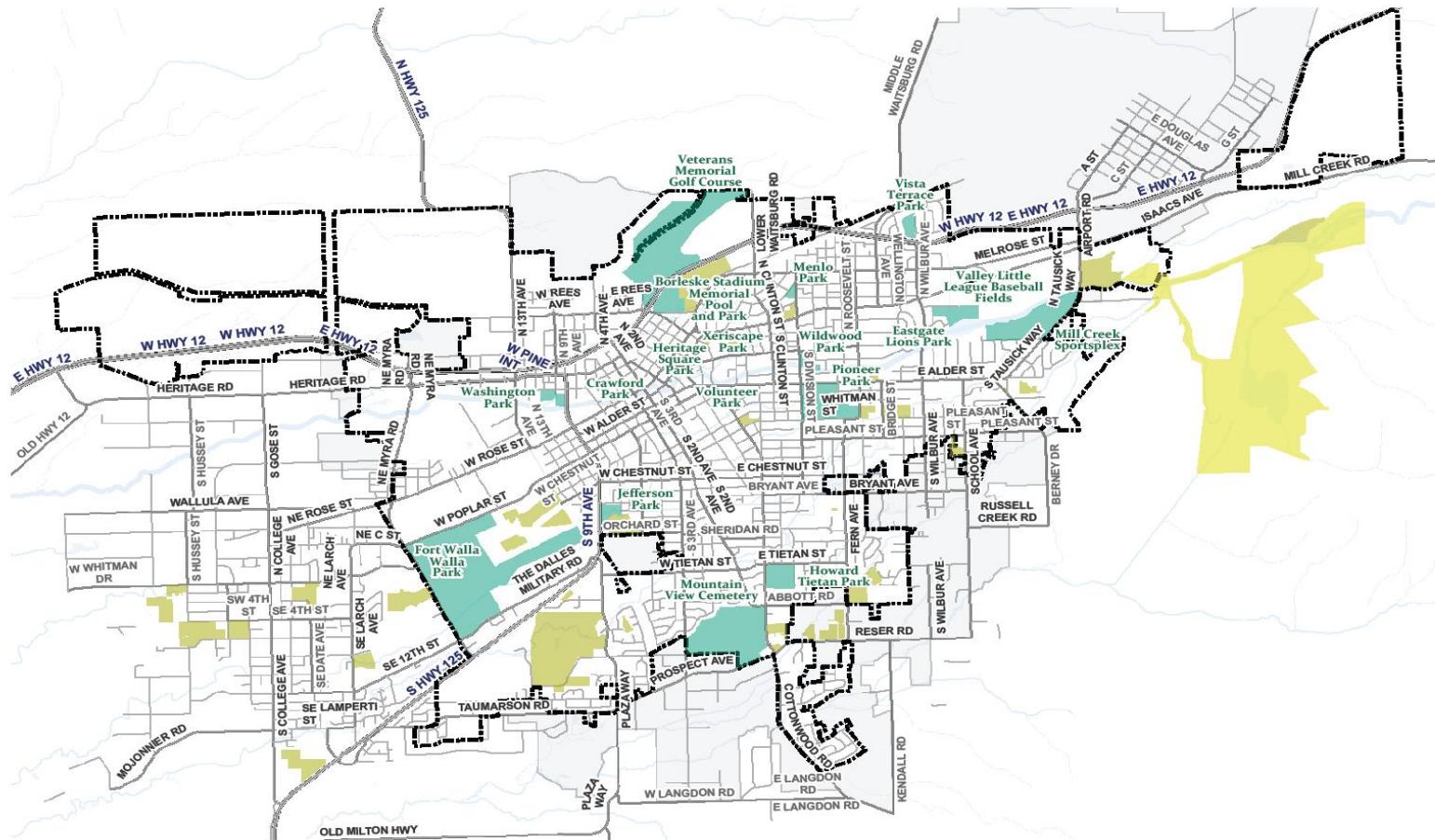
Photograph 4: Option #2, Segmental Block Retaining Wall



