

2046 Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan

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City of Walla Walla

SCJ Alliance

Project Information

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Background Information

Geography

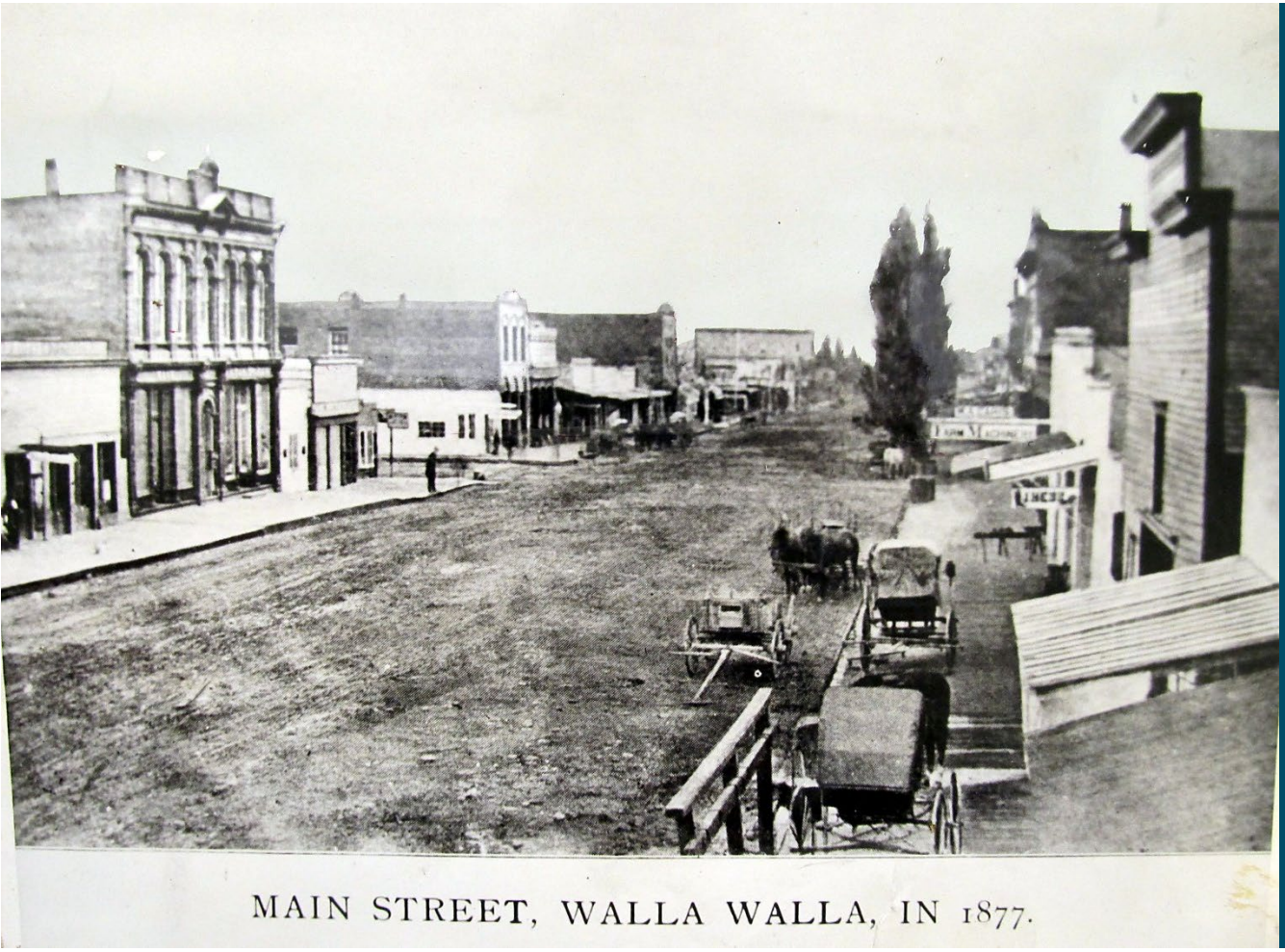
The City of Walla Walla, in Walla Walla County, sits in the southeastern quadrant of Washington State, near the borders of Oregon and Idaho. It is located between the Cascade and Rocky Mountains in the Columbia Basin. The characteristics of the topography are a result of past geologic epochs (Miocene and Pleistocene) that created the east-west trending series of folded rock layers that resulted in the existing terrain called the Yakima Fold Belt. It is these series of folded, and subsequently faulted, layers that provide much of the valley with its sole water source and the City with an important supplement to its primary source, which is Mill Creek. The City's location reinforces it as a tight-knit urban settlement sitting in the lap of the remarkably diverse and productive agricultural Walla Walla Valley. The City of Walla Walla is and has always been self-reliant.

Mill Creek traverses east-west through the City of Walla Walla and through College Place before its confluence with Walla Walla River. Walla Walla means "many waters" in the Sahaptin language of the local Native American tribe. The city of many waters includes various tributaries of the Walla Walla River including Mud Creek, Yellowhawk Creek, Birch Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Caldwell Creek, Russell Creek, and various other small streams.

History

Walla Walla's site was a traditional meeting place for Native American tribes of the region. This location was in the path of Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery and contact with local tribes was made in October 1805 and again in April 1806. Fur traders established what would become Fort Walla Walla near the confluence of the Walla Walla and Columbia Rivers in 1818, and the Whitman Mission was established in 1836. Walla Walla County was established in 1854, and the Treaty of 1855 was signed one year later, forcing the tribes onto reservations and out of the desirable Walla Walla Valley. The United States military established a military fort also bearing the name of Fort Walla Walla on the site of the current Jonathan M. Wainwright VA Medical Center in 1858, and the community of Walla Walla began forming adjacent to the fort.

At its incorporation in 1862, Walla Walla was principally involved in supplying miners in Idaho but by the late 1880s, railroads and the side hill harvester transformed the economy and the rolling hills surrounding Walla Walla into vast wheat fields.



MAIN STREET, WALLA WALLA, IN 1877.

Agriculture continues to be an important economic player in the Valley. Wheat is still king, but it is joined by livestock and other crops, including fruits and vegetables. The development of the signature Walla Walla onion and the emergence of grapes and wine production have more recently further diversified Walla Walla's bounty and added to its appeal as a destination for tourists as well as residents.

Many buildings within the City of Walla Walla that date back to the 1800s and early 1900s have been restored and are being used as restaurants, galleries, shops, and wine tasting venues.

As the Cradle of Northwest History, Walla Walla created and has sustained a diverse and active culture, supporting the longest-continuously operating symphony orchestra west of the Mississippi; Whitman College, a top-ranked liberal arts college; Walla Walla County Fairgrounds historic Fort Walla Walla and Fort Walla Walla Museum; and an award-winning Main Street program downtown.

Walla Walla Then and Now

Walla Walla has grown into a stable and proud community. While its remote location initially helped to define it as a community, it is ever more accessible in the 21st century, with daily flights to and from Seattle, ensuring its continued evolution. Through this Comprehensive Plan, Walla Walla seeks to take charge of its future, building on its past and present for a sustainable future.



Vision Statement

Walla Walla — the best of the best of the Northwest.

Residents see Walla Walla as a tourist destination, a farming hub, a college town and a retirement community, often all at once. They agree that the City's natural character is what makes Walla Walla unique and worth preserving. It's what draws people here, encourages them to stay, and welcomes them home after time away. Without that natural character, Walla Walla would be just another small city.

The elements of the comprehensive plan together portray a Walla Walla that:

- Preserves its identity and livability while adapting to change.
- Is inclusive of all people and celebrates its diverse community.
- Fosters an atmosphere of economic diversity.
- Preserves and builds on its history and culture.
- Enhances the natural environment.
- Supports transparency and collaboration in government.





Plan Structure, Use, and Success

Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA)

The Growth Management Act (GMA) is a Washington State law that guides how communities plan for growth. It requires the city to develop and adopt a comprehensive plan and establish a framework for managing growth, protecting resources, and coordinating public services. Adopted in 1990, the GMA sets specific requirements for adopting, amending, and periodically reviewing the plan. We must regularly evaluate our plan to ensure it aligns with Statewide goals and that it remains responsive to our changing conditions.

Plan Components and Structure

Each element of this Plan contains goals, followed by policies that support those goals. Elements also include policy connections to illustrate how they relate to and reinforce other elements in the Plan. In addition, the Plan provides guidance on how policies translate into action, outlining the City's approach to implementation over the lifespan of the Plan. Appendices offer detailed data and analysis that inform and provide context for the goals and policies and all source citations referenced throughout the Plan are compiled in the References section.

- Goals describe the outcomes the City aims to achieve over the 20-year life of the Comprehensive Plan, i.e., the year 2046. They express our long-term aspirations, whether stated as measurable targets or general directions for future change. Goals are not guarantees or mandates; they represent what we are striving toward over time.
- Policies should be understood as if they begin with "Our general approach is to…" Policies provide guidance for developing or revising specific rules and strategies, such as development regulations, budgets, and program or facility plans. When city officials make decisions, they typically rely on ordinances, resolutions, budgets, or plans that incorporate and reflect the Comprehensive Plan's policies, rather than referring directly to the Plan itself.

Plan Intended Use

The Plan is intended to be used by the entire community. Residents, businesses, developers, city staff, and city officials can rely on this plan to understand and support the city's long-term vision. It serves as our 20-year guide for how we will grow and change through 2046.

Because the Comprehensive Plan is a long-range policy document, it is not a regulatory code. Instead, it provides direction for future updates to development regulations, public investments, and local programs. As a broad blueprint, the Plan may not align perfectly with every individual permit decision. The Walla Walla Municipal Code is the primary tool for implementing the Plan's goals and policies. When zoning regulations and the Comprehensive Plan conflict, Washington law requires that zoning govern land use decisions.

Plan Success

Looking ahead to 2046, the success of this Plan means:

- Transit access, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and regional connectivity support mobility and accessibility.
- Transportation, utilities, and public services serve the community.
- Growth reflects the city's identity, including its historic core, distinctive neighborhoods, and human-scale design.
- Housing is available and attainable across income levels and life stages, and existing neighborhoods are strong and vibrant.
- The local economy is resilient and diverse, supporting industries from agriculture and wine to small businesses and emerging sectors of technology and manufacturing.
- Climate considerations are integrated into the city.
- Transit access, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and regional connectivity.
- City staff and officials use the Plan to guide the development of municipal code regulations.





Element Summaries

The 2046 Comprehensive Plan Elements are briefly described below. Each Element can be understood on its own, but they are best viewed in the context of the City's Vision Statement and as interconnected components of the Comprehensive Plan, including its supporting appendices and references.

Public Outreach and Engagement

The Public Outreach and Engagement section highlights how community input actively guided the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Through meaningful engagement, residents helped shape the planning process itself, and their feedback directly informed the goals and policies found throughout the other elements. This section reflects the essential role the community played in setting the direction for Walla Walla's future.

Community Character

The Community Character Element addresses the look and feel of Walla Walla and how people interact with their environment and each other. The policies in this section will help ensure that as Walla Walla continues to grow, the character remains unchanged.

Land Use

The zoning code is largely grounded in the Land Use Element. Its goals and policies guide responsible growth by directing development to areas with services, coordinating planning within the Urban Growth Area, supporting a range of housing and mixed-use options, and ensuring compatibility between land uses. Together, these principles help maintain quality of life, protect natural resources, and promote healthy, connected, and equitable neighborhoods.



Housing

Walla Walla faces a growing need for housing across all income levels, including households with extremely low, very low, low, and moderate incomes. Statewide projections show significant demand for new affordable homes, especially for residents in the lower income bands. The Housing Element responds to this need by supporting a wider range of housing types, increasing the community's ability to meet projected housing demand and offering more affordable options for all households.



Economic Development

The Economic Development Element focuses on sustaining the City of Walla Walla's long-term prosperity. While agriculture, tourism, the arts, education, and downtown commerce remain core strengths, the goals and policies support diversifying the economy by encouraging growth in stable, year-round sectors such as light manufacturing, technology, professional services, skilled trades, creative industries including film and media production, and value-added agriculture.



Historic Preservation

The City of Walla Walla's historic character is reflected in the architecture of its downtown and original neighborhoods. The Historic Preservation Element carries forward the goals and policies from the City's Historic Preservation Plan, focusing on protecting significant buildings and celebrating the community's heritage. This element supports continued recognition through local and national listings and encourages the repair and rehabilitation of historic and contributing properties.



Parks and Recreation

The City of Walla Walla's parks and recreation system is one of the community's most valued assets. The Parks and Recreation Element carries forward the goals and policies from the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, focusing on maintaining the high level of service provided

by existing parks, facilities, and programs. It also supports planning for future needs as the community grows and recreation preferences evolve.



Environment and Natural Resources

The Environment and Natural Resources Element focuses on the City of Walla Walla's natural setting. Policies center on protecting water, air, soil, and other features of our natural environment for now and the future by meeting current needs without sacrificing the needs of future generations.



Shoreline

The City of Walla Walla's Shoreline Master Program (SMP) is captured within the Shoreline Element. The goals and policies carried forward from the SMP focus on preventing harm from uncoordinated shoreline development while also protecting the rights of property owners. Together, they guide balanced, responsible stewardship of the city's shoreline areas.



Transportation

Safe, multi-modal, well-connected transportation systems within the City of Walla Walla are the main goals of the Transportation Element, which is a condensed version of the full Transportation Plan developed in tandem with the Comprehensive Plan.

Capital Facilities and Utilities

The Capital Facilities and Utilities Element is centered upon ensuring that the City of Walla Walla will have adequate public facilities and utilities to provide for future growth while maintaining high levels of service for residents and customers.

Climate Resilience

The Climate Resilience Element outlines the City of Walla Walla's goals and policies to prepare the community for climate related risks. It emphasizes strengthening community resilience, protecting people and infrastructure, and adapting to changing conditions. This work supports Washington State's broader climate resilience goal by aligning local actions with statewide efforts to build safer, more resilient communities and to help meet emission-reduction targets by 2050.



Public Outreach and Engagement

Public Involvement

Engagement activities were conducted throughout 2025 and early 2026 to share information, gather input, and involve residents, stakeholders, and decision-makers in the Comprehensive Plan update. These efforts included stakeholder interviews, an online community survey, mini polls, open houses, written comments, and ongoing presentations and outreach.

Early engagement began with orientation interviews, which helped identify key issues and priorities. Broader outreach was achieved through open houses, the online survey, and targeted efforts, providing multiple opportunities for participation. Materials for major public events were available in both English and Spanish to support broader access.

The City also conducted presentations with boards, commissions, community organizations, and partner agencies, and accepted written comments throughout the process. Together, these efforts provided a strong foundation of input to guide the plan. To see full results and an in-depth summary, refer to Appendix VII. Engagement Report.



Engagement Activity & Response Summary

The comprehensive plan public engagement survey was available for approximately six months and received 281 complete responses and 185 partial responses. Four mini polls that were focused on community vision, community character, economic development, and housing each received more than a hundred responses. Orientation interviews included 20 stakeholders representing a broad range of perspectives.

The July 2025 open house collected 243 penny poll votes, and the October 2025 open house collected 147, providing the public with additional opportunities to review and respond to emerging ideas. The City also conducted over 40 presentations and targeted outreach with more than 20 different agencies and organizations to broaden participation and gather additional input.

Stakeholder Interviews

Orientation interviews were conducted with 20 stakeholders in early 2025. Participants represented a broad cross-section of community interests, including business, housing, education, healthcare, transportation, historic preservation, and social services.

Housing was consistently identified as a top priority. Stakeholders noted a shortage of housing across income levels and household types, along with barriers related to infrastructure, cost, and regulatory requirements. Many emphasized the connection between housing availability and the ability to attract and retain workers.

Key Priorities

- **Economic disparities persist**
- **Growth is uneven and constrained**
- **Water resources are under pressure**
- **Cultural amenities are improving**
- **Economic sustainability is uncertain**
- **Coordination and communication need improvement**

Transportation was also a key topic. While recent improvements were recognized, stakeholders identified ongoing needs related to transit access, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and regional connectivity. Economic development discussions focused on diversifying the local economy, supporting family-wage jobs, and strengthening coordination among local partners.

Stakeholders also discussed parks, facilities, and community identity. Walla Walla's parks system and overall quality of life were viewed as strengths, though participants noted opportunities to expand access, improve connectivity, and better reflect the community's cultural diversity.

Community Survey and Mini Polls

The community survey and mini polls provided a broad snapshot of community priorities and concerns. Survey responses highlighted strong support for maintaining Walla Walla's character while planning for future growth. Respondents identified pace of life, community identity, and access to nature as defining qualities of the city. Many emphasized the importance of supporting local businesses, maintaining a vibrant downtown, and providing a mix of housing options.

Respondents indicated that there are not enough rental and ownership options to meet community needs, and many reported challenges related to availability, cost, and quality. Responses to questions about future housing showed a range of perspectives, reflecting both recognition of the need for additional housing and differing views on where and how growth should occur.

Survey results also identified concerns related to growth, including increased demand for services, rising costs, traffic, and environmental impacts. In addition, respondents expressed interest in expanding economic opportunities, improving parks and recreation access, and maintaining the community's overall livability.

Key Priorities

Community Character

- **Pace of life (23.4%), identity (19.8%), and access to nature (19.7%) are top community values.**
- **Parks generally meet needs (24.3%), with demand for accessibility (14.3%) and trails (13.8%).**

Community Vision

- **Vision alignment is strong, with 56.1% rating it "well" or "spot on".**
- **Preserving identity while adapting (29.1%) and inclusivity (21.3%) are top priorities.**
- **Perceptions of transparency (21.8%) and inclusivity (19.7%) are mixed.**
- **Supporting local businesses is widely valued (78.5%), more than transportation access (37.1%).**
- **Growth concerns center on services (19.4%), housing (17.0%), and traffic (16.2%)**

Housing

- **Most respondents own (65.0%) or rent (31.2%) their homes.**
- **Housing supply is insufficient across incomes (62.5% rental, 68.7% ownership).**
- **Affordability is a key issue (17.0%), especially for younger residents (26.1%).**
- **Rental challenges include availability (21.5%) and quality (17.5%).**

- Preferences are mixed with support for all housing types (31.0%) and limiting neighborhood growth (29.5%).

Economics and Workforce

- Desired growth industries include agriculture (19.6%), retail (18.6%), and healthcare (16.7%).
- Retaining young people depends on housing (26.1%), jobs (20.5%), and local businesses (20.3%).
- Business support priorities include amenities (17.2%), training (15.6%), and incubators (15.2%).



Summer Open House

The first open house was held on July 10, 2025, at the Walla Walla Public Library. The event introduced the planning process, shared information about upcoming opportunities for involvement, and invited participants to provide input through interactive activities. Materials were provided in both English and Spanish.

The open house included a penny poll, map-based activities, and open-ended comment opportunities. Housing affordability and availability received the highest level of interest in the penny poll, followed by social services and economic vitality. Additional topics receiving support included environmental protection, parks and recreation, and infrastructure.

Participants also provided location-based feedback on large maps and shared input on what makes Walla Walla unique. Comments highlighted the importance of housing, transportation improvements, local businesses, and maintaining a safe and connected community.

Key Priorities

- **Strong support for existing investments and expanding parks and infrastructure.**
- **Desire to diversify the economy beyond tourism and support local businesses.**
- **Housing affordability and availability are urgent concerns.**
- **Preference for infill development and more transparent, equitable land use decisions.**
- **Need for more parks, recreation options, and neighborhood access to open space.**



Figure 1. Engagement Board at the Summer Open House



Figure 2. The scene at the Fall Open House

Fall Open House

A second open house was held on October 15, 2025, at the Walla Walla Public Library. The event provided an update on the planning process and allowed participants to review and comment on emerging ideas.

Housing affordability and availability again ranked as the highest priority. Parks and recreation, environmental considerations, and transportation were also identified as important topics. Written comments emphasized support for infill development, interest in additional housing options such as accessory dwelling units, and the importance of preserving historic character.

Participants also identified needs related to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, traffic calming, utilities, and continued investment in existing neighborhoods.

Key Priorities

- Strong interest in affordable, flexible housing solutions, including ADUs and small-scale housing types.
- Preference for infill development and limiting expansion of the Urban Growth Area.
- Support for economic development that combines local business growth with community benefit.
- Emphasis on environmental protection, including floodplains, agriculture, and watershed health.
- Desire for expanded parks, trails, and recreation opportunities for all ages.

Written Comments

The City received written comments from community members throughout 2026. These comments reflected interest in staying informed and involved, while also raising specific ideas and concerns related to housing, redevelopment, downtown conditions, economic development, and quality of life.

Several comments focused on practical strategies to support development, including reducing barriers to housing, encouraging redevelopment in targeted areas, and addressing parking and infrastructure needs. Others highlighted concerns related to noise, air quality, and overall community livability.

These comments provided additional input from community members who may not have participated in other engagement activities and helped reinforce key themes identified throughout the process.

Key Priorities

- **Strong interest in staying informed and involved in the planning process.**
- **Housing affordability and redevelopment are key concerns.**
- **Downtown parking and economic development remain ongoing issues.**
- **Environmental factors like noise and air quality are important to residents.**
- **Overall quality of life is a central theme across feedback.**

City-Led Presentations

City staff conducted presentations and briefings throughout the planning process to share updates and gather input. These included Planning Commission and City Council meetings, community events, and presentations to local organizations, service clubs, schools, and development groups.

Staff also coordinated with tribal governments, state agencies, and regional partners by sharing draft materials and inviting feedback. Additional outreach included participation in community events and direct engagement with local organizations.

These efforts helped expand awareness of the Comprehensive Plan update, reach new audiences, and provide additional opportunities for input outside of formal public meetings.

Key Takeaways from Engagement

Housing

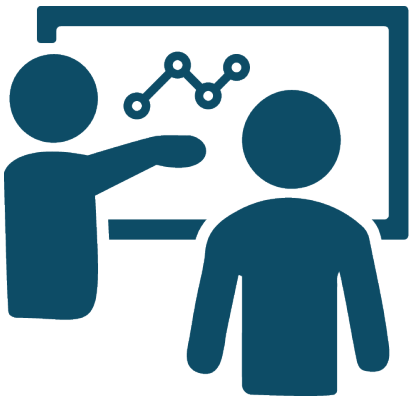
Housing was most consistently identified as a priority across interviews, surveys, open houses, and written comments. Residents and stakeholders described affordability and availability as major concerns, while also raising questions about where and how new housing should be accommodated.

- Housing affordability and availability were the top priority at both open houses.
- 62.5% of respondents said there are not enough rental housing options for a range of incomes and family sizes.
- 68.7% of respondents said there are not enough ownership housing options for a range of incomes and family sizes.
- Stakeholders identified housing affordability as one of the most urgent issues facing the community.

Community Character and Livability

Community members expressed strong interest in preserving the qualities that make Walla Walla distinct while planning for future growth. Comments repeatedly emphasized balancing change with quality of life, small-town character, and local identity.

- The pace of life (23.4%), community identity (19.8%), and access to nature and green spaces (19.7%) were the aspects of Walla Walla most important to respondents.
- The top growth concerns were increased demand for services (19.4%), housing affordability (17.0%), traffic congestion (16.2%), environmental impacts, and loss of small-town character (15.5%).
- Write-in comments emphasized affordability, public safety, parks and trails, a vibrant downtown, and preserving community character while managing growth.



Transportation and Connectivity

Transportation emerged as a recurring concern, particularly around safety, access, and connectivity. Community members and stakeholders alike identified the need for a more connected, efficient, and comfortable transportation system.

- Transportation access and safety were identified as one of the top three overall themes from the fall open house.
- 37.1% of respondents said it is very important that Walla Walla has public transportation and non-motorized modes of travel that are easily accessible and available, while 40.8% said this is somewhat important.
- Stakeholders noted ongoing needs related to transit access, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and regional connectivity.

Economic Opportunity

The engagement process showed broad support for a strong local economy that provides jobs, supports local businesses, and helps retain residents over time. Comments often linked economic opportunity to housing, affordability, and long-term community stability.

- Desired industry expansion included agriculture (19.6%), retail (18.6%), and healthcare (16.7%).
- The top priorities for retaining young people were affordable housing (26.1%), access to jobs (20.5%), and local businesses (20.3%).
- Respondents said business development would be best supported through amenities that attract business (17.2%), training programs (15.6%), and incubators (15.2%).
- Write-in comments emphasized economic diversification, living-wage jobs, streamlined permitting, affordable commercial space, and addressing vacant storefronts.



Parks, Recreation, and Environment

Parks, recreation, and environmental stewardship were important parts of how residents described both Walla Walla's identity and priorities for the future. Feedback showed support for maintaining and improving access to recreational amenities while also protecting natural systems.

- Parks and recreation and environmental protection both received notable support in open house engagement, and parks, recreation, and open space were identified as a top three theme at the fall open house.
- The top park improvement priorities were improved accessibility for all ages and abilities (14.3%) and more natural areas, habitat restoration, and/or trails (13.8%).
- 24.3% of respondents said Walla Walla's current parks and recreation amenities already meet their needs.
- Stakeholders described the parks system as a community strength, while also identifying opportunities to improve access and connectivity.

What We Heard

Taken together, the engagement results show that residents want Walla Walla to remain livable, distinctive, and community oriented as the city grows. Across engagement methods, people consistently pointed to the need for more housing options, better affordability, safer and more connected transportation, strong local economic opportunity, and continued investment in the places and qualities that define Walla Walla.





Community Character

Introduction

This Element focuses on the community's physical qualities and the ways people experience the built environment. Community character emerges from the interplay of architectural styles, scenic views, streetscapes, transportation systems, parks and open spaces, special attractions, landmarks, and natural features.

Community character shapes the daily lives of Walla Walla residents and visitors, influencing physical activity, public health, personal safety, and economic vitality. Considering community character requires looking beyond appearance to understand how well the community functions. More broadly, community design is informed by other comprehensive planning elements and serves as a valuable tool for thinking holistically about a community while addressing a wide range of social and functional goals. The city's beauty and livability will be key to maintaining and attracting residents, visitors, and businesses.

Today and Tomorrow

Conditions Today

The City is known for its exciting history. Often referred to as the Cradle of Inland Northwest History, the City of Walla Walla's rich Native American heritage includes the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla tribes. Pioneer history features include the Whitman Mission and Fort Walla Walla.

The City's unique and diverse neighborhoods include an active, pedestrian-oriented historic downtown, thriving residential areas, viable industrial areas, and a variety of open spaces. The City's edge and beyond is surrounded by agriculture and the foothills of the Blue Mountains. It is useful to think of these distinct areas as "character areas."

Character Areas Defined

Defining Character Areas helps us better understand the evolution of the city and its overall personality. Analyzing the components that define local neighborhoods also helps to guide future zoning as well as to preserve and celebrate the city's neighborhoods.

Character Areas are areas or districts with identifiable characteristics that contribute to the City's identity, livability, and diversity. The general locations of each area are identified on the accompanying map.

Methodology

Character areas were defined by reviewing the zoning map, land use plan, aerial photography, and field observations. Detailed characteristics may include land use, lot size, setbacks, building style, landscape, streetscape, age of development, signage, fencing, architectural appurtenances, and streets.

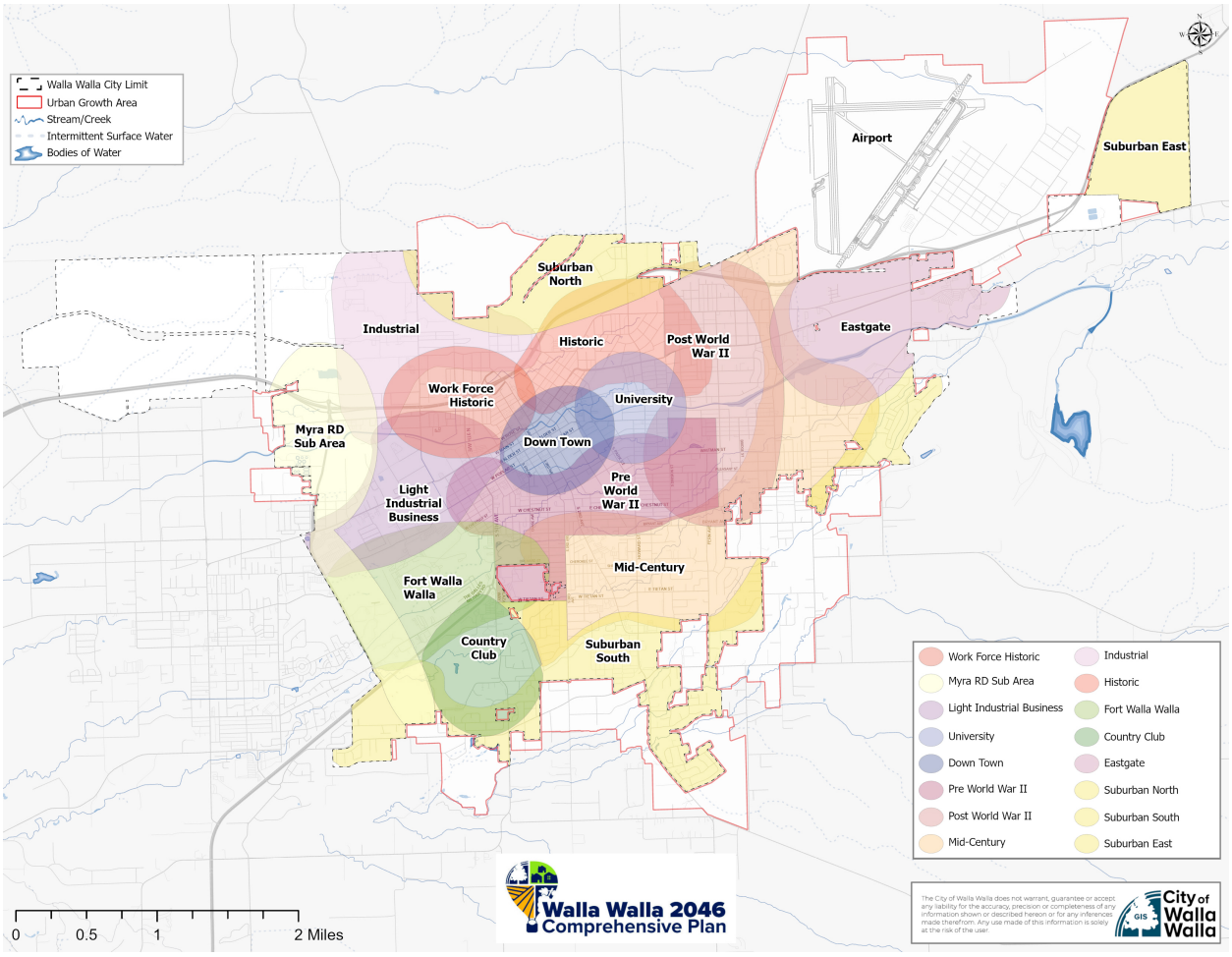


Figure 3. Community Character Map

Summary of Character Areas

Workforce Historic

The workforce historic area constitutes a district defined by pre-World War II cottage-style homes of approximately 600 - 1,200 square feet. There are few architectural details except for porches, and most homes are constructed of horizontal wood siding. The area is predominantly single-family residential, although some homes have been converted to duplexes. Front yard setbacks are small and closer to the street. Front yards are often fenced. Street improvements include sidewalks, wide right-of-way widths, and parking on both sides. Generally, trees in the streetscape are smaller in diameter.

Light Industrial/Business

The light industrial and business area is home to a variety of office and commercial businesses, as well as light industrial and warehousing. Large front and side yard setbacks are common. These areas are often used for outdoor storage and display of goods.

Land uses include auto-related, office, warehousing, sales, manufacturing, business park, and commercial. Structures within this area typically consist of metal siding, stucco, tilt-up concrete panels, and wood. Residential uses include multi-family residential as well as manufactured homes. As redevelopment occurs, streetscape and landscaping are incorporated.

Fort Walla Walla

The area surrounding Fort Walla Walla is defined by its expansive open spaces, mature vegetation, and strong institutional and historic character. Key facilities include a major veterans' medical center and related institutional uses, along with limited commercial activity and minimal residential presence. Buildings in the area tend to be large in scale and set back significantly from the street, reinforcing the spacious, campus-like environment.

Fort Walla Walla Museum occupies a portion of the Fort Walla Walla grounds and serves as a regional hub for interpreting local and Inland Northwest history. The broader Fort grounds offer a wide range of recreational amenities, including picnic shelters, reservable picnic areas, playgrounds, sports courts, and an extensive natural preserve with trails. Specialized facilities—such as remote-control vehicle areas, a BMX track, skate park, disc golf course, an amphitheater, and an off-leash dog park—add to the diversity of activities available.

The site also contains numerous commemorative and historic features, including war memorials, historic artillery pieces, a military cemetery, and the monument honoring Gold Star families. Together, these elements create a landscape that blends heritage, recreation, and institutional uses within a distinctive open-space setting.

Suburban North and South

The Suburban North and South areas are bound by the urban growth boundary and are expected to accommodate additional residential subdivisions. The South area includes

prominent community features such as the Walla Walla High School campus, currently in the UGA, and the public Mountain View Cemetery, while Suburban North includes the Veterans Memorial golf course. Lot sizes and setbacks are larger in some locations, reflecting the area's transitional character. Land uses consist of smaller pockets of agriculture and livestock, single-story ranch-style homes, and newer residential development concentrated along Taumarson Road and Cottonwood Road.

Streetscapes are minimal with new development offering curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and street trees. Many streets are unimproved and are drained by swales with no streetlights or sidewalks. Cul-de-sacs and irregular subdivision roads have replaced the adjacent urban street grid. In newer residential areas, the rear of homes and backyards face the collector streets, while the fronts of homes are served by internal, neighborhood streets. These residences typically have a privacy fence along the rear property boundary line, creating a walled effect along the collector streets.

Country Club

The Country Club area is primarily the private golf course and adjacent residential uses. Closest to the golf course, homes consist of 1960s to 1980s single-family and attached residences at higher densities than most suburban single-family residential. The area also includes newer residential developments and is accommodating further subdivisions and residential development. Open space and mature vegetation are characteristic landscape features. Sidewalks are present in newer developments and are lacking along Village Way, Country Club Road, Plaza Way, and other mid-to-late-century developments.

Mid-Century

The area offers a broad mix of uses, including single-family residential, multi-family residential, with stand-alone commercial and strip development along primary corridors, including South 2nd Avenue and Tietan Street. Building materials offer a mixture of stucco, brick, wood, and wood shingle siding. Porches are the main architectural feature.

Homes are a mix of styles from the 1920s to the 1970s, including craftsman, ranch, split-level, mid-century, and others. Mature street trees and lawns dominate the residential landscape and streetscape. Street parking is not predominant. Sidewalks are lacking on most residential streets, with the exception of the Meadow View and Neimeyers Eastview plats, situated southeast of Tietan Street and South 3rd Avenue, and west of South 2nd Avenue.

Pre-World War II

This area is characterized by pre-World War II homes, featuring residences of varying sizes on lots averaging 5,000 to 8,000 square feet. Development occurred between the late 1800s and the 1940s. Most buildings are clad in horizontal wood siding and display defining architectural elements such as porches, exposed rafters, decorative front entries, alley access, and columns.

Land uses are primarily single and multi-family residential, complemented by pockets of commercial mixed-use development. Commercial parking is often located at grade

within the planter strip, an area typically intended for landscaping while residential parking is generally provided at the rear via alley access or in detached garages positioned along extended driveways behind the home.

The street network follows a traditional urban grid. Streets are relatively wide, include generous planting strips, and accommodate on-street parking on both sides in some locations and on one side in others. Curbs and streetlights are present throughout. Mature street trees, along with abundant residential landscaping, strongly shape the neighborhood's visual character.

University

The area within the vicinity of Whitman College offers a mixture of homes, sizes, and styles, and many of them are stately and well-maintained. The University and Historic character areas overlap and contain similar features and styles. Front yard setbacks are small, creating a strong relationship with the street. The homes are generally older and include historic homes, with architectural styles including Tudor, Colonial Revival, American Foursquare, and others. Architectural features include historic details, porches, turrets, and balconies. Most are single-family with some multi-family homes, including the stately Clinton Court Apartments at Boyer Avenue and Clinton Street.

Characteristic sizes are in the range of 2,000 square feet or greater. Primary materials are horizontal wood siding, brick, and stucco. The residential landscape and streetscape are dominated by mature vegetation and include curvilinear streets with generous planting strips and mature street trees

Historic

The historic area constitutes a mix of house sizes and styles; however, there is a dominant historic flavor. This character area includes the historic Green's Park Addition, which was platted in 1903. Large multiple-story homes of wood construction with broad overhangs and grand porches characterize these buildings, dating back from the late 19th century through World War I. The neighborhood is reflective of the City Beautiful movement, and includes curvilinear, tree-lined streets with wide planter strips and mature street trees. The Green's Park Addition was platted around this new City Beautiful philosophy and was planned by community-minded developers who wanted to create a beautiful neighborhood. Homes were erected in popular styles of the time, including Classical, Colonial Revival, American Foursquare, and Arts and Crafts.

Post-World War II

Some lots are smaller, and homes are single-story. Homes were constructed in the 1950s to 1960s and are primarily built of wood and offer few architectural features and little detailing. Home sizes range from 800-1,200 square feet on lots that average 8,000 square feet. Some streets are laid out on a traditional grid, but others, such as Francis Drive, Boyer Drive, University, and Cambridge Drive, form a curvilinear network with cul-de-sacs. Setbacks are minimal, but they fail to create a strong relationship with the street. The landscaping strips are narrow, and street trees are minimal, although some feature sidewalks. Some streets are unimproved, lacking pedestrian access and on-street parking, including Wilson, White, Lewis, Clark, J, and K Streets. Driveways leading to carports are a common feature.

Eastgate

The Eastgate area includes a mixture of commercial, retail, strip mall development, higher-density residential, manufactured homes, mid and late 20th-century residential, and the Walla Walla Community College campus. Mill Creek and the recreational trail bisect the neighborhood. Commercial sites are dominated by parking areas and outdoor storage and offer minimal landscape. Collector streets support freestanding commercial buildings and commercial strips that are dominated by a wide variety of commercial signs.

Airport

Although not included in the city limits, the airport area, within the urban growth area, the airport area supports the Walla Walla Regional Airport, as well as industrial, commercial, and airport-related land uses. The airport also utilizes many of the original World War II base buildings with non-aviation uses in its industrial park, including a number of properties leased to wineries and other businesses. The area includes the Port of Walla Walla incubator buildings, which provide reasonably priced production space for startup beverage-related businesses to improve their chances for business success. The streets are unimproved with no pedestrian facilities, a sense of vast open space, and long sight lines to the Blue Mountains across the agricultural landscape.

Industrial

Historic warehouses and massive grain elevators visually dominate the industrial area. The Washington State Penitentiary campus is the northwestern corner, at the western edge of the city limits. Building construction is primarily single-story metal, concrete, or brick masonry. Land uses include newer warehousing and industry; there is a minimal amount of mixed-use, which includes a recreational trailer park. Wide streets, large setbacks, and no landscape or street trees characterize the area. There are pre-existing single-family residential uses in this area, which predate zoning ordinances and the construction of Highway 12.

Downtown

Downtown Walla Walla showcases a wide variety of architectural styles, many of them distinctive and historic. The area includes the Walla Walla Downtown National Historic District and an award-winning Main Street. Buildings are predominantly brick, multi-story structures. Land uses span mixed-use, commercial, residential, retail, office, hotel, and institutional spaces.