# Mill Creek Sportsplex







NON-PAVED TRAIL



LEVEE TRAIL



MULTI PURPOSE TRAIL



REGIONAL TRAIL

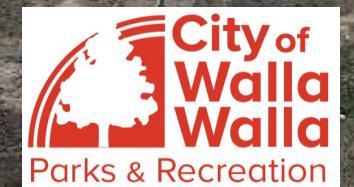


NEIGHBORHOOD TRAIL

## Myra Road to 6th Avenue



## Gose Street to Myra Road

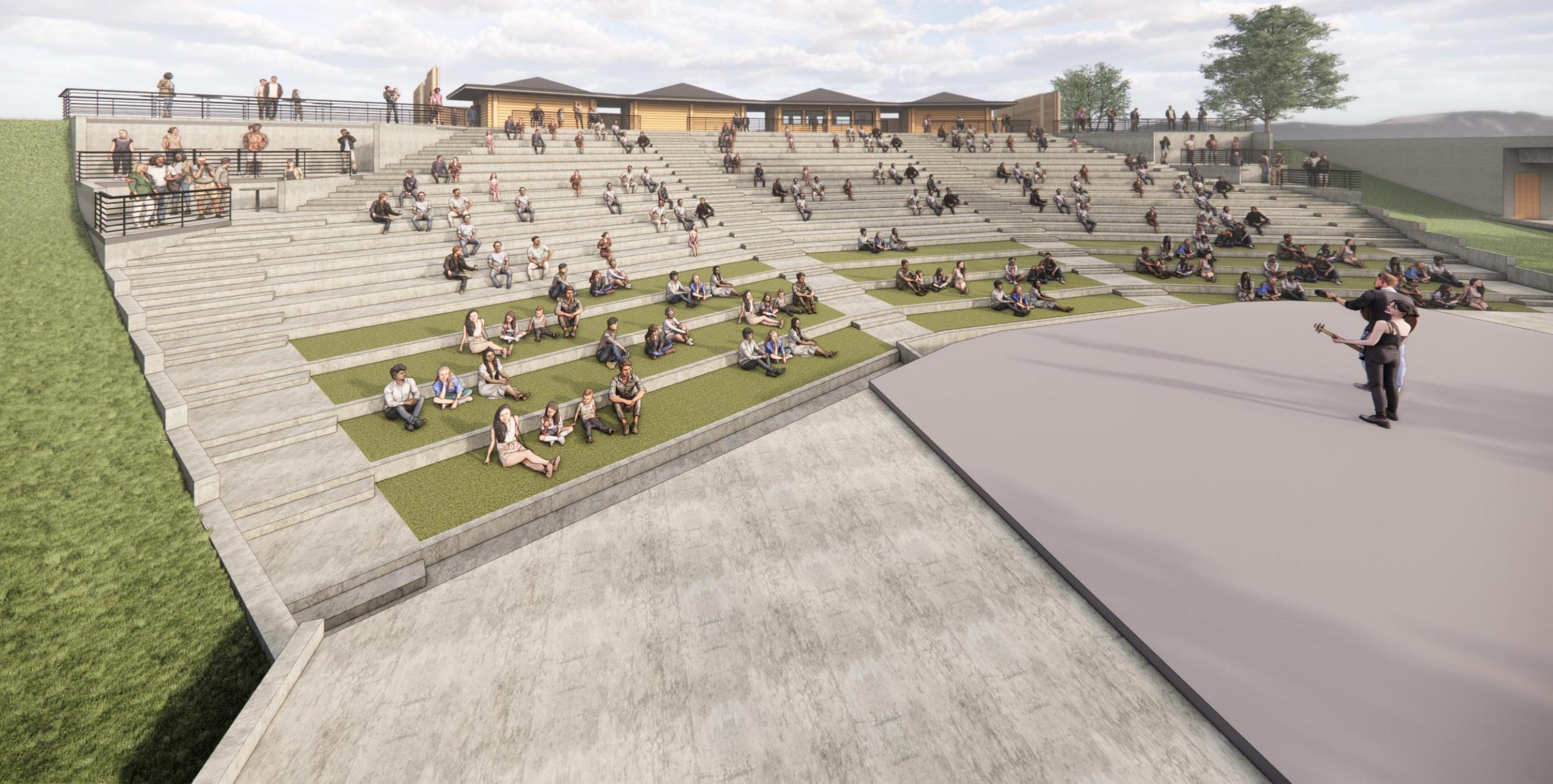




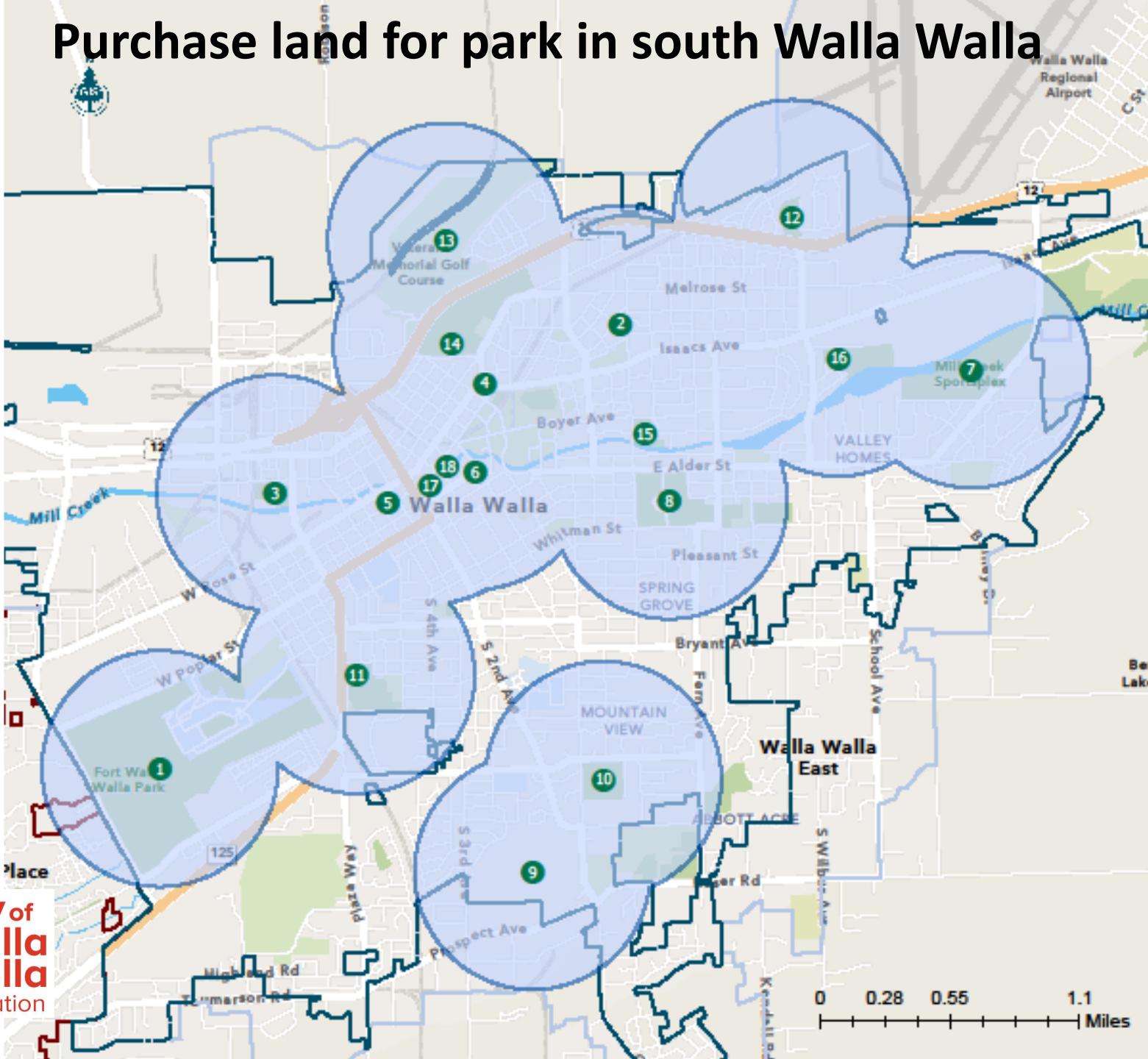
## Howard-Tietan Park Improvements

MARCH 2025

\$1 million towards Fort Walla Walla Amphitheater project (\$6.9 million)



# Purchase land for park in south Walla Walla



## Legend

- Parks and Open Space
- County Boundary
- Walla Walla City Limit Line
- City of Walla Walla Urban Growth Area Line
- College Place City Limits Line
- Parks Half Mile Buffer

Park Number	Name
1	Fort Walla Walla Park
2	Menlo Park
3	Washington Park
4	Xeriscape Park
5	Crawford Park
6	Volunteer Park
7	Mill Creek Sportsplex
8	Pioneer Park
9	MV Cemetery
10	Howard Tietan Park