Many of the downtown structures date back to the late 1800s and early 1900s, giving the district a strong historic character. The streetscape is defined by minimal setbacks, at-grade parking, generous sidewalks, and mature street trees. Key public amenities include Heritage Square, Walawála Plaza, and Crawford Park, home to the Downtown Farmers Market and the transit center. Mill Creek weaves through the downtown, flowing both underground and above grade.



Challenges and Opportunities

Downtown as a Destination for All

Downtown should be an inclusive attraction where all people feel welcome, which will help integrate both residents and visitors of different cultures and income levels. Key to this strategy is maintaining our flexible gathering spaces for festivals and events, and updating as needed to meet evolving conditions.

Physical Conditions of Older Neighborhoods

The City's housing stock includes many homes constructed before World War II. As these neighborhoods age, they face challenges related to declining building quality and ongoing maintenance needs. To support continued reinvestment in public infrastructure, in particular streetscapes and pedestrian facilities, the City may consider a range of improvement programs. The City's Transportation Improvement Program identifies planned street upgrades, while the Community Development Block Grant provides funding opportunities for home repair projects.

Reintegrate Mill Creek as a Connecting Corridor Through the City

Restoring portions of Mill Creek to a more natural condition could include walking and biking pathways to help connect the east and west portions of the city. This is an important opportunity to add a key amenity to the city.

Reflecting the Full Range of Cultures

Walla Walla is a vibrant and diverse community, representing Indigenous, French, German, Mexican, Italian, Chinese, and many other groups. These cultures should be celebrated and recognized as part of the city's identity by incorporating art and design elements that represent all cultures and their histories.

Goals and Policies

CC Goal 1: Walla Walla's historic character is a primary source of its civic identity and attracts visitors wanting to experience an authentic and vibrant community.

- CC 1.1: Establish preservation districts, and compile inventories of buildings that are potentially significant on their own or possess contributing status to preservation districts.
- CC 1.2: Promote the City's street grid in new development as an important community design characteristic.

CC Goal 2: All of Walla Walla's residential communities are livable and attractive.

- CC 2.1: Recognize and celebrate the distinct and unique character of Walla Walla's neighborhoods.
- CC 2.2: Enhance residential neighborhoods with streetscape improvements and home improvement programs such as tool loan programs, self-help assistance, and homeowner loans.

CC Goal 3: The City should consider appropriately zoned land uses in areas approximate to the surrounding rural region.

- CC 3.1: Work with regional partners to respect residential areas and the surrounding agricultural lands and open space.

CC Goal 4: Downtown is the heart of Walla Walla, making all people feel welcome, accommodating a wide variety of civic and commercial functions, and reflecting the city's history.

- CC 4.1: Carefully protect and enhance Downtown's visual character, the most important single aspect of the city's identity, through historic preservation activities, complementary infill development, and sensitively designed public works.
- CC 4.2: Encourage infill mixed-use development near the Downtown farmer's market.
- CC 4.3: Foster mixed-use and live-work areas for artist housing/studios and live-work facilities Downtown.

CC Goal 5: Walla Walla incorporates open spaces and natural features as part of its attractions and regional identity.

- CC 5.1: Work with public and private partners to enhance the Mill Creek corridor with ecological restoration, habitat connectivity and trails to become a keystone asset in the city's physical identity.
- CC 5.2: Honor the city's name and character," place of many small waters," by protecting and revitalizing stream corridors and natural areas.
- CC 5.3: Support the implementation of the Urban Forestry Plan through preserving, restoring, and enhancing the tree canopy.
- CC 5.4: Improve and maintain public parks as community resources and an important part of Walla Walla's visual character.
- CC 5.5: Create new parks in communities without adequate open space.

CC Goal 6: Walla Walla continues to add new and attractive features to its historic qualities as it grows.

- CC 6.1: Assure adequate code enforcement to protect the safety and attractiveness of the City.
- CC 6.2: Incorporate Walla Walla's diverse cultures and artistic resources into public projects.

CC Goal 7: Walla Walla has a sense of place and prioritizes the everyday experiences that residents value, including access to nature, design, neighborhood livability, and a human-scaled environment.

- CC 7.1: Evaluate development and public investment decisions based on their ability to enhance daily quality of life while incorporating inclusive public engagement and equity considerations to ensure redevelopment benefits the broader community.
- CC 7.2: Enrich the cultural experiences of residents and visitors in the City through the creation of public murals and permanent and temporary art installations in public spaces, with support from the Arts Commission.
- CC 7.3: Encourage public art events and the organizations that produce them, including ArtSquared, First Friday Art Tours, Walla Walla Guitar Festival, the Balloon Stampede, and similar community arts initiatives.

Policy Connections

- **The Environment and Natural Resources Element** recognizes the importance of healthy mature trees, identifies restoration of Mill Creek as an urban amenity, and incorporates community character objectives into efforts to increase sustainability.
- **The Land Use Element** addresses community character objectives, policies to provide for a more equitable physical environment, measures to reduce land use conflicts, and design guidelines.
- **The Transportation Element** addresses streetscape and non-motorized improvements that provide greater mobility for all residents.
- **The Parks and Recreation Element** addresses arts and cultural elements in parks planning and projects.

Translating Policy into Action

Table 1. Community Character Implementation Action

Implementation Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Home improvement assistance programs	2-3 years	Community Development
Creating new parks	10 years	Parks and Recreation
Establish preservation districts and compile inventories of buildings that are potentially significant.	Ongoing	Community Development
Foster areas for artist housing/ studios and live/ work facilities Downtown.	5 years	Community Development
Develop standards for the processing and installation of murals.	3-5 years	Community Development



Land Use

Introduction

This Element identifies the land uses necessary for Walla Walla to accommodate projected growth over the 20-year planning horizon. Land use in a community influences many aspects of community health and vitality. It is the basis for establishing zoning, which determines where people can live, work, shop, or recreate.

Today and Tomorrow

Conditions Today

Walla Walla's population as of April 2025 was estimated at 34,850 by the Washington State Office of Financial Management. The City of Walla Walla's planning area includes the incorporated city limits and the land within the Urban Growth Area (UGA), which totals approximately 13,041 acres. Agricultural uses within the planning area are typically designated for future development on the Future Land Use Map and in the zoning code. Over time, these areas are expected to transition to urban uses, helping preserve agricultural areas outside the UGA.

The City of Walla Walla's population growth has generally been slow and steady. While the City averaged about 0.86% annually between 1970 and 2010, more recent growth has been slower, including two years of decline during the COVID-19 pandemic, from 2024 to 2025, when the City grew by 0.78%.

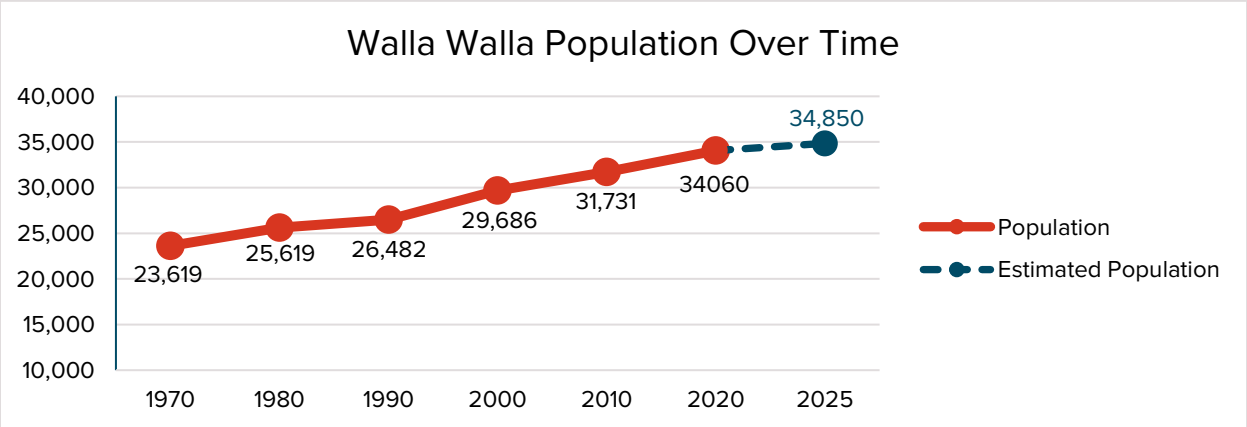


Figure 4. Walla Walla Population Over Time

Source: Washington State OFM Official Census Data

Land Capacity Analysis



In 2025, the City of Walla Walla analyzed vacant lands that could be redeveloped within city limits and the UGA using GIS analysis. The analysis identified available land for development by looking at existing development patterns, site utilization, permitted projects, and non-buildable areas due to the presence of critical areas. Capacity was estimated by assessing zoning capacity, examining permit records to identify actual built densities by zone, and applying a market factor to account for property owners who are unlikely to sell or redevelop. Full details about the methodology and calculations can be found in Appendix II. Land Capacity Analysis: Housing by Income Band.

Future Projections

The population of the City of Walla Walla is expected to be 39,884 people in 2046, according to the population target assigned by Walla Walla County. To accommodate future growth, the City of Walla Walla created the Future Land Use Map shown in this Element. The acreage of land designated for each purpose is shown below.

Table 2. Acreage of Land by Zone

Zone	Fully Developed Acres	Vacant / Underutilized Acres	Total Acres
Central Commercial	43	27	70
Heavy Industrial	96	189	285
Highway Commercial	279	302	581
Light Industrial/ Commercial	207	170	377
Mobile/Manufactured Home Park Community	75	3	78
Multi-Family Residential	147	63	210
Neighborhood Residential	2,128	529	2651
Public Reserve	51	2,887	2,938
Urban Planned Community	4	400	404
Total	**3,030**	**4,570**	**7,600**

Table 3. Acreage of Land Designated by Purpose

Land Use Designation	Acres in City	Acres in UGA	Total Acres
Residential	2,861	1,438	4299
Public	2,926	99	3025
Commercial	585	.9	586
Industrial	662	279	941
Airport	0	2,019	2019
Urban Planned Community	404	0	404
Downtown	86	0	86
TOTAL	**7729**	**3747**	**11,360**

Source: City of Walla Walla GIS



Challenges and Opportunities

Annexation Policy

The City's policy regarding the extension of water and sewer utility services in the UGA requires annexation for those who request to receive City services. Most of the City's growth will occur through annexation. For new housing developments to occur, large tracts of land will need to be annexed. Upon annexation, the City takes the lead role in administering the development process.

Critical Areas and Riparian Areas

Much of the developable land in the UGA, and some within the City, is constrained by proximity to one or more of Walla Walla's many riparian areas. Several designated floodplains limit development on the south side of the City. Additionally, each riparian area has a management zone that protects the riparian system. New development and the establishment of land uses in such areas should be carefully evaluated to ensure that critical areas are protected.

Commercial and Industrial Uses

Commercial and industrial land uses are concentrated in the north and west sides of the planning area, apart from the Eastgate commercial area. This may put pressure on transportation networks and other resources as people commute to employment or travel to obtain goods and services.

To alleviate this, Walla Walla could consider zoning that would allow:

- Small commercial areas in or near neighborhoods for people to obtain daily goods and services.
- Subarea planning that could encourage employment- related uses in other parts of the City's planning area.

New population and commercial growth are expected along the Myra Road corridor. The existing Valley Transit bus routes linking the Cities of Walla Walla and College Place could promote a compact urbanized area for future homes, jobs, and shopping.

Manufactured Home Communities

In early 2023, the City Council adopted Ordinances 2023-01 and 2023-02, adopting a new Manufactured Home Park Community zoning district and Comprehensive Plan Map Designation. The new zoning districts and comprehensive plan map designations were applied to land where manufactured home parks currently exist. The allowable uses for this new zoning district are primarily residential and closely related to manufactured homes, thereby limiting opportunities for redevelopment and displacement of park residents. These amendments were supported by the Walla Walla Regional Housing Action Plan, which includes recommendations related to increased opportunities for the siting of manufactured homes, the preservation of existing manufactured home parks, and strategies for mitigating the displacement of vulnerable residents.

Future UGA Study Areas

When the City's land capacity analysis and population projections indicate that additional land is needed within the Urban Growth Area (UGA), potential expansion areas should be evaluated with consideration for the City's ability to extend or provide urban infrastructure, while also respecting the County's goal of preserving prime agricultural land. UGA expansions should include sufficient land necessary to meet 20-year population, housing, and employment targets, plus a market factor, and should account for potential impacts on critical areas.

Walla Walla's Plan

Additional housing is to be built, additional employment opportunities, and new places to obtain goods and services. The City of Walla Walla seeks to retain its community character. This means planning for growth and its impacts so that Walla Walla is a great place to live for all residents. The City will offer opportunities and choices for housing, employment, and business, and continue to be a healthy, sustainable community.

Future Land Use Map

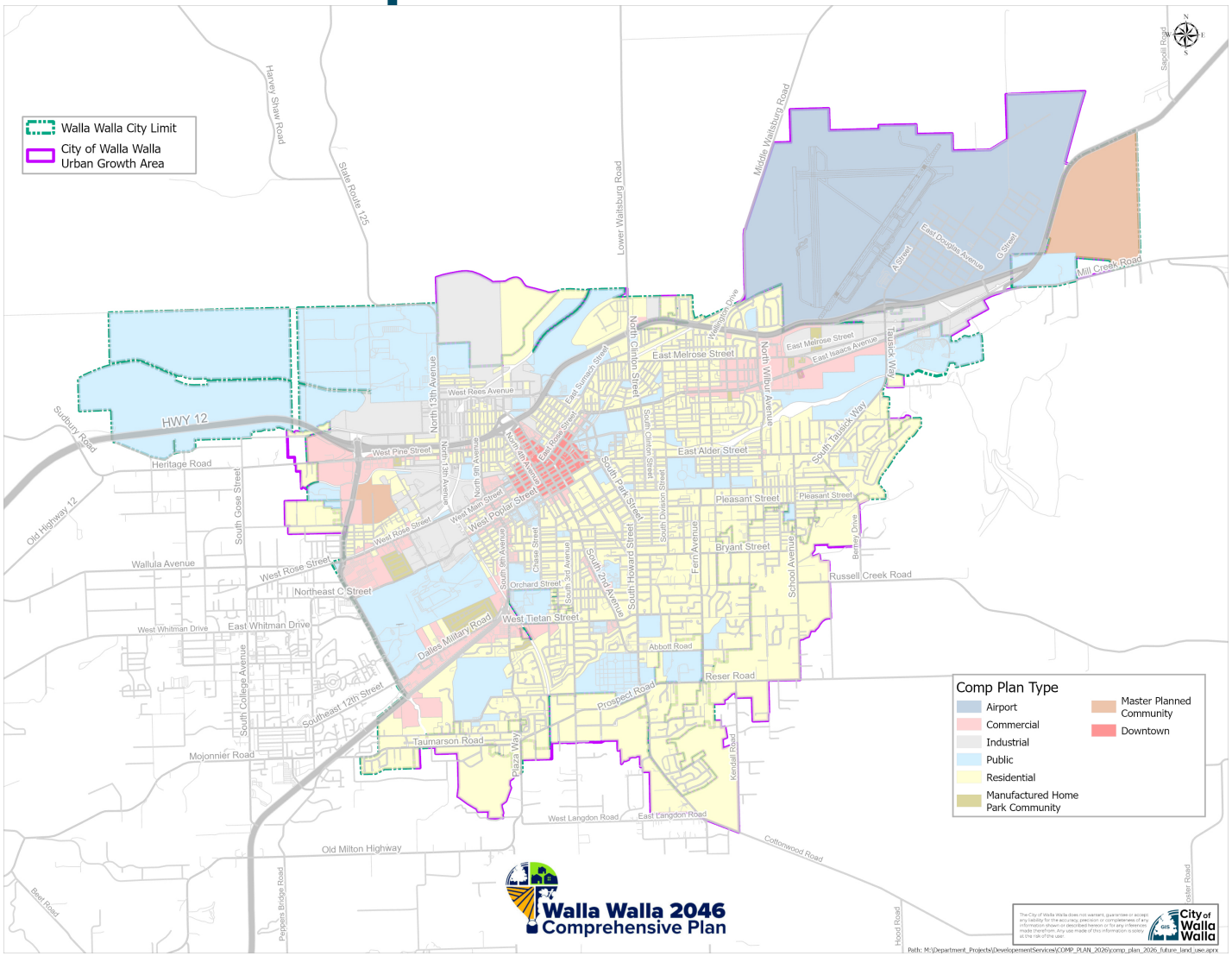


Figure 5. Future Land Use Map

Goals and Policies

LU Goal 1: Walla Walla grows in a responsible way that maintains or improves the quality of life for its residents.

- LU 1.1: Accommodate new residential and commercial development in areas with available infrastructure and services.
- LU 1.2: Land use will be developed in consideration of the Walla Walla Countywide Planning Policies.
- LU 1.3: Where appropriate, the City will consider Interlocal Agreements (ILA) with Walla Walla County to facilitate planning for growth in the Urban Growth Area.
- LU 1.4: The City will coordinate with Walla Walla County to plan for the delivery of urban services within unincorporated UGAs prior to annexation.
- LU 1.5: The City supports Walla Walla County's goal that, where feasible, all land within unincorporated Urban Growth Areas will be annexed to the City or incorporated within the 20-year planning horizon.
- LU 1.6: Encourage infill development that provides additional housing within the city.
- LU 1.7: Establish land use and zoning standards that prevent incompatible development, reduce conflicts between adjacent uses, and ensure orderly, balanced growth.
- LU 1.8: Develop Walla Walla's downtown in a way that encourages sustainability and supports community vitality.
- LU 1.9: Analyze proposed industrial uses for potential impacts on adjacent lands and ensure adequate public services can be provided at proposed or alternative locations.
- LU 1.10: Encourage commercial growth in areas of the Urban Growth Area where services can be provided.
- LU 1.11: To the extent possible, advance equitable access to healthy, safe, and sustainable environments through planning efforts that support overall community well-being.
- LU 1.12: Inform land use decisions to prevent the worsening of environmental health disparities, ensuring that new developments don't disproportionately impact vulnerable or underserved communities.
- LU 1.13: Strive to remedy existing environmental health disparities by prioritizing improvements, investments, and mitigation measures in communities that have historically experienced disproportionate environmental burdens.

LU Goal 2: Walla Walla coordinates with neighboring communities and state agencies for the improvement of the region.

- LU 2.1: Coordinate City plans with the Countywide Planning Policies and regional policies of the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- LU 2.2: Coordinate planning in the Urban Growth Area with Walla Walla County to ensure orderly, sustainable development consistent with City standards, and discourage development of subdivisions using septic systems and private water systems.
- LU 2.3: Cooperate with neighboring communities' appropriate agencies, and area Tribes to ensure the protection and revitalization of the region's natural resources.
- LU 2.4: Identify opportunities to link the City's roads, trails, parks, and open spaces with others in the region.
- LU 2.5: Cooperate regionally on the development and siting of essential public facilities to ensure that the burden, impact, and benefit is equitably distributed among neighboring communities.
- LU 2.6: Continue coordination with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and Walla Walla County Flood Control District to restore Mill Creek.

LU Goal 3: There are a variety of uses allowed throughout Walla Walla that encourage options for housing and business.

- LU 3.1: Encourage mixed-use development and new housing Downtown.
- LU 3.2: Allow live/workspaces and mixed uses to encourage entrepreneurial opportunities for residents.
- LU 3.3: Allow master planned development to include mixed-use that is compatible with adjacent land uses.
- LU 3.4: Discourage strip-style commercial development by encouraging buildings to be developed close to the street frontage with parking lots to the rear.
- LU 3.5: Locate new commercial areas near, or mixed with, higher density residential development and at the intersection of major transportation corridors.
- LU 3.6: Allow commercial development that provides daily goods and services to adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- LU 3.7: Support a variety of housing types such as tiny homes, duplexes, multi-family development, cottage housing, and single-family residential.