11	Jefferson Park
12	Vista Terrace Park
13	Veterans Memorial GC
14	Memorial Pool
15	Wildwood Park
16	Eastgate Lions Park
17	Wala Wala Plaza
18	Heritage Square Park

# What will be delivered if approved? (continued)

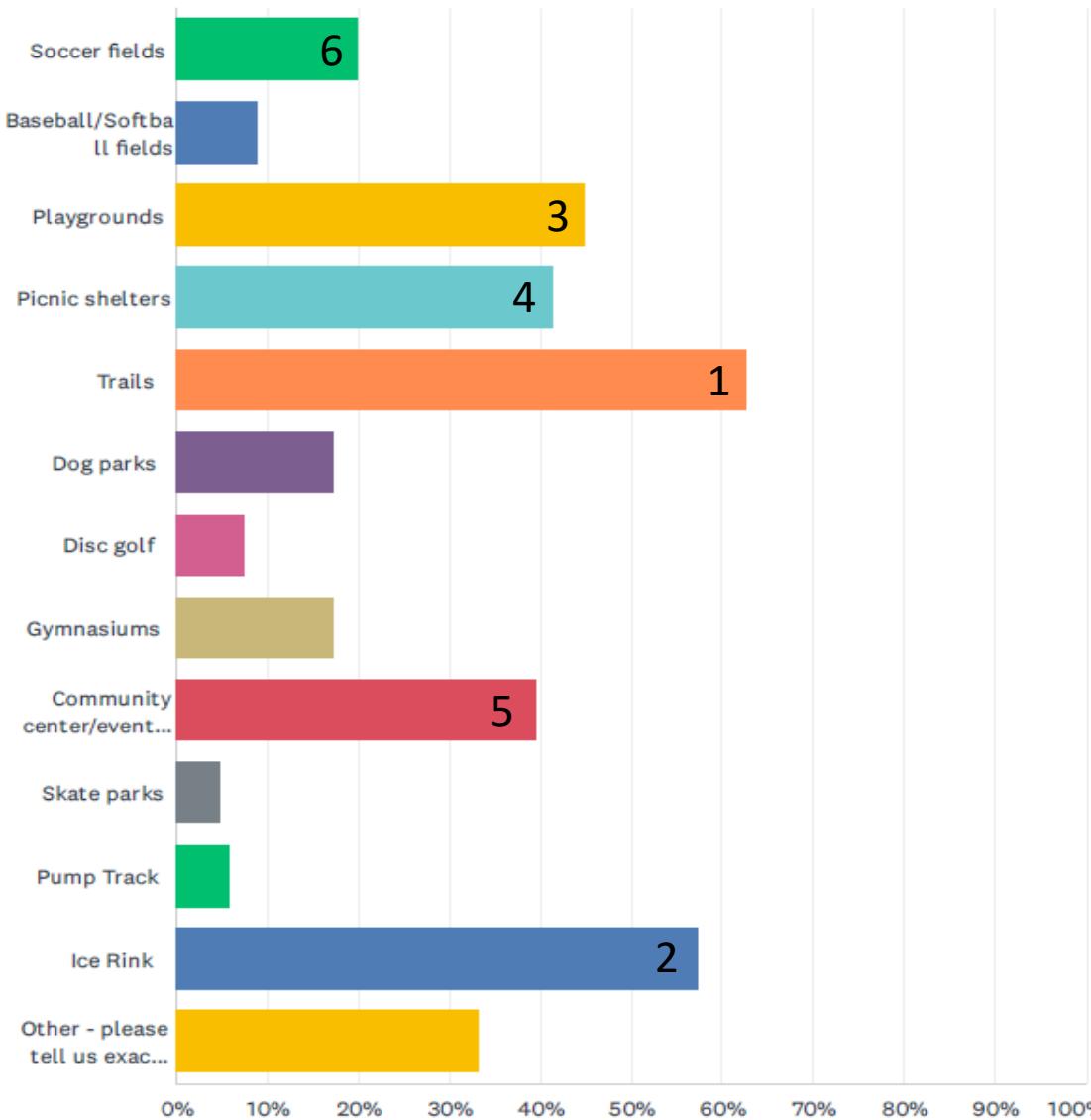
## ✓ **Projects completed over the next 10 years:**

Memorial Pool shade structures  
Pickleball Lighting at MCSP  
Six miles of trails  
Dog Park (east ward)  
Restroom at Martin Field  
Vista Terrace Park parking improvements  
Splashpad at Eastgate Lions Park  
Restroom at Martin Field  
Fort Walla Walla Park parking and road improvements  
Picnic shelters  
Rebuild three playgrounds  
Splashpad at Jefferson Park  
Security cameras  
Enhanced urban forestry

Q9 Please select the types of parks and recreation facilities you would like the City to concentrate its resources constructing, updating, or adding more of.

Answered: 225 Skipped: 113

2023



# Outreach efforts since May 21<sup>st</sup>:

Staff and Parks, Recreation & Urban Forestry Advisory Board Members have held 35 community engagement opportunities

- Every park
- Senior Center Board
- Senior Center users
- Golfers
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July in the Park
- Parks & Rec Day
- Walawála Plaza – each Thursday for 12 weeks



It is estimated that there have been over 1,000 contacts with community members through these efforts

**Seems to be strong support from the majority of those that staff have discussed the plan with.**

# Virtual Open House - webpage

- Nearly 1,500 visits
- 19 comments by visitors
- 3 comments opposed



A screenshot of the Metropolitan Park District webpage. The header features a green and yellow design with the words "improve", "Expand", and "Maintain" in large white letters, followed by "Walla Walla Parks" in a smaller white box. Below the header are several images of park facilities: a riverwalk, a swimming pool, a tennis court, and a person walking. The main content area has a green sidebar with links like "Metropolitan Park District", "Parks &amp; Recreation", "Metropolitan Park District", "Metropolitan Park District", and "Metropolitan Park District". The main text discusses the formation of a Metropolitan Park District to support long-term investment in parks and recreation. The footer includes a "Font Size" button, a "Share &amp; Bookmark" button, and a "CONTACT" section with links to "Parks &amp; Recreation Director" (Andy Cole, 509.524.4100, acoleman@cityofwallawalla.gov).

# Other communication methods

- Flyers (English & Spanish)
- Sandwich Boards (English & Spanish)
- Emails
- Educational videos

## Metropolitan Park District 3-Year Planned Improvements

The top nine projects were selected by the Parks and Recreation Visioning Task Force to reflect the community's current and future recreational needs. These priorities align with feedback from the 2023 Walla Walla Parks and Recreation Resident Survey.



Pioneer Park Playground  
Concept Rendering



Multi-use Field & Seasonal Ice Rink



Fort Walla Walla Amphitheater  
Concept Rendering



## 2024 Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan – Goals and Objectives

Objective 1.4: Acquire land sufficient for a neighborhood park in the south portion of the city or Urban Growth Area in order to develop a park to meet the needs of residents in this developing area of the city.

Objective 1.5: Maintain and expand funding in order to maintain parks at high levels of service.

Objective 1.6: Explore options to provide parks and recreation facilities within a  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile walk of 80 percent of Walla Walla's population.

Objective 1.8: Explore the feasibility of establishing a Metropolitan Parks District for the purpose of creating dedicated funding for the Parks and Recreation Department.



Objective 1.9: Research and initiate the conversion of select natural grass fields to artificial turf.

Objective 3.6: Create a trails master plan for the city that is developed in coordination with the City's Transportation Plan and the Blue Mountain Regional Trails Plan.

Objective 3.3: Conduct a feasibility study for the development of a community center.

Objective 3.12: Explore the feasibility of a seasonal ice rink facility.

# City of Walla Walla – Strategic Plan – 2024-2028

Strategic Objective 1 (What)	Initiatives (Transition to How)	Timeframe (When)
1. Address current and long-term projected gap between available revenue and resources, what is required to meet service levels and the objectives of the strategic plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement REET 2 whether through a legislative fix or place as future ballot measure.</li></ul>	2025-2026
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HB 1590 advocacy; .1% sales tax for affordable housing and behavioral health.</li></ul>	2024-2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore implementation of a sales tax for E911.</li></ul>	2025-2027
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adoption of the additional .1% sales tax for the Transportation Benefit District.</li></ul>	2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support studies to implement development impact fees (parks and fire).</li></ul>	2025-2026
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore implementation of a Metropolitan Parks District.</li></ul>	2025-2027
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fee ordinance / fees for service</li></ul>	2025

# Parks, Recreation & Urban Forestry Advisory Board

- Held a special meeting on March 31 to receive the Parks & Rec Visioning Task Force report and formulate a recommendation to City Council.
- Voted unanimously in favor of a motion encouraging City Council to adopt a resolution to place the Metropolitan Park District proposition at the \$0.75/\$1,000 levy rate on the February 10, 2026, ballot.
- Multiple meetings since and have not waivered.



# Metropolitan Park District

# Questions?



# Improve      Expand      Maintain

## Walla Walla Parks



### Background

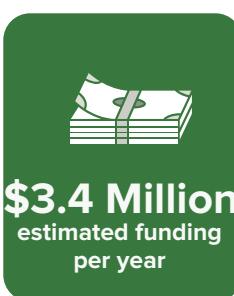
The City of Walla Walla is exploring the formation of a Metropolitan Park District (MPD) to support long-term investment in parks and recreation. A MPD is a special-purpose taxing district with dedicated authority to raise funds, to manage, maintain, improve, and expand parks and trails. The City is inviting residents to provide input on the potential creation of a MPD and to learn more about the proposed projects that could be achieved within three to 10 years of its implementation.