LU Goal 4: Land use is sustainable and conserves natural resources.

- LU 4.1: Balance commercial, industrial, and residential development with the conservation of natural resources and open space by directing growth to areas already served by infrastructure.
- LU 4.2: Establish water-permeable greenway corridors and/or open space where feasible to ensure conservation and connectivity of natural areas, water infiltration and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.
- LU 4.3: Protect natural features and critical areas, including topography and native vegetation such as riparian woody vegetation to minimize impacts to the surrounding ecosystem.
- LU 4.4: Ensure that landowners are educated regarding responsibilities of properties abutting or surrounding surface waters such as wetlands and other water bodies.

LU Goal 5: Walla Walla is a healthy city that is designed to provide opportunities for physical activity with multimodal transportation and access to parks and recreation.

- LU 5.1: Consider physical activity and health when adopting land use policies and regulations and in the siting of community facilities.
- LU 5.2: Ensure physical activity opportunities exist in new subdivisions and housing with safe pedestrian and bicycle access to nearby community facilities and amenities.
- LU 5.3: A network of open spaces and recreation facilities should be located in proximity to residential neighborhoods.
- LU 5.4: Maximize opportunities for green space and common areas to allow for health and recreation.

LU Goal 6: Provide inclusive public engagement practices.

- LU 6.1: Consider targeted outreach methods to include lower-income households and historically marginalized communities in local legislation related to planning and development.
- LU 6.2: Consider all community input received during planning and land use projects to help inform decisions.

Policy Connections

- **The Housing Element** includes policies on ensuring a sufficient variety of housing types and affordability to meet the community's needs within areas designated for residential uses.
- **The Environment and Natural Resources, Shoreline, and Climate Resilience Elements** address land use related to the protection of critical areas and the preservation of natural resources.
- **The Capital Facilities and Utilities Element** and the **Parks and Recreation Element** demonstrate how future land uses will be served by public services and infrastructure.
- **The Transportation Element** identifies options for motorized and non-motorized transportation of people and goods between the future land uses in the City.
- **The Historic Preservation Element** identifies policies for the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods. **The Community Character Element** offers other policies that address neighborhood character.

Translating Policy into Action

This section makes connections between other city plans, programs, and actions and the policy direction of this element.

Table 4. Land Use Implementation Action

Implementation Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Downtown Master Plan: Originally produced in 2004, this plan aims to direct high-quality infill and redevelopment to the core of the City. An update to this plan is recommended.	5 years	Community Development and Downtown Walla Walla Foundation
Allow live/workspaces and mixed uses to encourage entrepreneurial opportunities for residents.	5 years	Community Development
Discourage strip-style commercial development by encouraging buildings to be developed close to street frontage with parking lots to the rear.	5 years	Community Development
Allow commercial development that provides daily goods and services to adjacent residential neighborhoods.	5 years	Community Development
Ensure that landowners are educated regarding the responsibilities of properties abutting or surrounding surface waters, such as wetlands and other water bodies.	Ongoing	Public Works



Housing

The City of Walla Walla must ensure it has enough housing for all its residents. As the City grows, it also plays a role in providing everyone who lives here with access to a decent home that they can afford. There are many ways to do this, but increasing the different types of housing is an important factor in meeting community needs. This element describes the City of Walla Walla's current housing conditions, assesses its housing needs, and outlines how the city can ensure there are enough homes for everyone in the future.

Conditions Today

Population

The City of Walla Walla is growing slightly faster than Walla Walla County as a whole. Growth has been slower than the statewide average, with growth in the city slowing between 2020 and 2025. The percentage increase from 2010 to 2020, a ten-year period, was 7.3 percent, a faster rate of growth than over the previous decade. The percentage increase from 2020 to 2025, a five-year period, was 2.3 percent.

Table 5. Population Over Time, 2000-2025

	2000	2010	2020	2025	2010-2025 % Change	2020-2025 % Change
The City of Walla Walla	29,686	31,731	34,060	34,850	9.8%	2.3%
Walla Walla County	55,180	58,781	62,584	63,800	8.5%	1.9%
Washington State	5,894,121	6,724,540	7,706,310	8,115,100	20.7%	5.3%

Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), 2025.

According to data from the U.S. Census, 46 percent of the City of Walla Walla's population is under 34 years old. The presence of higher educational institutions, such as Whitman College and Walla Walla Community College, increases the proportion of young adults in the community. In the City, around 5 percent of the population is between 18 and 19 years old. The Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) estimates that roughly 11 percent of the City population, or nearly 3,700 people, live in group quarters such as college residence halls, the state penitentiary, or nursing facilities, while the remainder reside in households.

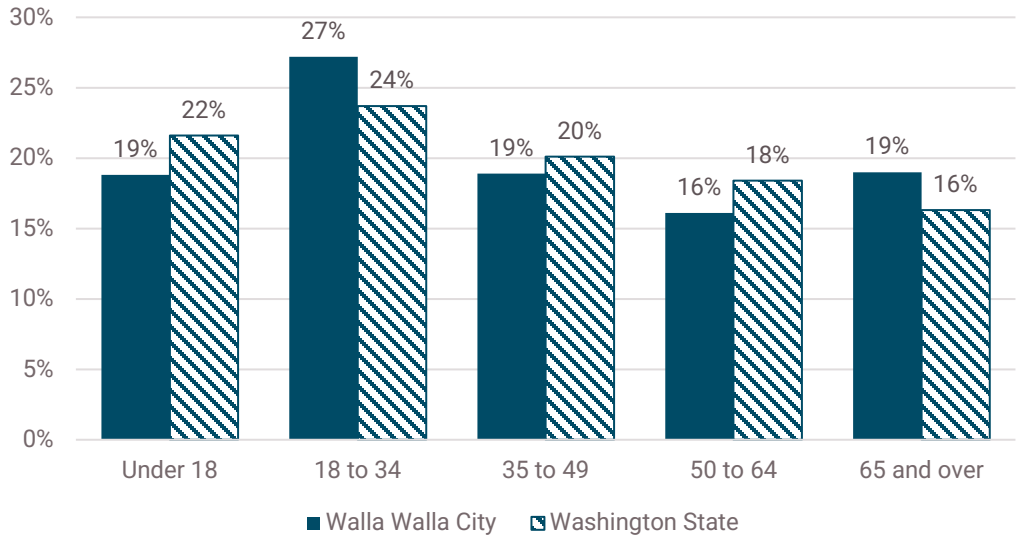


Figure 6. Age Distribution in the City of Walla Walla and Washington

Source: US Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS (Table S0101)

Although the percentage of people in the City of Walla Walla aged 65 and over is about 19 percent, nearly one-third of households have a senior householder. About one-third of those households are rentals. These households may be particularly vulnerable to increases in rents, especially those on fixed incomes. The population is also more likely to have a disability, since the American Community Survey (ACS) reports that nearly 41 percent of the population over age 65 in the City of Walla Walla has a physical, visual, auditory, or cognitive impairment.

Table 6. Households with a Senior Householder in the City of Walla Walla

	Households
Total Households with a Senior Householder	**4,203**
Renter-Occupied	1,429
Owner-Occupied	2,774

Source: US Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS (Table B25007)

In the City of Walla Walla, 91 percent of the me population identifies as white alone, with almost 25 percent of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino.

Table 7. Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

	The City of Walla Walla	Walla Walla County	Washington State
Male	52.0%	50.8%	50.4%
Female	48.0%	49.2%	49.6%
White	73.0%	75.3%	67.8%
Black or African American	2.7%	1.8%	4.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.0%	1.2%	1.2%
Asian	2.4%	1.9%	9.4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.2%	0.7%
Some other race	9.7%	9.9%	5.6%
Two or more races	9.9%	9.6%	11.4%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	24.3%	23.4%	14.1%

Note: Hispanic or Latino origin is considered an ethnicity and not a race.
Source: US Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS (Table DP05)

Household Characteristics and Income

As of 2025, OFM estimates there are 13,089 total households in the City of Walla Walla. The average household size is 2.28 people per household. Sixty percent of all households in the City of Walla Walla are renter-occupied. Single-person households are the largest market for rental housing. However, it is notable that 26 percent of renter households have three or more members. Given that apartments are generally smaller in size, many of these households likely reside in single-family detached housing throughout the city and could possibly be candidates for future multifamily housing units. Over half (52 percent) of rental households have one person.

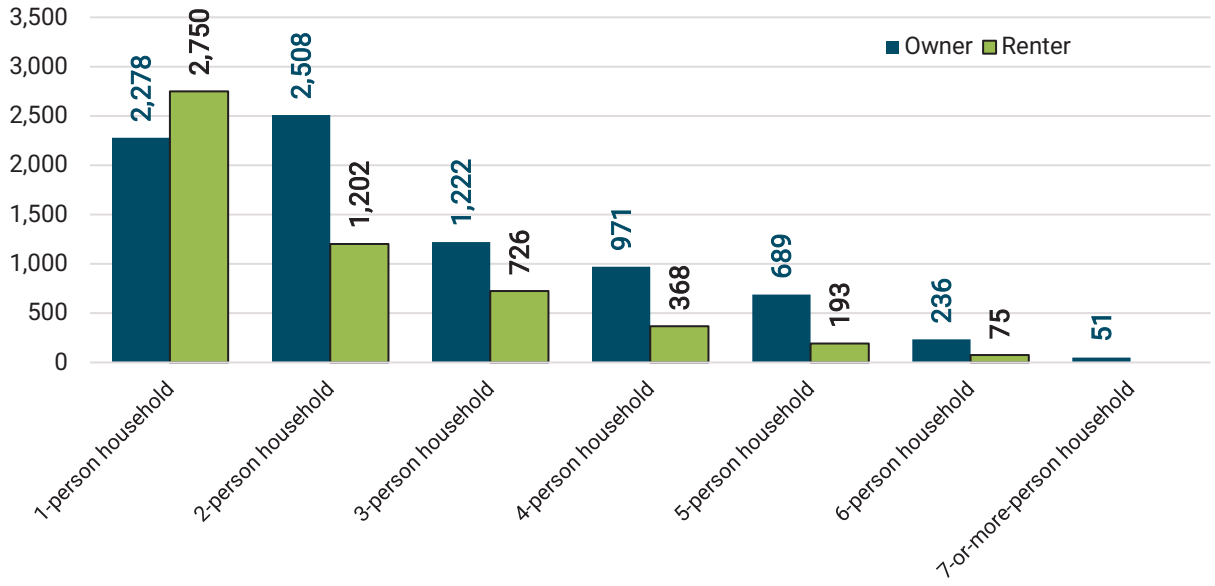


Figure 7. Renter and Owner-Occupied Households by Size

Source: US Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS (Table B25009)

As of 2023, the American Community Survey lists median household income for households residing within the City of Walla Walla as $65,493, compared with a slightly higher median household income of $72,212 in Walla Walla County, and $94,952 statewide (ACS Five-Year Estimates, 2019-2023).

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) calculations and groupings are based on the HUD Area Median Family Income (AMI), a calculation that takes into account household size. AMI is based on the median income for a four-person family household. In 2025, HUD's AMI for Walla Walla County is $97,900.1

HUD provides data on household income breakdowns relative to the Walla Walla County AMI. Therefore, this Housing Element groups households based on income categories relative to the County AMI. Note that HUD accounts for household size when grouping households into these income categories.

- Very Low Income—Under 30% of AMI (<$32,150).
- Low Income—30-50% of AMI ($32,150 - $48,950).
- Moderate Income—50-80% of AMI ($48,950 - $78,300).
- Lower Middle Income—80-100% of AMI ($78,300 - $97,900).
- Above Median Income—Above 100% of AMI (>$97,900).

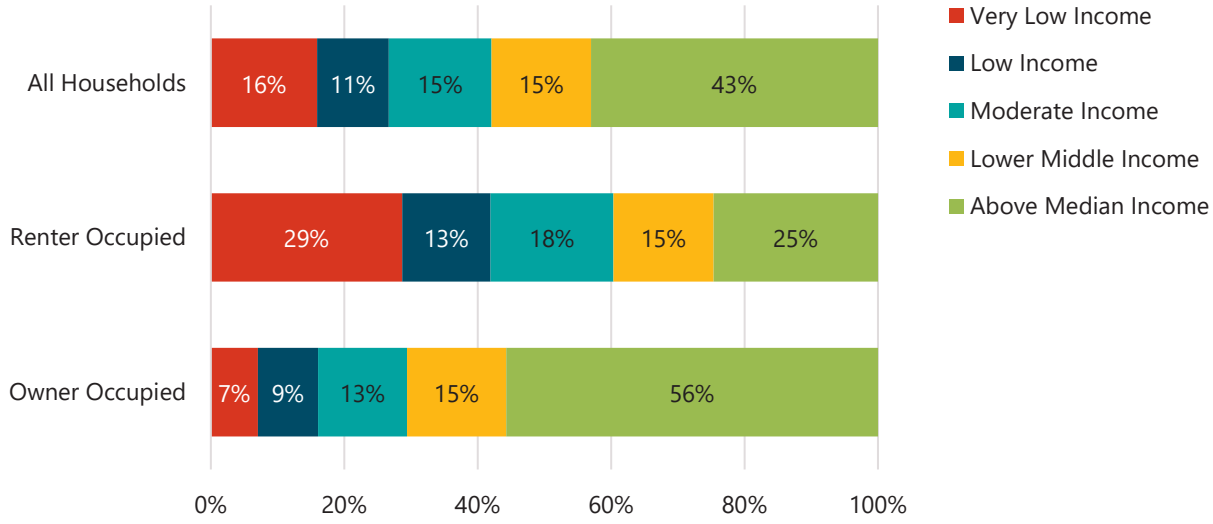


Figure 8. Household Income Categories - The City of Walla Walla

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2017-2021

Owner-occupied households are more likely to be in a higher income category, with 56 percent earning more than AMI, whereas only 25 percent of renter households earn more than AMI. Around 42 percent of renter households have income levels classified as low or very low income, earning less than 50 percent AMI. This suggests a need for affordable rental housing options in the City of Walla Walla.

The Washington State Department of Commerce, in coordination with Walla Walla County, performs a yearly point-in-time count of homeless persons and households. The numbers that the Department of Commerce publishes use the HUD definition of homelessness, which excludes those who reported staying with family or friends. Walla Walla County includes those individuals and households in its published data, as it helps to depict both those who are chronically homeless as well as those with intermittent struggles with sustainable housing.

In 2024, there were 218 individuals who identified as homeless during the point-in-time (PIT) count. This number represents an increase over the 2023 count, in which 183 homeless individuals were identified. Since 2011, there has been an upward trend in homelessness, when the survey began tracking chronically homeless households. However, in 2025, PIT shows a decrease in homelessness from 218 to 197. This slight decrease still indicates a need to address long-term solutions to homelessness in the County.

Housing Conditions

The City of Walla Walla has an aging housing stock. Nearly 36 percent of homes in the City of Walla Walla were built prior to 1950. This suggests that investments will be needed in the coming decades to update the housing supply. Since 2010, over 1,200 homes have been built in the City.

Table 8. Housing Structures by Decade Built

	Percent of Housing Structures
Built 2020 to 2023	0.4%
Built 2010 to 2019	8.0%
Built 2000 to 2009	11.0%
Built 1990 to 1999	7.6%
Built 1980 to 1989	6.5%
Built 1970 to 1979	12.7%
Built 1960 to 1969	7.1%
Built 1950 to 1959	11.1%
Built 1940 to 1949	8.6%
Built 1939 or earlier	27.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS (Table DP04).

As of 2025, there were 14,274 housing units in the City of Walla Walla. 67 percent of all housing units in the City of Walla Walla are single-family residences.

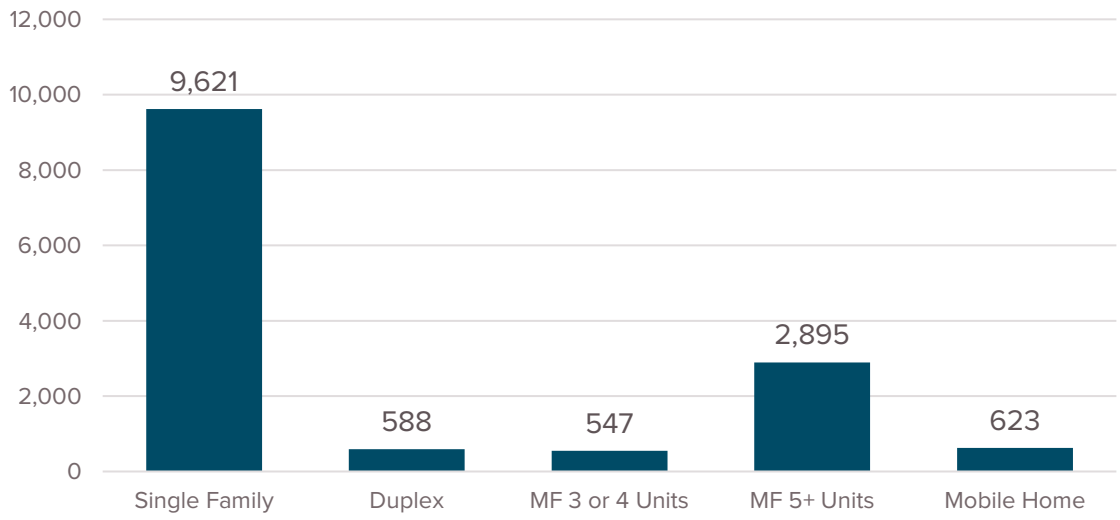


Figure 9. Housing Units by Type

Source: Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM, 2025)

When comparing household sizes (see Household Characteristics and Income above) with housing units by type, some potential housing gaps may be evident. For example, there are over 5,000 households with only one member, yet there are fewer than 2,300 studio and one-bedroom housing units combined. This is a difference of about 2,700 units. While not all one-person households are looking for a studio or one-bedroom unit, it is also likely that there are people living in larger shared houses that would prefer to live in a studio or one-bedroom unit, if there were enough units available. The presence of Whitman College is likely impacting the number of one-person households, yet with roughly 1,500 students, the data would still indicate a need for studios or one-bedroom units.

On the other hand, nearly 57 percent of housing units in the City of Walla Walla have three or more bedrooms, while only 34 percent of households have three or more members. There is potential that the number of households with three or more members is higher than actual demand, assuming people seeking small apartment units are instead sharing larger units due to the lack of appropriate supply in the apartment market.

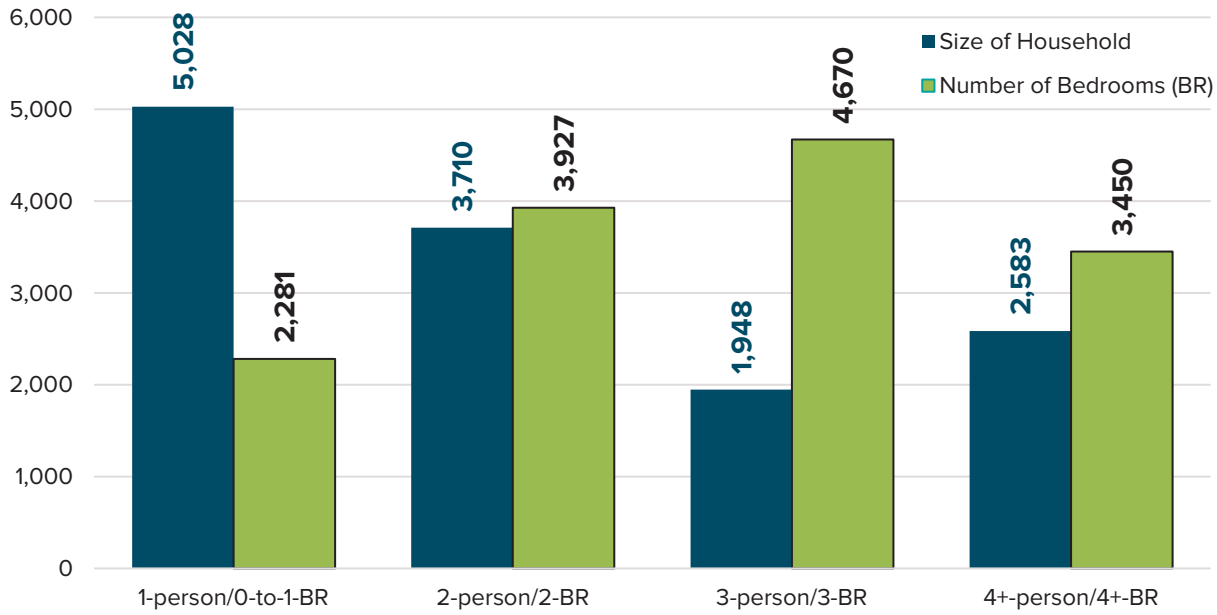


Figure 10. Alignment Between Household Sizes and Size of Units in the City of Walla Walla

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS (Tables S2501 & DP04).