### When would improvements be seen?

Improvements would begin immediately, with nine major projects scheduled for completion within the first three years, alongside additional projects planned over the following decade.

### How much would it cost?

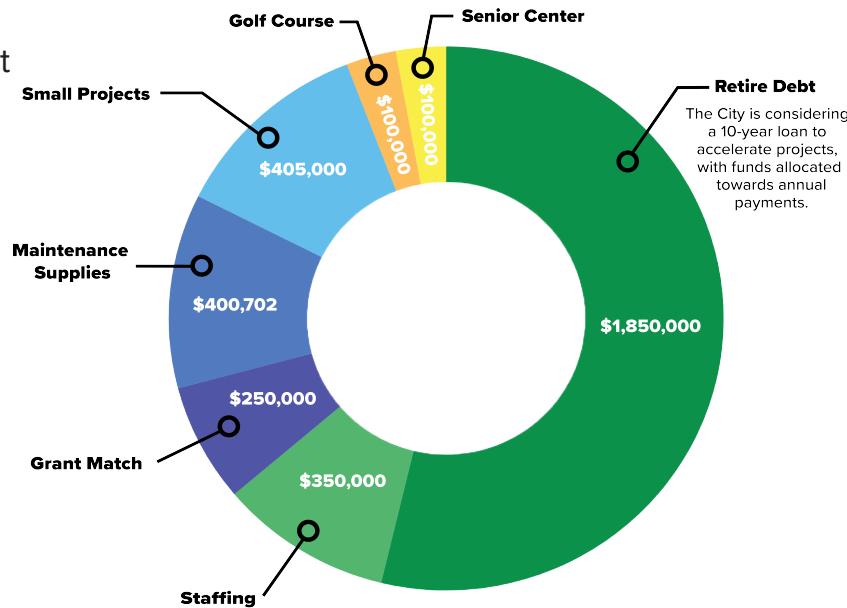
On March 31, 2025, the Parks, Recreation & Urban Forestry Advisory Board unanimously voted to encourage City Council to adopt a resolution to place the Metropolitan Park District proposition at the \$0.75/\$1,000 levy rate on the February 10, 2026, ballot.



### What role would a Metropolitan Parks District play in supporting funding for parks and recreation?

The current budget allows Parks & Recreation to maintain existing services, but additional funding is needed to complete future projects and expand amenities. Due to competing priorities in the city's General Fund, relying solely on it may limit meeting growing community needs. A dedicated funding source would provide consistent, sustainable support for Walla Walla's 15 parks, golf course, aviary, pool, trails, and historic cemetery. Program revenues, fundraising, and grants also help support these facilities. Additional funding would improve aging infrastructure, expand recreational offerings, and maintain high operational standards.

### Preliminary MPD Annual Budget



### Contact

Andy Coleman  
Parks & Recreation Director  
509.524.4576  
acoleman@wallawallawa.gov



Scan to visit  
the MPD webpage



# Metropolitan Park District

## 3-Year Planned Improvements

The top nine projects were selected by the Parks and Recreation Visioning Task Force to reflect the community's current and future recreational needs.

These priorities align with feedback from the 2023 Walla Walla Parks and Recreation Resident Survey.



Pioneer Park Playground  
Concept Rendering



Multi-use Field & Seasonal Ice Rink



Fort Walla Walla Amphitheater  
Concept Rendering



### 10-Year Improvements



**Splashpad Construction**  
Eastgate Lions Park, Jefferson park



**East Ward**  
dog park



**Memorial Pool**  
Shade Structure

**Martin Field**  
Restroom



**Rebuild**  
3  
Playgrounds

3

Construct  
6 miles  
of Trails



Increase the number  
of City trees and  
improve maintenance



**Pickleball Lighting**  
Mill Creek Sportsplex



**Security**  
Improvements

**Parking Improvements**



Fort Walla Walla  
Vista Terrace Park

# Metropolitan Park District

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a Metropolitan Park District (MPD)?

A MPD is a junior property taxing district with special taxing authority for the management, control, improvement, maintenance, and acquisition of parks, pathways, boulevards, recreational facilities, programs, and services.

### Who pays this tax?

Property owners within the boundaries of the City of Walla Walla would pay this tax.

### Would this tax expire?

The tax does not expire.

### Who would oversee the Walla Walla MPD?

The MPD would be governed by the Walla Walla Metropolitan Park District Board, consisting of the Walla Walla City Council.

### Could MPD funds be used for other City of Walla Walla needs?

No. By state law, MPD funds can only be utilized for parks and recreation-related facilities, programs, and services.

### How would MPD revenue be spent?

MPD funds will be spent on park development, maintenance, trails, and recreational programs and facilities as outlined in the Parks and Recreation Plan or annual capital and operating budgets approved by City Council.

### Who would determine what the MPD revenue will be spent on?

The City Council, in its role as the Walla Walla Metropolitan Park District Board, would approve the MPD budget.

### What are the funding priorities for the MPD?

The preliminary budget for the proposed MPD outlines strategic investments in key areas that support long-term sustainability and service expansion. Designated funding would support additional staffing, grant matching opportunities, essential maintenance supplies, and small-scale improvement projects. It would also provide dedicated support for Veterans Memorial Golf Course and the Walla Walla Senior Center.

### General Fund and MPD: Shared Support Model

The MPD would work in partnership with the City's General Fund to support parks and recreation. While the General Fund has historically contributed to park operations, its fluctuations and competing demands make it an unstable long-term solution. By establishing the MPD, the City would create a reliable, dedicated funding stream specifically for parks, trails, and recreational services.

Using both funding sources together allows for greater impact — maximizing the number and scope of projects that can be completed. This combined approach ensures not only the continued maintenance of existing parks and facilities, but also meaningful expansion and improvements that reflect the community's needs and aspirations.

Contact

Andy Coleman  
Parks & Recreation Director  
509.524.4576  
acoleman@wallawallawa.gov



Scan to visit  
the MPD webpage



### **MPD Engagement Schedule**

<b><u>Day</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Format</u></b>
Wednesday	May 21	12:00 to 1:00 p.m.	Golf Course	Key Communicators
Wednesday	May 28	4:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Mill Creek Sportsplex	Community Drop-in
Thursday	May 29	10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Walawála Plaza	Community Drop-in
Thursday	May 29	1:00 to 2:00 p.m.	Senior Center	Senior Center Board Mtg
Tuesday	June 3	8:30 to 9:30 a.m.	Fulton Community Room	State of the City Mtg
Wednesday	June 4	5:00 to 6:00 p.m.	Eastgate Lions Park	Community Drop-in
Thursday	June 5	8:30 to 9:30 a.m.	Fulton Community Room	State of the City Mtg
Thursday	June 5	10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Walawála Plaza	Community Drop-in
Thursday	June 5	6:00 to 7:30 p.m.	West Ward Town Hall @ Wash Park	Information Booth
Wednesday	June 11	4:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Vista Terrace Park	Community Drop-in
Thursday	June 12	10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Walawála Plaza	Community Drop-in
Thursday	June 12	11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Senior Center	Presentation to Members
Wednesday	June 18	5:00 to 6:00 p.m.	Pioneer Park (near Band Stand)	Community Drop-in
Thursday	June 19	10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Walawála Plaza	Community Drop-in
Wednesday	June 25	4:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Wildwood Park	Community Drop-in
Thursday	June 26	10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Walawála Plaza	Community Drop-in
Friday	July 27	4:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Heritage Square	Community Drop-in
Friday	July 4	10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	4th of July in the Park	Information Booth
Wednesday	July 9	5:00 to 6:00 p.m.	Menlo Park	Community Drop-in
Thursday	July 10	10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Walawála Plaza	Community Drop-in
Thursday	July 10	4:30 to 6:30 p.m.	Library	Comp Plan Open House

Wednesday	July 16	4:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Memorial Pool & Park	P&R Day Event
Thursday	July 17	4:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Howard-Tietan Park	Community Drop-in
Thursday	July 17	10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Walawála Plaza	Community Drop-in
Wednesday	July 23	5:00 to 6:00 p.m.	Memorial Park/Martin Field	Community Drop-in
Thursday	July 24	10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Walawála Plaza	Community Drop-in
Friday	July 25	4:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Heritage Square	Community Drop-in
Wednesday	July 30	4:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Washington Park	Community Drop-in
Thursday	July 31	10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Walawála Plaza	Community Drop-in
Wednesday	August 6	5:00 to 6:00 p.m.	Jefferson Park	Community Drop-in
Thursday	August 7	10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Walawála Plaza	Community Drop-in
Wednesday	August 13	4:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Fort Walla Walla Park (near playground)	Community Drop-in
Thursday	August 14	10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Walawála Plaza	Community Drop-in
Friday	August 15	4:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Heritage Square	Community Drop-in
Wednesday	August 20	5:30 to 6:30 p.m.	Veterans Memorial Golf Course	Golfer Invitation

## Feedback received through City informational website

### Comment 1

Projects sound great! Maybe include a project for a natural area? Something for "forest bathing"?

### Comment 2

Why that tax rate? Can you do a smaller amount?

This sounds like a lot of nice to have but not must have items. Given how much the City has raised rates already for utilities and how much our property taxes have gone up, plus all the new WA state taxes coming our way, plus the 911 tax you plan to ask for in August, this is too much. We will need to make sure people have food and housing in the years ahead, not golf courses.

### Comment 3

I love this plan. Thank you for all the planning and collection of community feedback that went into this proposal. I will be supporting

### Comment 4

Please find a way to adopt the rails to trails from Melrose to downtown.

### Comment 5

When will this be voted on?

If approved I feel the path around pond in pioneer Park must be the first project. I am sure the city will be sued if someone gets hurt

### Comment 6

Why is pioneer park's playground getting a downgrade?

Honestly Pioneer park should be getting the same treatment as the playground of dreams in Columbia park, Tri Cities.

This new proposed playground is technically has less features than the existing playground.

Inclusivity for all ages is the antithesis of a playground.

In an age where child-focused spaces are dwindling, a playground should be the last place aiming to be age inclusive.

### Comment 7

Children and athletes:

Children and athletes are particularly vulnerable to the potential health effects of artificial turf due to their higher rates of exposure through playing on the surface, inhaling dust, and potentially ingesting microplastics.

Respiratory irritation and asthma:

VOCs and SVOCs released from the turf can cause respiratory irritation and asthma in some individuals.

Endocrine disruption:

Phthalates and other chemicals found in the turf can disrupt the endocrine system, potentially affecting reproductive health and development.

Microplastic ingestion and absorption:

Microplastics released from the turf can be ingested or absorbed through the skin, potentially leading to health concerns.

Microplastic pollution:

Microplastics released from the turf can contaminate soil, water, and the wider environment.

Impermability:

Artificial turf is impermeable, which can lead to increased runoff and reduced water infiltration, impacting local ecosystems.

Heat absorption:

Artificial turf can absorb and retain heat, creating hotter surfaces compared to natural grass, which can lead to skin burns and other heat-related problems.

#### . Mitigation Strategies:

Choosing turf without PFAS: Some manufacturers are now offering turf that claims to be free of PFAS, but it's important to check the product for independent testing and certifications.

Proper cleaning and maintenance: Regularly cleaning and maintaining artificial turf can help reduce the amount of dust and microplastics that are released into the environment.