While data suggests that the housing stock generally supplies units that are too large for the kinds of households that exist in the City of Walla Walla, overcrowding still exists and is primarily among renter households. HUD defines overcrowding as greater than one occupant per room. Based on this definition, 158 owner-occupied housing units and 48 renter-occupied housing units are overcrowded, representing 1.6 percent of all occupied housing units.

The City of Walla Walla's vacancy rate hovers near the state average at about 7.4 percent. The American Community Survey estimates that of the total vacant units in the City of Walla Walla, 35 percent of those are for rent, 16 percent are for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, and 47 percent are listed as "other vacant." This category includes properties that the owner does not intend to rent or sell but are currently in use, those being used for storage, those undergoing repair or renovation, and those in foreclosure

Housing Affordability

A housing cost burden, as identified by HUD, occurs when a household spends more than 30 percent of its income on housing costs. Households spending more than 50 percent of their income towards housing costs are considered severely cost-burdened. In the City of Walla Walla, 32 percent of all households were estimated to be either cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened as of 2021. A greater percentage of renter households were cost-burdened (51 percent) than owner-occupied households (19 percent).

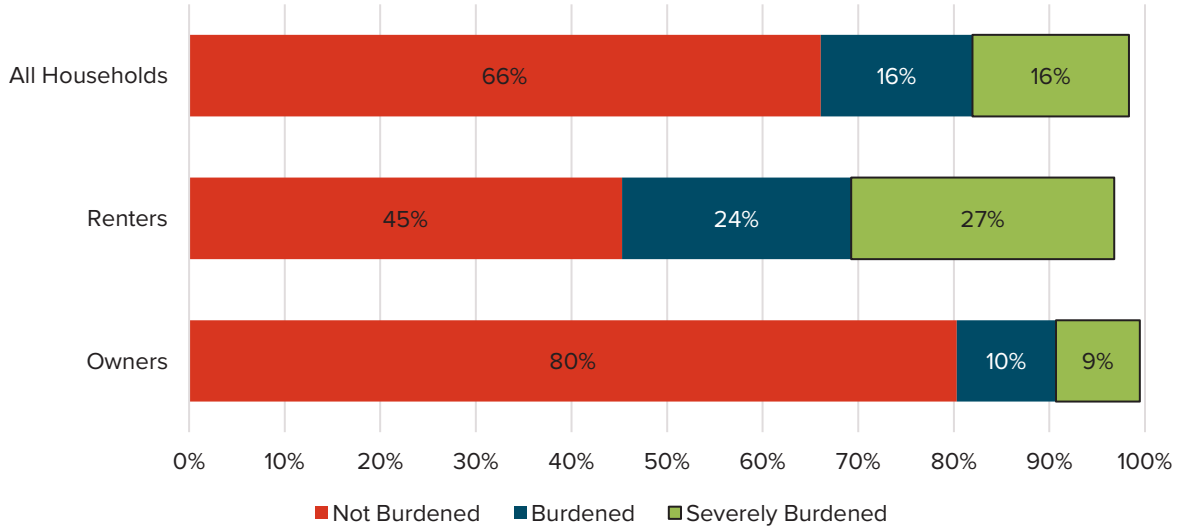


Figure 11. Cost Burden by Housing Tenure, the City of Walla Walla

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2017-2021

The chart below shows the market asking rents for multifamily apartments. Between 2016 and 2025, rents increased by approximately 35 percent. However, rent growth has been relatively stable since 2023, decreasing by 0.7 percent over two years.

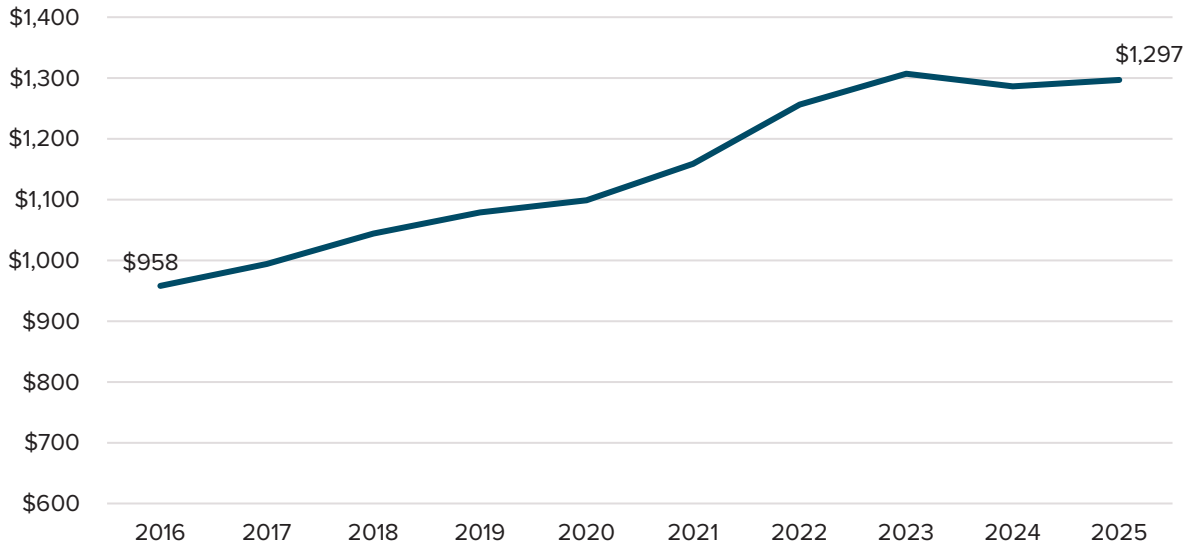


Figure 12. Market Asking Rent for Multifamily Apartments

Source: CoStar

To afford the median rent for a single-family home, a four-person household would need to earn at least $50,080 annually. To afford the median rent for a multifamily unit (as reported by the

Census Bureau Five-Year ACS), a household would need to earn at least $47,040 annually. The estimated number of renter households that earn enough to afford the median rent for a single or multifamily rental housing unit is shown below.

Table 9. Renter Households Affording Median Rent

Household Income to Afford Median Rent	Renter Households Number	Renter Households (Percent)
$47,040	3,039	57%

Source: US Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS (Table S2503).
Households affording rent are those making less than $50,000 annually.

Among all renter households, 45 percent were estimated to be cost burdened, and 24 percent were estimated to be severely cost burdened. Few households with low or very low incomes can find housing they can afford.

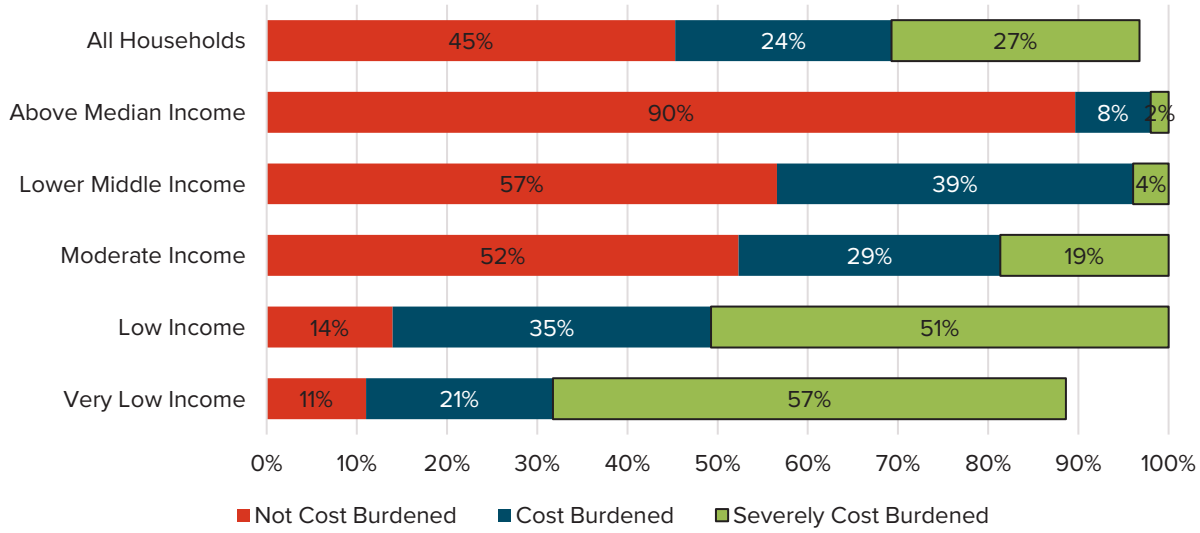


Figure 13. Renter Cost Burden by Income Category

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2017-2021

The cost of owner-occupied housing more than doubled between November 2015 and November 2025. Most of this growth took place between 2015 and 2022. Since April 2022, median home prices have increased by 6.2 percent, reaching $405,623 in late 2025.

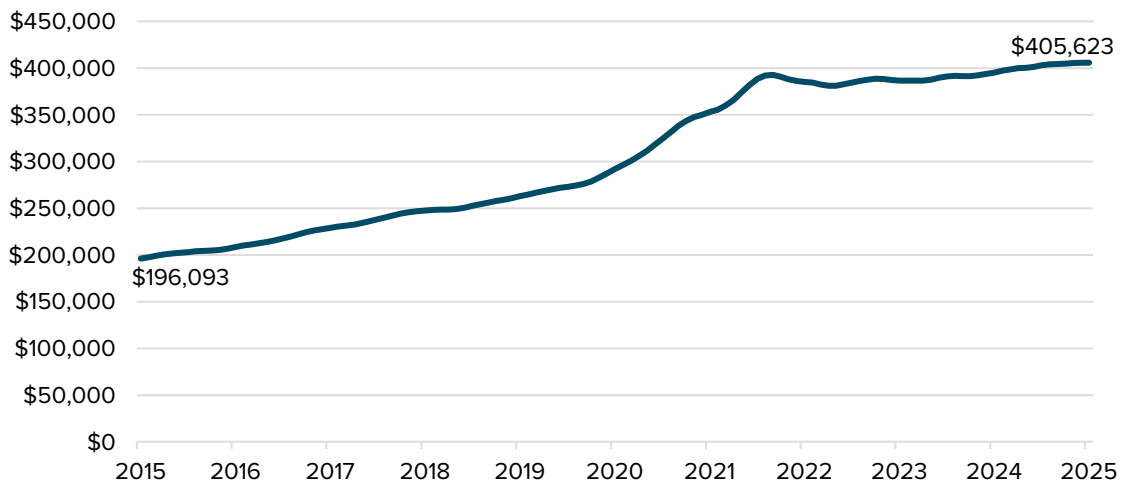


Figure 14. The City of Walla Walla Median Home Price, 2015-2025

Source: Zillow Home Value Index

While homeowners are generally less cost burdened than renters, low- and very low-income households are most likely to be cost burdened.

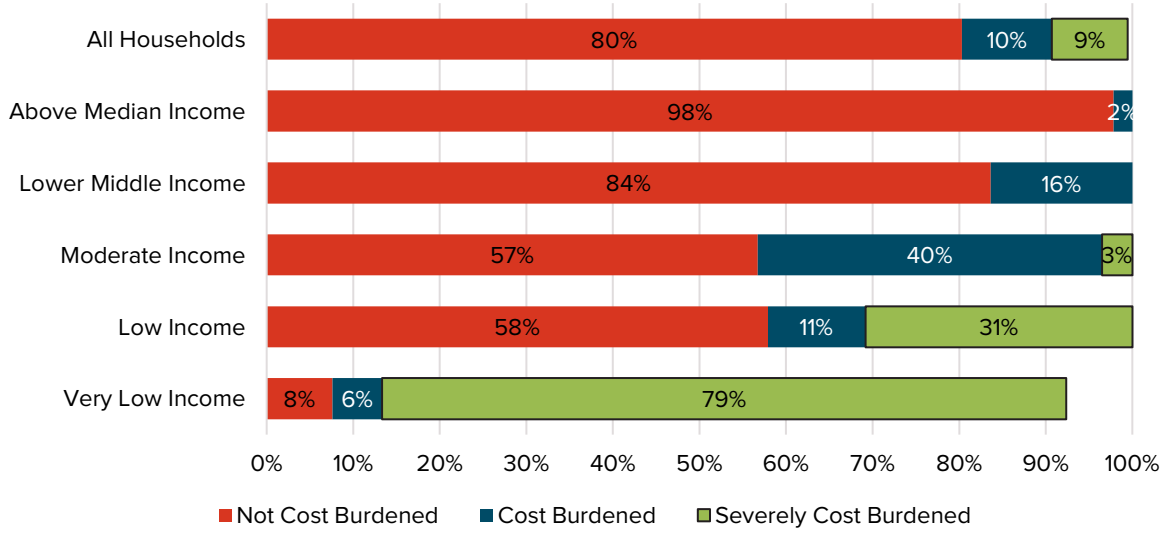


Figure 15. Owner Cost Burden by Income Category

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2017-2021

The City of Walla Walla has a substantial inventory of subsidized housing, primarily owned and operated by the Walla Walla Housing Authority (WWHA). The Housing Authority owns and manages 613 units and provides rental assistance to another 1,174. An additional 50 units at the Meadow Grove Apartments were completed in 2025. The Walla Walla Housing Authority reports that approximately 1,900 households are on its waitlists, which have consistently remained above 1,500 households. Their target income for qualifying for their programs is below 60 percent AMI.

Of the 613 units owned and managed by the WWHA, 128 units are targeted at agricultural workers. Additionally, there is one transitional program targeting homeless veterans, which has nine units totaling 34 beds. The WWHA indicated that since the early 1990s, their programs have grown from 84 owned units with 20 rental assistance slots, to the numbers reported above. This equates to approximately 15 new subsidized units per year, on average.

In addition to WWHA, the Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC) provides a variety of services to low-income Walla Walla residents, including housing serving seniors, developmentally disabled residents, chronically mentally ill residents, and shelters serving homeless families. Further details on the City of Walla Walla's subsidized housing inventory can be found in Appendix III. Adequate Provisions Analysis.

Future Projections

Population. As noted above, the OFM prepares low, intermediate, and high range growth management population projections for the counties within the State. The City of Walla Walla needs to plan for a total population of 39,884 by 2046 – an increase of 5,824 residents over the population reported in the 2020 Census and 5,034 over the population reported by the OFM in 2025.

Housing Capacity. Amendments to the GMA resulting from Washington State House Bill 1220 (2021) require jurisdictions to plan for housing unit targets by income band in addition to overall population growth targets. Walla Walla must plan for 2,348 net new housing units for the 2020-2046 planning horizon, broken down by what income band (as a percentage of Countywide Area Median Income) the new units can serve, as shown below in Table 10, under "Housing Needs."

A Land Capacity by Income Band analysis was performed, and the full report can be found in Appendix III. Adequate Provisions Analysis. The analysis identifies the capacity potential for approximately 2,370 new housing units within the city limits on vacant or redevelopable lands for the 2020 – 2046 planning period. The report identifies 2,198 pending housing units in the development pipeline, which also count towards meeting the city's growth targets. The housing unit land capacity and pending units were categorized by what income band they can serve, expressed as a percentage of Countywide Area Median Income (AMI), following the Department of Commerce guidance and supplemented by an analysis of housing costs for single-family, duplexes, condos, and rents by unit size in the City of Walla Walla. The analysis concluded that the City has sufficient capacity to meet its housing needs at all income levels under the current zoning.

Table 10. The City of Walla Walla Housing Capacity by Income Band, 2020-2046

Income Band (as % of County AMI)	Housing Needs
0-30 PSH*	428
0-30 Non PSH	714
30-50	517
50-80	157
80-100	93
100-120	116
120+	323
Total	**2,348**

*Permanent Supportive Housing

Table 11. The City of Walla Walla Housing Capacity by Income Band Detail, 2020-2046

Income Band (as % of County AMI)	Aggregated Housing Needs	Pending Units	Remaining Needs	Total Capacity	Surplus/ Deficit
0-30 PSH, 0-30 Non PSH, 30-80	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	**127**
80-120	209	384	-175	570	**745**
120+	323	1,175	-852	948	**1,800**
Total:	**2,348**	**2,198**	**150**	**2,588**	**2,672**

Challenges and Opportunities

As the City grows, there is an opportunity to encourage housing that best meets the needs of the City of Walla Walla residents.

A Variety of Housing Types

People have different housing needs throughout their lives. The City of Walla Walla's housing inventory indicates that there may be some gaps in housing stock. A greater stock of smaller unit rental housing may be needed to serve single-person households. This type of housing might support young adults who are just starting out, or seniors who wish to age in place. Building smaller-unit rental housing may free up larger units and increase the number of rentals available to serve families. The Land Capacity Analysis indicates that there is sufficient capacity for

multifamily housing. However, capacity alone does not determine whether adequate housing to meet the needs of the community will be built over the planning horizon. Addressing barriers to housing development, as shown in the Adequate Provisions Checklist, will help the City meet the needs of a wide variety of households.

Housing Affordability

The housing inventory shows that more than a third of the households in the City of Walla Walla are burdened by their housing costs. This includes people with moderate incomes as well as people with low and very low incomes, although people with lower incomes are more likely to be burdened by their housing costs. The City could consider a housing affordability plan to address this issue. Such a plan could address the needs for affordable rental and homeownership opportunities for families of all income levels, but particularly for households that make less than 50 percent of the area median income. Subsidized housing is also needed for seniors, people with disabilities, and people with very low incomes. Such housing may be developed and managed by non-profits or public agencies, but the City could consider ways that it can support its development.

Maintenance of Existing Housing Stock

The City of Walla Walla has a decent but aging housing stock. This can be an asset for a community as it grows if the existing housing is well-maintained. The City has a variety of ways to keep current housing in good condition. Such programs could include code compliance programs, minimum property maintenance standards, or home repair assistance programs.

Table 12. Existing Housing Stock

Zone	Description	Net Developable Vacant Acres	Net Developable Underutilized Acres	Total Net Developable Acres
CC	Central Commercial	1.7	7.7	9.4
CH	Highway Commercial	95.2	36.7	131.9
IH	Heavy Industrial	40.4	52.9	93.2
IL	Light Industrial / Commercial	29.1	24.1	53.2
PR	Public Reserve	33.4	2.5	35.9
RN	Neighborhood Residential	193.4	15.1	208.6
RM	Multi-Family Residential	12.9	1.1	14.1
UPC	Urban Planned Community	26.3	2.9	29.2

Goals and Policies

H Goal 1: A broad range of housing choices is available to meet the needs of people of diverse socioeconomic status, race/ ethnicity, household type, ability, and age.