Using natural alternatives: Consider using natural alternatives like wood mulch or engineered wood fiber for play areas, which can provide a safer and more environmentally friendly option.

#### \*\*Research and advocacy

Comment 8

This is awesome!

Comment 9

What is the expected tax cost for a homeowner (per \$100k of property value)?

Has using MPD funding to subsidize (or more fully subsidize) recreation fees been considered. For example, decreased entry cost to Memorial Pool, lower cost for participation in parks & rec sports and activities.

What is the likely cost of interest on the loan? What is the urgency? How much would be possible without borrowing money? making Walla Walla a sustainable place for working-class people to live is a MAJOR PROBLEM, and expanded parks and recreation facilities simply are not the most critical place to direct resources at this time. The high cost of housing, whether buying or renting needs to be addressed. Additional taxes for property owners only raises the cost of housing in our community. Using property tax as the funding source is especially problematic given the increase in the cost of real estate compared to wages; the value of my house (and the basis for our property taxes) has DOUBLED since buying it but my income (which pays property taxes) has not even come close to doubling during the same time period.

Much of the proposed expansion and improvement will benefit the most privileged people in our community, i.e. people with the time and money to engage in recreation. Yes, some of this is aimed at youth (splashpads and playgrounds), but other developments (lighting for pickleball) are clearly not. I would view the proposal more favorably if more of the funding were directed at increasing access to recreation (free or reduced pool access, free or lower cost sports/activities, etc.).

I don't see the urgency for these projects that would justify taking on interest-bearing debt (with a 10-year commitment) to accelerate development. What's the hurry?

A non-expiring tax concerns me. I acknowledge that the General Fund is not a reliable source of money for projects, but the very nature of this limitation is arguably a good thing--recreation projects are only undertaken when funds allow this, and financial commitments are kept to a short term. Moreover, this appears to be an additional tax for additional amenities; the description clearly indicates that the parks could "remain at [their] current operational level" without the creation of the MPD.

Full disclosure: I traditionally support taxes for services and infrastructure. I'm a runner and biker with kids. We live near Pioneer Park and would benefit from the projects described here. I just do not think this is a high priority for investment right now.

Comment 10

I love that this exists and would appreciate being involved where possible.

Investing in new spaces / activities that attract young families and create new activities for tourists to enjoy should be prioritized. I love the idea of investing in trails and our sports complexes.

Some other potential ideas:

- investing in additional trails at Bennington
- investing in additional trail heads / parking spaces in the Blue Mountains for mountain biking, etc.
- investing in making veterans pool open longer (April through September?) or adding a bubble to make it year round
- investing in additional outdoor water areas (maybe along mill creek or at pioneer park)
- creating walking or biking paths along the existing railroad tracks

Comment 11

Is the tax rate up for discussion? It sounds high.

How can city residents speak into the priorities and sequence of proposed projects? How is community need assessed? Will funds be re-allocated suddenly if something else breaks down (say, at Memorial Pool?)

Where would the ice rink be located? While ambitious, this sounds amazing!

needed! As a parent and relatively new homeowner, I have great respect for the school district's levies, which balance much-needed improvements with fiscal responsibility; the district communicates extremely well about planned and completed projects and even returns excess funds by lowering the levy! Please bear this model in mind, as it has created trust in the community and helped those who do not personally have children in the school district to support the levies.

Please also plan ways to maximize usage of newly improved areas, so that trails and enhanced parks remain safe and visible. Would a mother with young kids feel comfortable using the trail or park on her own, for example? Some of our current trails and parks do not fit this category. This proposal is exciting and I look forward to hearing more!

Comment 12

What kind of improvements will be done to the Mill Creek trail system near Myra Road? A trail already exists in that area, would this involve paving the trail? Is the goal to connect this portion of the Mill Creek trail to the current paved recreation path on the east side

Comment 13

I do not support this at this time. I'm being taxed to death and after my husband died 3 yr ago unexpectedly, I'm barely making it.

Comment 14

Have you found the property you hope to purchase for this park on the south side of town?

How many acres are you planning on purchasing on the south side for the new park?

Comment 15

It's all lovely but the cost is too much at this time! An ice rink - really?

And why does the tax not retire after 10 years?

Walla Walla is not really growing. Housing is so expensive and this will make it worse.

We don't live in city limits but have commercial rental properties downtown and would have to pass this on to our tenants.

Comment 16

When will pioneer park pond repair start? Is it safe to assume the pond that is being repaired the one across from the aviary on I am looking forward to pioneer park repairs and to the new playground!

Comment 17

Did I hear correctly that the area around the bandstand in Pioneer Park would receive a side walk for people walking around the center circle don't have to walk in the road?

About the proposed trails...

Please include some shade, resting stops, and bathroom. Maybe a water bottle refill station?

Trees would be very welcome!

**Comment 18**

What is the interest rate on the existing loan wanting to be retired?

Have seniors and low income home owners been polled about how much this much tax would affect them?

Where do the grant match funds come from and are they in danger of going away? How does WW compare to other populations in spending on parks? Has there been a citizen and government study group working on the needs assessing long term/ short term needs? What are the needs for kids- elderly ie within walking range of living ( there is a universal value for this

Are county folks who are across street from city included or taxed. Initially on first impression this seems like a very high taxation for low income home owners and this is coming from a person who loves and supports parks.

**Comment 19**

Who decided on these 9 priorities

Can these 9 plans be changed/reorganized in level of priority?