- H 1.1: Provide an array of housing choices such as apartments, small lot single-family housing, accessory dwelling units, townhomes, manufactured homes, and cottages to meet the needs of people of all incomes throughout their lifespan.
- H 1.2: Ensure growth complies with Walla Walla County's adopted countywide housing growth targets.
- H 1.3: Address the needs of the unhoused population by working with local agencies and non-profits that provide services to this community.
- H 1.4: Encourage the use of existing housing stock to provide affordable housing for households with middle and lower incomes.
- H 1.5: Coordinate and collaborate with private agencies to ensure housing for people with special needs including seniors, people with physical and developmental limitations, victims of domestic violence, and homeless individuals and families.
- H 1.6: Work with educational institutions to ensure the provision of adequate housing for students and faculty.
- H 1.7: Support a housing land trust model that provides permanently affordable housing.
- H 1.8: Promote fair and equitable access to housing for all residents, with an emphasis on reducing racial disparities and preventing displacement.

H Goal 2: Attractive and functional neighborhoods are welcoming to all types of households.

- H 2.1: Integrate housing for extremely low, low, and moderate income households and those with special needs into a variety of geographical locations throughout the city, including near transit and services.
- H 2.2: Develop minimum property maintenance standards to ensure the safety and suitability of existing housing stock, while ensuring that enforcement does not jeopardize housing stability for residents.
- H 2.3: Promote energy-efficient housing that is designed to maximize the use of renewable resources such as solar and wind power.

- H 2.4: Locate new senior housing near transportation and community facilities to allow seniors to age in place.
- H 2.5: Develop a housing assistance program that helps homeowners with low incomes with small remodeling projects to improve weatherization, increase sustainability, and provide accommodations for disabilities.
- H 2.6: When siting new development, take into consideration accessibility to community facilities and services, including schools, transit, recreational facilities and areas, and parks, particularly for lower- and moderate-income families and individuals.

H Goal 3: Walla Walla supports all forms of affordable housing in a variety of types and sizes.

- H 3.1: Develop incentives for the construction of housing affordable to extremely low, low, and moderate-income households, such as density bonuses, waived fees, multi-family property tax exemption, or other such incentives.
- H 3.2: Periodically review and update permit processes to ensure they are timely, transparent, and fair for all applicants.
- H 3.3: Apply for state and federal funding to help provide housing for extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income households and those with special needs.
- H 3.4: Work with regional jurisdictions, non-profit agencies, and partners to support development, maintenance, and preservation of housing for extremely low, low, and moderate income households.

Policy Connections

- **The Environment and Natural Resources Element** includes policies to direct the location, site planning, and construction of housing to ensure the least impact to natural resources and the greatest benefits for the environment.
- **The Land Use Element** establishes a plan for where housing should be located in the community.
- **The Transportation Element and Capital Facilities and Utilities Element** plan for infrastructure, utilities, and public facilities to serve housing in Walla Walla.
- **The Community Character Element** provides guidance for community character and historic preservation to ensure the creation of attractive, functional neighborhoods.

Translating Policy into Action

Table 13. Housing Implementation Actions

Implementation Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Housing affordability program: Support the implementation of the regional Housing Action Plan for affordable housing in Walla Walla.	2 years	Community Development
Assistance program: This program would provide renovation assistance to homeowners with low incomes.	5 years	Community Development
Housing types demonstration projects: Work with the development community to create demonstration projects that showcase diverse housing types.	5 years	Community Development



Economic Development

Introduction

Walla Walla's economy is strongest when it builds from its existing assets while also broadening the range of business sectors that can grow here. Agriculture, wine, tourism, arts, education, healthcare, and downtown commerce remain foundational to the city's identity and economic vitality. At the same time, long-term resilience requires continued support for less seasonal and less volatile sectors, including light manufacturing, technology, professional services, skilled trades, creative industries, film and media production, value-added agriculture, and small to mid-sized employers that provide year-round, living-wage employment.

Today and Tomorrow

This section contains an overview of current economic conditions and activities in the City of Walla Walla as well as its role in the County and region. It also considers recent trends in employment and wages and anticipates the potential opportunities and challenges posed by those trends over the 20-year planning horizon.

Conditions Today

The City of Walla Walla is the economic hub of the Walla Walla Valley, with the largest population and the greatest areas of economic activity. The major areas of economic activity are shown below, and include:

- **Downtown**, the cultural, financial, and historical center of the City of Walla Walla, anchored by the Walawála Plaza, located at 1st Avenue and Main Street.
- **Eastgate**, centered on Isaacs Ave and North Wilbur Avenue, is anchored by the Eastgate Marketplace, a shopping center in the northeast of the City. Significant opportunities exist for revitalization in this auto-oriented area.
- **Southgate**, focused along South 2nd Avenue between East Chestnut Street and West Tietan Street, is an employment center anchored by the Southgate Medical Park. As with Eastgate, there are significant redevelopment opportunities in this auto-oriented corridor.
- **9th Avenue and Plaza Way**, located along South 9th Avenue and Plaza Way between West Rose Street and Village Way, and is anchored by Safeway, Bi-Mart, and Rosauers Supermarket.
- **Myra Road,** centered along Myra Road, from Highway 12 to Taumarson Road and anchored by the Walla Walla Town Center, Twin Creek Plaza, and WinCo, with surrounding areas for future development.

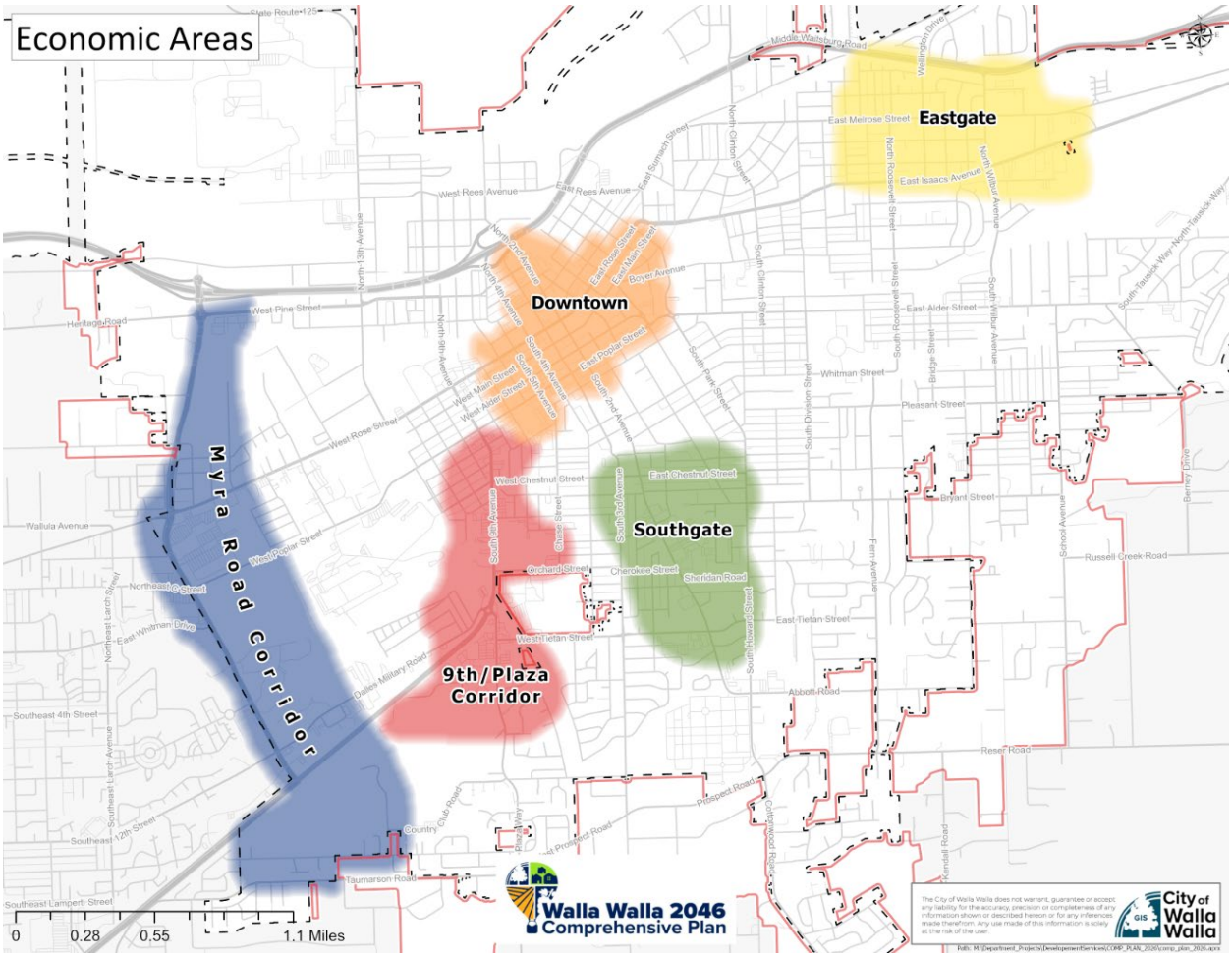


Figure 16. Areas of Economic Activity in the City of Walla Walla

As of 2022, the City of Walla Walla was home to 15,754 jobs, up from 13,944 in 2012 (an increase of 13 percent). The largest employment sectors in the City of Walla Walla include health care and social assistance, public administration, educational services, and accommodation and food services.

	2012	2022	Change	% Change
Educational Services	1,105	1,902	797	72%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,385	1,815	430	31%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,664	4,050	386	11%
Public Administration	1,547	1,926	379	24%
Construction	352	551	199	57%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	197	355	158	80%
Administration & Support, Waste Management	279	397	118	42%
Wholesale Trade	278	393	115	41%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	76	153	77	101%
Manufacturing	839	881	42	5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	339	371	32	9%
Utilities	68	86	18	26%
Transportation and Warehousing	133	148	15	11%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	27	41	14	52%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1	4	3	300%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	181	180	(1)	-1%
Information	263	247	(16)	-6%
Retail Trade	1,620	1,470	(150)	-9%
Finance and Insurance	640	460	(180)	-28%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	950	324	(626)	-66%
	13,944	**15,754**	**1,810**	

Figure 17. The City of Walla Walla Jobs by Sector, 2012-2022

Source: US Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap

Between 2012 and 2022, the sectors that added the most jobs in the City of Walla Walla were educational services, accommodation and food services, health care and social assistance, and public administration. Together, these sectors added nearly 2,000 jobs to the city's economy. Over the same period, the retail trade, finance and insurance, and other services sectors saw the most job losses.

Ten of the top 15 employers in Walla Walla County are located in the City of Walla Walla. The largest of these include Providence Saint Mary Medical Center, the Washington State Penitentiary, and the Walla Walla School District.

The City's economic goals focus on fostering a diverse, sustainable, and well-balanced mix of activities that serve both residents and visitors. Its approach supports continued community development by emphasizing the place (environment and land use), the people (culture, services, and applied expertise), and a shared commitment to shaping the future together.

The Port of Walla Walla (the Port) is the leading agency for economic development for both the City of Walla Walla and the County. The Port's 2025 Economic Development Plan focuses on the creation and maintenance of family-wage jobs and fosters private sector capital investment to enhance the economic health of families in Walla Walla County, including families living below the poverty line. The Port's Plan is action-oriented and identifies benchmarks within the following six core elements:

- Small Business Development
- Existing Business Retention/Expansion
- Business Recruitment, Marketing, and Advertising
- Site and Infrastructure Development
- Economic Profiling
- Economic Development Advocacy

The Port's 2025 plan includes roles and actions for several economic, educational, and planning partners, including Walla Walla Community College, Whitman College, WorkSource Walla Walla, the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation, Visit Walla Walla, the Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance, school districts, the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization, and others. In this plan, the City of Walla Walla's role is identified as follows:

- Formulate and adopt economic policy and guide public investment.
- Provide guidance concerning the Port's implementation of the Economic Development Plan.
- Invest in specific economic development infrastructure projects within its jurisdiction.
- Work complimentary together on-site visitations, retention efforts, and targeted economic development initiatives.
- Provide technical assistance (GMA planning support).
- Support public policy decisions that promote economic development.
- Elected official and administrative staff participation in the bi-monthly economic development informational meetings.

Future Projections

The City of Walla Walla Employment Targets

As part of the Comprehensive Planning process, Walla Walla County assigned population, housing, and employment growth targets to jurisdictions based on the expected countywide growth forecast by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). Based on historic trends and expected growth, the County assigned employment growth based on a 1:1 ratio of housing units to jobs. Therefore, the City of Walla Walla's target for the 2026-2046 period is 2,348 net new jobs. The City's housing target is also 2,348 new housing units.

Eastern Washington Employment Forecasts by Sector

The Washington State Employment Security Department produces job forecasts by industry for the major workforce development areas in the state. For the Eastern Washington Partnership, which includes Walla Walla County as well as other Eastern Washington counties all the way to the Canadian border (excluding Spokane, as shown below), the sectors with the highest expected job growth are professional and business services, education and health services, government, and leisure and hospitality.

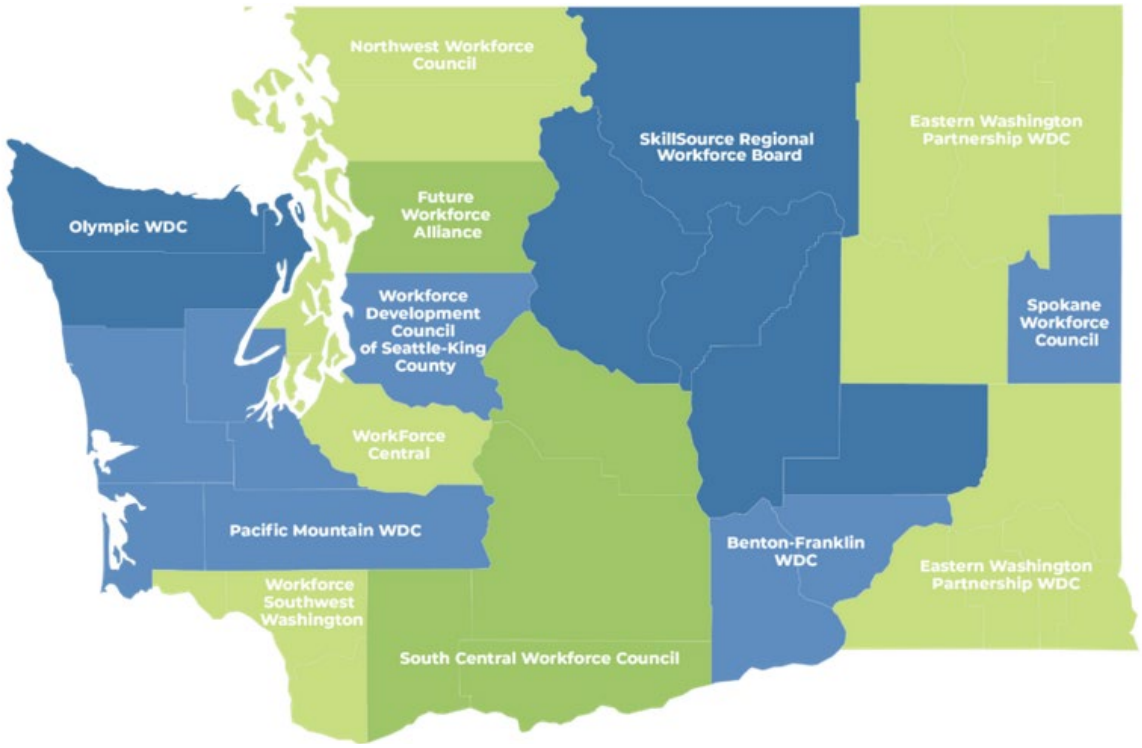


Figure 18. Washington State Workforce Development Areas

Source: Washington Workforce Association

Table 14. Employment Forecasts by Sector, Eastern Washington Workforce Development Area, 2023-2033

Title	Estimated employment 2023	Net New Jobs 2023-2033	Estimated employment 2033	Average annual growth rate 2023-2033
Total Nonfarm	**79,100**	**6,100**	**85,200**	**0.75%**
Natural Resources and Mining	400	0	400	0.00%
Construction	3,700	200	3,900	0.53%
Manufacturing	9,000	100	9,100	0.11%
Food and Beverages Manufacturing	2,600	200	2,800	0.74%
Wholesale Trade	2,100	0	2,100	0.00%
Retail Trade	6,900	200	7,100	0.29%
Food and Beverage Stores	1,800	0	1,800	0.00%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	1,900	100	2,000	0.51%
Information	500	0	500	0.00%
Financial Activities	2,100	100	2,200	0.47%
Professional and Business Services	3,500	500	4,000	1.34%
Education and Health Services	13,300	1,900	15,200	1.34%
Leisure and Hospitality	7,000	500	7,500	0.69%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1,000	100	1,100	0.96%
Accommodation and Food Services	6,000	400	6,400	0.65%
Other Services	1,600	200	1,800	1.18%
Government	27,100	2,300	29,400	0.82%



Employment Land Capacity

As part of the Comprehensive Plan Update, the City conducted a Land Capacity Analysis (LCA), identifying vacant and redevelopable parcels in the City for both housing and employment uses. The full methodology and results of the LCA can be found in Appendix II. Land Capacity Analysis: Housing by Income Band of this plan. As noted above, the City has an employment target of 2,348 net new jobs for the 2026-2046 planning period. Using density assumptions based on recent commercial development by zone, and standard assumptions for square feet per employee, the LCA found a capacity for 4,405 new jobs on vacant and underutilized parcels in commercial and mixed-use zones. Additionally, the LCA found 1,183 pending jobs in development that have occurred since 2020 (planned or proposed). These pending jobs are not located on vacant or underutilized parcels. Since pending jobs and land capacity for employment on vacant and underutilized parcels both count towards meeting the City's job target, this results in a total of 5,588 new jobs over the planning horizon. This number includes pending jobs. In total, this is a surplus of 3,240 above the target, showing that the City of Walla Walla has sufficient capacity to meet its job targets for the 2026-2046 planning horizon. Table 15 on the following page shows the job capacity and the assumed commercial share of land by zone.

Table 15. Employment Land Capacity in the City of Walla Walla, 2026-2046

Zone	Description	Category	% Commercial	Net Commercial Developable Acres	Assumed Density (Jobs/Ac)	Gross Job Capacity	Net Job Capacity
CC	Central Commercial	Mixed-Use	75%	7.1	36.3	256	**256**
CH	Highway Commercial	Mixed-Use	75%	98.9	29.0	2,873	**2,873**
IH	Heavy Industrial	Industrial	100%	93.2	8.7	812	**812**
IL	Light Industrial / Commercial	Industrial	100%	53.2	8.7	464	**464**
PR	Public Reserve	Public	95%	34.1	0.0	0	**0**
RN	Neighborhood Residential	Residential	0%	0.0	0.0	0	**0**
RM	Multi-Family Residential	Residential	0%	0.0	0.0	0	**0**
UPC	Urban Planned Community	Residential	100%	29.2	0.0	0	**0**
		Total		**315.8**		**Total Land Capacity**	**4,405**
						Pending Jobs	1,183
						Grand Total	**5,588**
						Target	2,348
						Surplus	**3,240**

Challenges and Opportunities

The City of Walla Walla will likely face important economic challenges over the next twenty years. The City's remote location, distance from major transportation hubs, lack of easy access to the Interstate Highway System, and major railroad lines may limit the attractiveness of the City of Walla Walla for the recruitment of large businesses and for business and employee retention.

Additionally, as discussed in greater detail in the Housing Element, housing affordability is a challenge in the City, particularly for renters. A lack of available and affordable housing can have significant negative impacts on the city's economy, particularly in sectors with lower-wage jobs, such as the tourism and service industries, which are important sectors in the City. Among all renter households, 45 percent are estimated to be cost burdened, spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs, and 24 percent are estimated to be severely cost burdened, spending more than half their income on housing costs. Few households with low or very low incomes can find housing they can afford.

Wages pose both a challenge and an opportunity for the City: while wages for common jobs in the City's top sectors vary widely, jobs in the healthcare and education sectors are among the highest paying in the local economy. As these higher-paying sectors continue to grow, household incomes should rise. However, jobs in the accommodation and food services industry, which are important in the City's central business district and wine industry, are much lower paying. These jobs are essential to a healthy economy, but workers are susceptible to displacement as the cost-of-living rises.

The wine industry is a major driver of tourism and has contributed to significant growth in the accommodation sector. The City recently completed a Tourism Master Plan that highlighted the continued importance of tourism and the wine industry in the local economy. In 2022, winemakers in Walla Walla County produced nearly 3.5 million gallons of wine (55.8 gallons per capita). This is the highest production level since at least 2009, indicating strong growth in the sector and a rebound from the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there are indications that the alcoholic beverage industry, and wine in particular, could face significant headwinds in the coming years. Nationwide, the demand for wine has been declining since 2020. A report by Silicon Valley Bank0F0F0F1 shows that across the US, the total wine volume consumed has declined in 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. These trends indicate that the City may need to diversify its economic and tourism base beyond wine to achieve sustainable growth in the near term.

Educational institutions in the City, including Walla Walla Public Schools and private schools, Whitman College, and Walla Walla Community College, offer unique opportunities for workforce development and business attraction, especially for students and employers in the health care, food services, and viticulture sectors. higher education is facing significant demographic challenges and a continued decline in enrollment. To remain sustainable, institutions are adopting new strategies. Many are shifting their focus to attract adult learners, expanding online and hybrid education options, and developing innovative pathways to strengthen enrollment. Building on this opportunity will be key to economic growth.

[1] Silicon Valley Bank. State of the US Wine Industry 2025. https://www.svb.com/globalassets/library/uploadedfiles/wine/svb-state-of-the-us-wine-industry-report-2025.pdf

Downtown Walla Walla is a significant commercial center for the region as well as a high-quality amenity for residents, visitors, and businesses. Public investments in Downtown, such as the recent completion of Walawála Plaza and Heritage Square, will help attract new workers and businesses to the city.

The key commercial corridors of Eastgate, Southgate, 9th Avenue, and Plaza Way are experiencing challenges such as persistent vacancies, limited pedestrian amenities, and auto-oriented layouts dominated by large parking lots. Looking ahead, these areas have strong potential to be revitalized through improved pedestrian facilities, upgraded streetscapes, and the introduction of public attractions that create a more inviting and connected environment. A focused analysis of each corridor should identify strategies to strengthen economic vitality and support long-term economic health and sustainability.

The City's other opportunities include replacing and maintaining the built environment and infrastructure, which include the streetscapes and sidewalks; preserving established neighborhoods with historic buildings and homes; and supporting the Parks and Recreation programs and facilities.

Leveraging the City's Identity for Economic Vitality

Many local businesses benefit from the City's attractive physical identity, and the business community is actively promoting the City's attractions. Because businesses and developers benefit from these attractions, it is appropriate that developers and businesses invest in the community's attractiveness and amenities.

Accommodating Growth While Maintaining Attractiveness and Walla Walla's Unique Character

The City should balance attracting higher-paying jobs while taking deliberate steps to preserve its historic, physical, and social character. To achieve this, the City should promote its development incentives and financial tools. The City can also continue the use of special tax valuation to help activate and rehabilitate underutilized historic buildings, strengthening both economic vitality and preservation efforts.

Goals and Policies

ED Goal 1: Walla Walla continues to build a diversified, skilled, and well-educated workforce.

- ED 1.1: Work with the City's higher education partners to expand opportunities for residents seeking higher education and technical skills for job advancement and greater economic opportunity.
- ED 1.2: Coordinate with Whitman College, Walla Walla University, Walla Walla Community College, and Walla Walla Public Schools to support their substantial contributions to the economic vitality of the City.
- ED 1.3: Promote and support the Opportunity Zones.
- ED 1.4: Collaborate with the Port of Walla Walla, the State, neighboring jurisdictions, tribal governments, and special districts to promote economic growth.
- ED 1.5: Prioritize employer recruitment efforts to ensure the City's growth aligns with Walla Walla County's adopted countywide employment growth targets.

ED Goal 2: Walla Walla has an array of sustainable employment choices for all income and age levels, particularly jobs that pay a living wage.

- ED 2.1: Seek to diversify Walla Walla's economy with a variety of businesses to weather economic cycles.
- ED 2.2: Address regulatory, policy, and other barriers to business retention, expansion, and recruitment in Walla Walla.
- ED 2.3: Encourage business stakeholders in the community to develop more employment opportunities.

ED Goal 3: Walla Walla has a supportive environment for entrepreneurial opportunities and startup businesses.

- ED 3.1: Support home-based businesses and occupations by reviewing and implementing policies and regulations that are current and adaptive to new technologies.
- ED 3.2: Work with the Port of Walla Walla and private commercial owners to provide low-cost incubation space for startup businesses, including office-based and industrial.
- ED 3.3: Evaluate the impact of development standards on businesses and amend as needed.
- ED 3.4: Ensure there is adequate land and infrastructure for businesses and industries including utilities and transportation connections.

ED Goal 4: Walla Walla offers a high quality of life for entrepreneurs, their families, and employees.

- ED 4.1: Accommodate housing at all income levels for future employees through appropriate land use and development regulations.
- ED 4.2: Support and encourage the creation and retention of quality, accessible, and affordable childcare.
- ED 4.3: Strive to connect the community with affordable and quality broadband.

ED Goal 5: Downtown Walla Walla is full of thriving businesses and is recognized and celebrated as the center of the community.

- ED 5.1: Retain and recruit businesses in the Central Business District.
- ED 5.2: Encourage continued revitalization of Downtown through appropriate development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation.
- ED 5.3: Incentivize redevelopment of vacated commercial spaces and upper story levels in the Downtown.
- ED 5.4: Continue the support and encouragement of tourism-based commerce within the Downtown while balancing the needs of residents.

ED Goal 6: Walla Walla has a thriving retail economy with ample shopping opportunities, and local residents choose to shop in the city.

- ED 6.1: Analyze conditions in the Eastgate Corridor to determine strategies for strengthening economic vitality.
- ED 6.2: Promote the long-term economic health and sustainability of commercial corridors, including Eastgate, Southgate, 9th Avenue/ Plaza Way, and Myra Road.
- ED 6.3: Work with property owners to develop the Myra Road corridor as a mixed-use urban village that supports both commercial and residential development.

ED Goal 7: Tourism continues to be an important part of Walla Walla's economy, including heritage and enology and viticulture.

- ED 7.1: Maintain and improve the built environment of sidewalks, parks, paths and other public amenities that visitors will enjoy and utilize.
- ED 7.2: Support the region's tourism agencies in promoting the City and region as a welcoming place to live and a destination for entertainment, commerce, recreation, and tourism.

ED Goal 8: Walla Walla provides a resilient, year-round local economy that honors Walla Walla's heritage, agriculture, wine, tourism, and cultural identity while expanding business-sector diversity, living-wage employment, and opportunities for entrepreneurship.

- ED 8.1: Support the retention, expansion, and modernization of existing businesses across Walla Walla's established and emerging sectors.
- ED 8.2: Encourage land use, infrastructure, and permitting approaches that support flexible, multi-use business environments, and preserve and enhance areas suitable for light industrial, maker, production, studio, warehouse, office, and other mixed-use employment activities.
- ED 8.3: Strengthen Walla Walla's ability to attract and grow small to mid-sized businesses that provide year-round employment and reduce reliance on any single season, industry, or visitor-driven revenue stream.
- ED 8.4: Recognize creative industries, film, media, and related production sectors as well as associated support services as emerging economic opportunities that diversify the local economy, increase off-season activity, support local vendors, and build on Walla Walla's quality of place.
- ED 8.5: Coordinate economic development planning with workforce training and education, housing, transportation, broadband, utilities, land-use planning, and commercial space needs to support long-term business growth, retention, and recruitment.
- ED 8.6: Support economic diversification by encouraging growth, retention, and recruitment of small to mid-sized employers in sectors that provide year-round, living-wage jobs and are not solely dependent on seasonal visitor activity.
- ED 8.7: Support entrepreneurship, incubators, co-working, maker spaces, and adaptive-reuse opportunities that allow local businesses and emerging sectors to start, scale, and remain in Walla Walla.
- ED 8.8: Support Walla Walla's Creative District as both a cultural and economic development asset by encouraging arts, design, film, media, culinary, heritage, music and production-related businesses that contribute to downtown vitality, local entrepreneurship, visitor experience, and year-round employment.

Policy Connections

- **The Land Use Element** includes policies to accommodate projected growth and ensure sufficient land capacity is available for new jobs and residents.
- **The Capital Facilities and Utilities Element** and the **Transportation Element** demonstrate how future land uses will be served by public services and infrastructure.

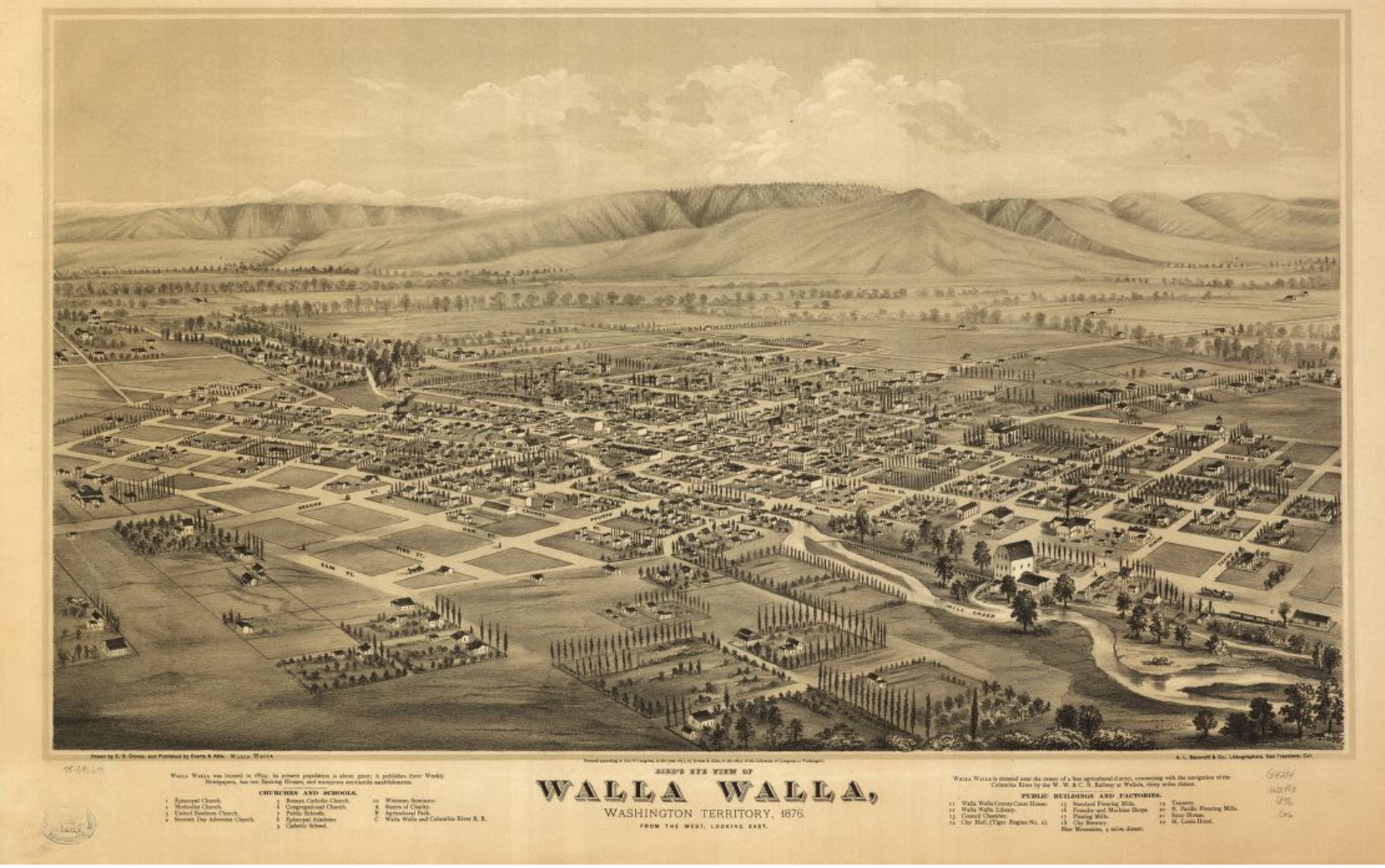
- Policies for the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods are included in the **Historic Preservation Element**. Other policies that address neighborhood character can be found in the **Community Character Element**.

Translating Policy into Action

Table 16. Economic Development Implementation Actions

Implementation Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Invest in public infrastructure	Ongoing	Public Works
Participate in regional economic development meetings and activities	Ongoing	Community Development
Enhance the economic health of the City of Walla Walla through the development and execution of the Port of Walla Walla Economic Development plan	Ongoing	Port of Walla Walla and the City of Walla Walla
Monitor and adjust development standards to meet the needs of employers, while maintaining community values.	Ongoing	Community Development
Encourage redevelopment in vacant commercial spaces Downtown and highway commercial zones	Ongoing	Community Development
Work with the Port of Walla Walla and private commercial owners to provide low-cost incubation space for startup businesses, including office-based and industrial.	Ongoing	Community Development and Port of Walla Walla
Initiate commercial corridor studies to assess infrastructure needs and support the sustainability and resilience of key corridors	5-10 years	Community Development and Public Works
Support the redevelopment and strengthen the economic vitality of the Eastgate commercial corridor.	5 years	Community Development
Create and launch a dedicated webpage that clearly presents the City's available economic incentive tools	1-5 Years	Community Development
Support the implementation of the Tourism Master Plan	Ongoing	Community Development

Historic Preservation



Bird's eye view of Walla Walla, Washington Territory

Source: Walla Walla, Everts & Able 1876 via the Library of Congress

Introduction

The City of Walla Walla is a vibrant community with a rich history—some of the oldest built-environment resources in the state are present in the City. The history of the Walla Walla Valley begins with early stewardship of the land by the ancestors of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). Walla Walla's historic resources help define the character of the city and its inhabitants, create a strong sense of place, enhance the quality of life for residents, and connect those residents to the city's heritage.

The City of Walla Walla has valued the preservation of its historic buildings and sites for many years and formalized that commitment by establishing the Historic Preservation Commission in 2002. In 2003, the City became a Certified Local Government (CLG) and created a Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) in 2022. The HPP provides a roadmap for the program, ensuring that the heritage and historic places that enrich the community remain for future generations. As a Certified Local Government (CLG), Walla Walla's commitment to historic preservation recognizes the value of maintaining the rich history of the community and the economic benefits of preserving structures, particularly in downtown Walla Walla and its historic neighborhoods.

CLG status is given by the National Park Service (NPS) and serves as a means for local governments to strengthen their historic preservation efforts. CLGs are eligible for technical assistance and matching grants from their State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO), which are sponsored by the NPS and state governments. The City has successfully collaborated with residents, private investors, and organizations such as the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation to adaptively reuse and redevelop several historic structures in the City's core to preserve Walla Walla's historic architecture. Significant preservation and revitalization efforts include:

- Establishment of the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation in 1984.
- Rehabilitation and renovation of the Die Brücke Building.
- Rehabilitation and renovation of the Whitehouse-Crawford Building.
- Creation of a public-facing interactive GIS (geographic information system) map of the Walla Walla Register of Historic Places.
- Generation of historic property inventory reports for homes and buildings to provide the information required for listing on historic registers.
- Designation of the Downtown Walla Walla National Historic Register District in 2021.
- Creation and City Council adoption of a city-wide Historic Preservation Plan in 2023.

Walla Walla has embraced historic preservation as an effective tool for economic vigor and stability. For the past 40 years, historic preservation has been used to transform the downtown core, Fort Walla Walla Historic District, and neighborhoods throughout the City. Walla Walla's cultural stewardship has helped the City remain an attractive and vibrant place to live, work, and play.

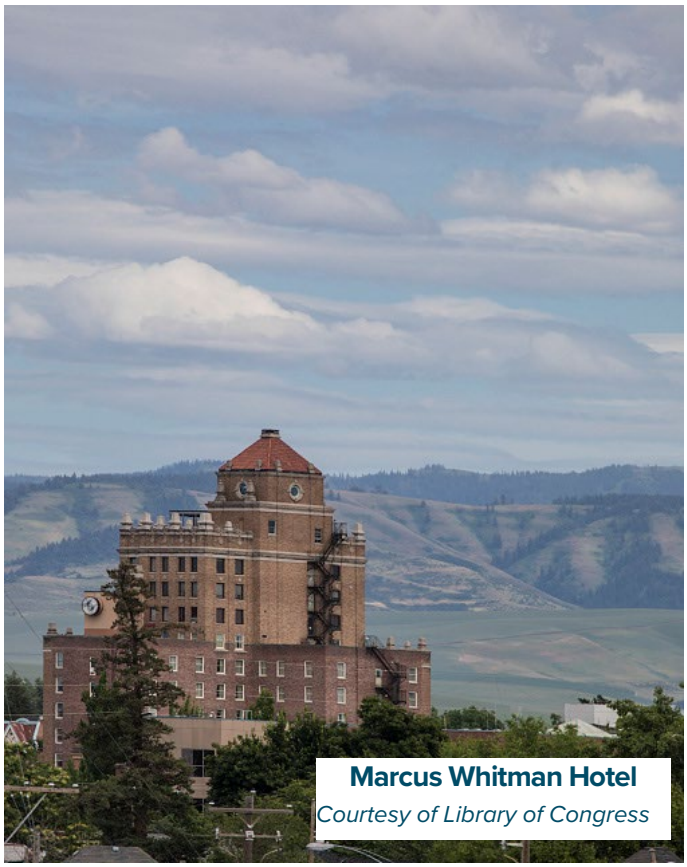


For the purposes of this plan, historic preservation is defined as follows:

Historic preservation is an activity that preserves historic resources and their ability to communicate their intended meaning and significance. Historic preservation includes the identification, evaluation, designation, protection, and retention of significant architectural, historic, and cultural resources in the built and natural environments. Resources can include everything from small objects and individual buildings to sites and districts, as well as landscapes, streetscapes, and viewsheds. The benefits of historic preservation are increased sustainability and green building, and it can create a strong and unique sense of place through the retention of older buildings. Overall, historic preservation efforts enhance a community's quality of life.

There are numerous benefits of historic preservation. Four key areas where historic preservation can benefit a community are social, cultural, environmental, and economic.

1. **Social:** Historic resources are recognized and known entities within their community, whether that is land associated with traditional cultural practices, a park that generations have visited with family and friends, or a commercial building that has housed a highly regarded legacy small business.
2. **Cultural:** Within Walla Walla, historic buildings represent a window to the past and what the City used to look like, providing opportunities for cultural tourism and for still-standing historical buildings to be in use today.
3. **Environmental:** Historic preservation can support the efforts of environmental sustainability. Reusing historic buildings and structures preserves the embodied energy inherent to these resources and reduces what is taken to the landfill.
4. **Economic:** The labor intensiveness of reusing historic buildings creates local jobs. Cultural resources provide a rich setting for businesses and events that draw residents and tourists, encouraging investment in local economies. Historic properties tend to have stable property values, allowing them to weather economic crises.



Marcus Whitman Hotel
Courtesy of Library of Congress

Several laws at the federal, state, and local levels serve as the legal basis for the City's historic preservation activities. At the federal level are the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended; the National Environmental

Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended; the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1978 (AHPA), as amended; the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA), as amended; and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), as amended, and others.

Washington state laws on historic preservation include the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) of 1971; the Shoreline Management Act (SMA) of 1971; the Abandoned and Historic Cemeteries and Historic Graves Act (RCW 68.60); the Archaeological Sites and Resources Act; the Washington State Historic Building Code; the Governor's Executive Order 21-02; Chapter 25-12 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC): Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; and Chapter 19.27.120 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW): Building Code Exception.