Most of these ideas should fall under the cities maintenance budget

In light of the country's and cities poor leadership and financial realities, it is NOT a good time to look at such frivolous expense



ar-5754

45 Min.

**City Council - Work Session**

**Meeting Date:** 09/22/2025

**Item Title:** Review Strategic Plan Implementation

**Submitted For:** Elizabeth Chamberlain, City Manager Office

**Add'l Contributors:**

**Project No:** **Funding/BARS No.:**

**Financial Comments:**

2025-2026 Budget

---

**Information**

**HISTORY:**

The 2024-2028 Strategic Plan was adopted by City Council at the July 24, 2024 regular council meeting (Resolution 2024-077). A year into the Strategic Plan implementation, staff will bring forward to council a status update of where we are at with the initiatives identified in the plan. Attached is the strategic plan objectives and initiatives with a column added identifying the status of implementation of the particular initiative.

**POLICY ISSUES:**

No decision, status update only.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Status update only.

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:**

Approved for council work session discussion.

---

**Attachments**

Status Update Strategic Plan Implementation

---

# Strategic Plan Implementation Status (August 2025)

2024-2028 Strategic Plan adopted July 24, 2024 Resolution 2024-077

## LIVABILITY

Strategic Objectives (What)	Initiatives (Transition to How)	Timeframe (When)	Status of Implementation
1. Address the housing needs within the community (see needs assessment Regional Housing Action Plan).	• Develop an annexation strategy for the city's urban growth area.	2024-2025	Timeframe should be revised to 2027 to align with the comprehensive plan update (complete December 2026). Countywide Planning Policy work completed early 2025.
	• Continued implementation of the Regional Housing Action Plan recommendations.	On-going	Housing ad-hoc committee continues work. Next meeting Oct 7.
	• Collaborate and work with private sector to identify barriers to employment.	2025-2027	Not started.
	• Ensure infrastructure capacity to meet future growth.	2025-2028	On-going work; linked with first initiative
2. Address the gap in youth and teen activities.	• Identify and address the gap and collaborate with youth service providers to expand services.	2025-2026	On-going work

Red = Not started Initiative

Green = Started/In Process/On-going

Purple = Completed

# ECONOMIC HEALTH

Strategic Objective (What)	Initiatives (Transition to How)	Timeframe (When)	Status of Implementation
1. Collaborate with local and regional partners to achieve economic resilience in the Walla Walla Valley.	• Adopt and implement the tourism master plan.	2024	Completed – Implementation ongoing
	• Identify ways to support activities through allocation of lodging tax revenues.	2024-2026	2025-2026 awards begin to implement tourism master plan; on-going work
	• Continued advocacy of Highway 12, Phase 8.	2024-2028	On-going work
	• Collaborate with Port of Walla Walla and partners on recruitment of family wage jobs/opportunities with a focus on properties within the city limits (linked with housing objective).	2024-2028	Not started
	• Support community partners on addressing the childcare shortages through collaborating with licensed providers on creative solutions.	2025-2028	CDBG Completed zoning amendments to streamline permitting for daycares (worked with Early Learning Coalition)
	• Maintain inventory for readiness of commercially zoned land for development potential.	2024-2026	Not started
2. Increase shopping opportunities in the Walla Walla Valley.	• Actively recruit commercial development.	On-going	On-going work

Red = Not started Initiative

Green = Started/In Process/On-going

Purple = Completed

## SAFE COMMUNITY

Strategic Objective (What)	Initiatives (Transition to How)	Timeframe (When)	Status of Implementation
1. Strengthen the Community Paramedic Program.	• Secure sustainable funding sources.	On-going	Completed/on-going
	• Expand the program to include mental and social health services.	2024-2025	Completed
2. Identify funding for streets and sidewalks.	• Secure funding for Pavement Management Program, address sidewalk and ADA gaps.	2025-2028	Not started

## HIGH PERFORMING ORGANIZATION

Strategic Objective 1 (What)	Initiatives (Transition to How)	Timeframe (When)	Status of Implementation
1. Address current and long-term projected gap between available revenue and resources, what is required to meet service levels and the objectives of the strategic plan.	• Implement REET 2 whether through a legislative fix or place as future ballot measure.	2025-2026	Not successful 2025 legislative session; 2026 legislative session try again
	• HB 1590 advocacy; .1% sales tax for affordable housing and behavioral health.	2024-2025	Work started but placed on hold with other initiatives taking priority
	• Explore implementation of a sales tax for E911.	2025-2027	Completed
	• Adoption of the additional .1% sales tax for the Transportation Benefit District.	2025	Not started
	• Support studies to implement development impact fees (parks and fire).	2025-2026	Traffic impact fees in process; not started other impact fee analysis
	• Explore implementation of a Metropolitan Parks District.	2025-2027	In process

Red = Not started Initiative

Green = Started/In Process/On-going

Purple = Completed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fee ordinance (fees for service GF) and a process to routinely update.</li> <li>Levying the banked levy capacity.</li> </ul>	2025	In process
		2025-2026 (budget)	Completed/1% property tax ongoing with each budget cycle
2. Support employee wellbeing and mental health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop further resources for first responders for mental health services specific to fire, law enforcement, and dispatch.</li> </ul>	2025-2026	<p>In process</p> <p>Finishing the improved alerting system at both fire stations and dispatch</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify resources to address burnout and stress management.</li> </ul>	On-going	In process/on-going
3. Support how we recruit, develop, and retain diverse talent to serve our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a comprehensive Employee Recognition program.</li> </ul>	2025	Not started
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an organization staffing plan to identify staffing to sustain current and future levels of service.</li> </ul>	2025-2026	<p>Part in process with cost-of-service study work.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support training for managers and supervisors to use the Q12 survey results in the continuation of improving employee engagement.</li> </ul>	2025-2026	<p>In process/on-going</p> <p>Held training for supervisors with Gallup in Q4 2024</p>

**Red = Not started Initiative**

**Green = Started/In Process/On-going**

**Purple = Completed**