The City of Walla Walla Municipal Code Chapter 2.27 establishes the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), commonly called the Historic Preservation Ordinance. This ordinance defined the HPC responsibilities and established the City of Walla Walla Register of Historic Places (WWRHP), often referred to as the Local Register, and authorized the special valuation program (ten-year period of revised assessment valuation). The purpose of the ordinance is to provide for the identification, evaluation, designation, and protection of the City's historic and prehistoric resources. It also seeks to preserve and rehabilitate eligible historic properties for future generations through the use of special valuation, a property tax incentive, and other means. As a Certified Local Government (CLG), the City is responsible for administering the HPC; continuing to survey local historic properties; maintaining the WWRHP; and providing the public with opportunities to participate in other preservation activities.

Funding

CLG status is given by the National Park Service (NPS) and is a means for local governments to strengthen their historic preservation efforts. There are many benefits to being a CLG, such as eligibility for public and private funding through technical assistance and matching grants, typically administered by State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) and supported by the NPS and state governments.

Annual CLG grant funding is available from the NPS through the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). CLG grants can be used to support a variety of preservation planning activities, including historic surveys, developing design guidelines, educational materials, and others.

The City of Walla Walla and the Historic Preservation Commission have been active in seeking grants through the DAHP to complete inventories of neighborhoods. Reconnaissance-level surveys have been completed of the following neighborhoods:

- Downtown Walla Walla
- Green Park Neighborhood
- Germantown

The City does not have a grant program specific to designated historic properties.

Today and Tomorrow

Historic Context

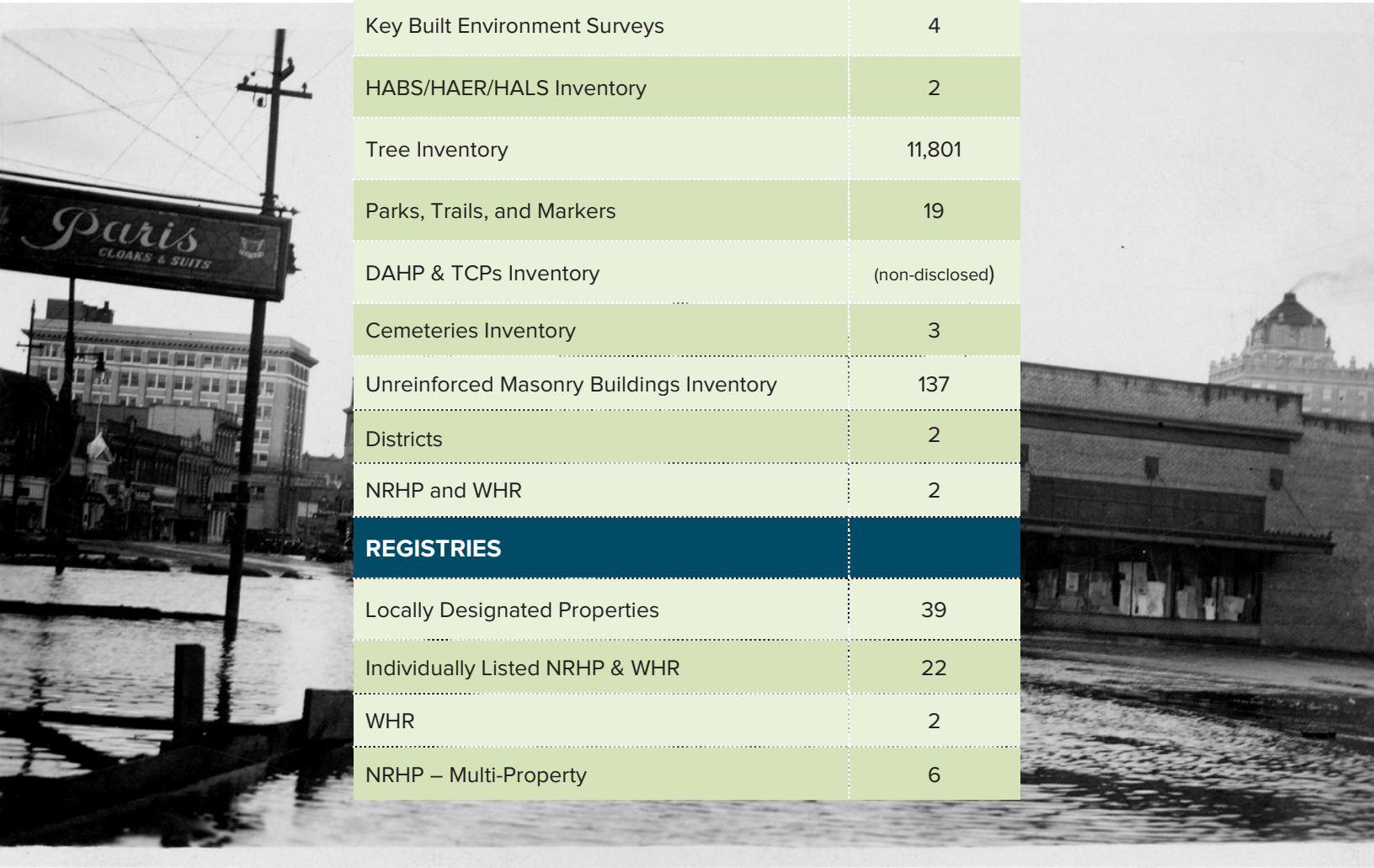
Historic context is not a complete history of Walla Walla, but it provides a summary of the City's founding and development in the context of the built environment. To provide context for the City's history, staff completed surveys and inventories of historic features. There are multiple inventories that relate to historic resources and are maintained by different entities and accessed in different ways.

The Historic Preservation Plan is a reference in the Comprehensive Plan, and it provides full lists and more detailed information on built-environment surveys and historic inventories completed to date.

Cultural resource surveys conducted within the city limits resulted in over 1,300 inventoried resources in the City of Walla Walla historic inventory via WISAARD.

Table 17. Inventoried and Registered Resources

INVENTORIES	Qty
Key Built Environment Surveys	4
HABS/HAER/HALS Inventory	2
Tree Inventory	11,801
Parks, Trails, and Markers	19
DAHP & TCPs Inventory	(non-disclosed)
Cemeteries Inventory	3
Unreinforced Masonry Buildings Inventory	137
Districts	2
NRHP and WHR	2
REGISTRIES	
Locally Designated Properties	39
Individually Listed NRHP & WHR	22
WHR	2
NRHP – Multi-Property	6



View of Main Street, looking west, after 1931 flood — from the Washington State Archives

Conditions Today

Sixty-four properties and structures within the City are either listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Washington Heritage Register, or the City's Local Register of Historic Places. The Historic Preservation Plan, a reference to this Comprehensive Plan, includes a complete list of the properties and structures on the various historic registers.

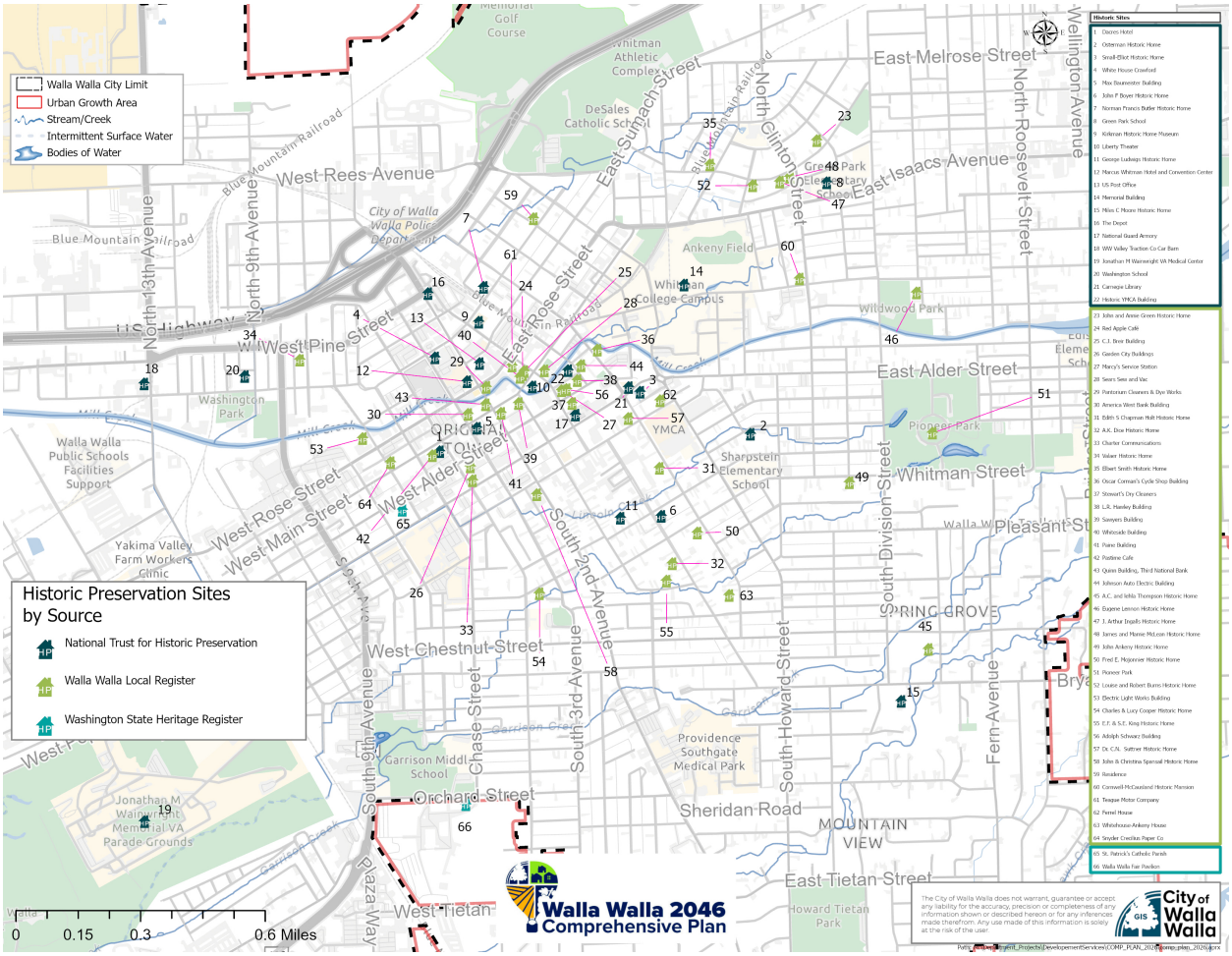


Figure 19. Historic Preservation Sites

The current state of historic preservation in the City of Walla Walla is robust, with more initiatives to preserve the city's architectural and cultural heritage sites. The Downtown Walla Walla Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in September 2021, covering roughly 100 properties.

The community has made progress in a number of preservation and restoration projects. For example, the exterior of the Walla Walla County Courthouse, including terracotta and sandstone elements, is being restored thanks to a sizable state grant, with efforts underway to extend work to other facades. The City completed and adopted a long-term Historic Preservation

Plan in 2023, developed with public input, to guide preservation efforts over the next decade. Lastly, newer tools for public engagement and transparency are being implemented—for example, the development of an interactive map to display the city's historic register properties, making it easier for residents and visitors to understand and appreciate what is historic in Walla Walla. More information about the City's historic preservation may be found in the Historic Preservation Plan.

Challenges and Opportunities

Historic preservation can face many challenges, such as buildings that have been altered over time in ways that diminish their historic integrity, or properties that are under pressure for demolition to make way for redevelopment opportunities. Deterioration and the high cost of rehabilitation hinder preservation efforts, and declining state and local grant funding for surveys and inventories further intensifies these challenges.

One goal of this Plan is to increase awareness of historic preservation and its benefits. Currently, inadequate incentives, regulatory frameworks, and lack of education pose challenges. There is a need for an easily accessible method to share information and engage stakeholders and the general public in the preservation process.

The Walla Walla community sees the benefits of historic preservation through a vibrant downtown, increased tourism, and pride in the community. Maintaining that momentum in strategic ways, such as identifying the community's priorities for preservation and promoting rehabilitation of structures, is key to an effective preservation program. A lack of education of historic preservation processes and programs among the public continues to pose challenges. Enhancing the community's knowledge of preservation incentives and tools is an important opportunity. Other opportunities include economic development through historic rehabilitation, which generates direct economic impacts through purchases of goods and services and indirect impacts through related spending at local businesses.



Sharpstein Elementary School
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Walla Walla's Plan

The purpose of the Historic Preservation Element is to provide guidance for residents, developers, and organizations regarding preservation issues within the City of Walla Walla. This document formalizes City policy, guides public and private investment to advance the City's preservation goals, supports the work of the Historic Preservation. More information about the city's historic preservation may be found in the Historic Preservation Plan.

Commission, and promotes historic preservation throughout the community in order to:

- Safeguard the history of Walla Walla as represented by the buildings, districts, objects, sites, structures, and landscapes which reflect significant elements of the City's history;
- Foster civic and neighborhood pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past, and a sense of identity based on Walla Walla's history;
- Stabilize or improve the aesthetic and economic vitality and values of historic sites, improvements and objects;
- Assist, encourage, and provide incentives to property and business owners for preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, redevelopment and use of outstanding historic buildings, districts, objects, sites, and structures;
- Conserve valuable material and energy resources by ongoing use and maintenance of the existing built environment.

Goals and Policies

The following goals support the vision and mission of Walla Walla's historic preservation program and will guide ongoing work.

HP Goal 1: Walla Walla values its rich history and strives to protect and memorialize it.

- HP 1.1: Broaden and clarify the role of historic preservation within the city's decision making.
- HP 1.2: Work with residents and property owners to establish preservation districts with design guidelines.
- HP 1.3: Encourage designation to the Walla Walla Register of Historic Places.

HP Goal 2: Walla Walla values its unique cultural resources.

- HP 2.1: Protect archaeological resources and traditional cultural properties, including those significant to area Tribes.
- HP 2.2: Continue seeking grant opportunities to conduct cultural resource surveys.
- HP 2.3: Encourage alternatives to demolishing cultural resources and prohibit demolition of those eligible for a historic register when the purpose is to build parking.
- HP 2.4: Reuse existing public buildings in such a way that civic and historic design elements are preserved, and encourage school districts, Whitman College, and Walla Walla County to reuse structures rather than tear down.

HP Goal 3: Walla Walla is committed to making historic preservation information available to its citizens.

- HP 3.1: Expand the community's understanding of cultural resources in collaboration with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and broaden the range of historic properties and stories that are documented.
- HP 3.2: Provide educational materials in a variety of formats that outline the benefits of historic preservation and encourage appropriate renovation, restoration, and infill construction throughout the City.

HP Goal 4: Historic preservation supports Walla Walla's economic vitality.

- HP 4.1: Provide assistance and education to developers, landowners, and interested citizens in obtaining grants and tax incentives for the reuse and rehabilitation of designated cultural resources.

- HP 4.2: Publicize historic preservation projects and highlight the economic benefits.
- HP 4.3: Encourage adaptive reuse of historic structures through incentives such as local register designation and accessing special valuation property tax benefits.

HP Goal 5: Ensure authenticity guides heritage tourism in Walla Walla.

- HP 5.1: Actively encourage and promote Walla Walla as a heritage tourism destination, including attractions such as historic barns/farms, historic wineries, historic downtown, charming historic neighborhoods, local history sites, Fort Walla Walla Museum, Frenchtown Historic Site, Whitman Mission, Kirkman House Museum, walking tours, and biking tours.
- HP 5.2: Utilize heritage tourism materials to engage with Walla Walla residents.
- HP 5.3: Continue to honor local historic sites not designated on the City's local register.
- HP 5.4: Support and encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings in downtown Walla Walla.

Policy Connections

- **The Housing Element** includes policies to revitalize neighborhoods and preserve the housing stock.
- **The Economic Development Element** includes policies for promoting heritage tourism.
- **The Community Character Element** includes policies that address the community's physical qualities and how we experience them.

Translating Policy into Action

This section makes connections between other city plans, programs, and actions and the policy direction of this element.

Table 18. Historic Preservation Implementation Action

Implementation Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish preservation districts for neighborhoods, work with residents and property owners, and explore opportunities with DAHP grant funds in the future.	Ongoing	Community Development and Historic Preservation Commission
Refine education materials that outline the benefits of historic preservation	3-5 years	Community Development and Historic Preservation Commission
Develop a program/ process that highlights historic preservation projects	5 years	Community Development and Historic Preservation Commission
Expand visitor awareness of Walla Walla's heritage and its historic resources online and promote WW as a destination for cultural heritage tourists	Ongoing	Visit Walla Walla Fort Walla Walla Museum Communications
Implement the recommendations of the Historic Preservation Plan	Ongoing	Community Development



Parks and Recreation

Introduction

Parks and recreation facilities are key components in developing and maintaining a vibrant and attractive community. The City of Walla Walla contains numerous city parks, which include a pool, cemetery, sports complex, and golf course to meet community needs. Recreation programs bring people together, improve the quality of life, and promote a healthy community. Parks and recreation facilities also play an important role in the City's economy by attracting and retaining workforce, instilling community pride, and encouraging tourism. Additionally, a balanced and engaging community park system is a strong selling point for employers who want to invest in the community and attract talent.

This Element provides a summary and overall assessment of the parks and recreation resources in the City of Walla Walla along with goals and policies. The City's Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, as adopted by reference, provides a much more detailed inventory and analysis of the City's parks and recreation facilities as well as a more expansive review of future capital projects.





Today and Tomorrow

Conditions Today

The City of Walla Walla has a rich and distinctive history of park development that reflects the community's early commitment to civic beauty and recreation. This legacy began in 1901, when the City Council proposed retaining city-owned property for a "City Park." That vision became reality in 1908, with the opening of Walla Walla's first park, named City Park. In 1931, the park was renamed Pioneer Park.

The transformation of this land into a vibrant public space was driven by the Women's Park Club of Walla Walla, led by Grace Isaacs in the early 1900s. This dedicated group of local women championed the creation and funding of the park, turning a dusty tract into a beautiful civic landmark. They built essential infrastructure, including the iconic gazebo and fountains, which left a lasting imprint on Walla Walla's cultural and physical landscape.

Their efforts did not stop there. With the support of Park Commission President John Langdon, the Park Club continued raising funds for park improvements and city beautification. Their advocacy led to the hiring of the renowned Olmsted Brothers, one of America's most influential landscape architecture firms. John C. Olmsted provided detailed recommendations for Pioneer Park and proposed a comprehensive vision for additional parks throughout the City.

In the decades that followed, the Club remained instrumental in expanding and enhancing Walla Walla's park system. They donated land, planted trees and shrubs, installed play equipment, and added amenities that enriched the community's quality of life. Their foresight and dedication established a tradition of green space preservation that continues today, reflected in the wealth of parks that make Walla Walla a uniquely livable and beautiful city.

The City's park system has grown to include 17 parks encompassing approximately 600 acres of parkland. This includes Veterans Memorial Golf Course, an 18-hole municipal golf course, Mountain View Cemetery, an 89-acre cemetery established in the 1860s, and Veterans Memorial Pool, an Olympic-sized lap pool with slides and splash features. The park system offers a wide range of recreation programs, youth and adult sports, educational opportunities, and community events. Mountain View Cemetery also serves as a space for passive recreation activities such as walking and cycling. Residents and visitors alike enjoy amenities such as the downtown Walawála Plaza, the fully rebuilt Heritage Square, eight pickleball courts and expanded parking at the Mill Creek Sportsplex, and six pickleball courts at Pioneer Park.

Future Projections

Population growth in the City has historically been slow and steady, averaging approximately 0.49% per year from 2016 to 2025, with two years of negative growth during the coronavirus pandemic. Between 2024 and 2025, the City experienced a growth rate of 0.78%. While the current inventory provides sufficient parkland by acreage per capita, anticipated growth in the southern region of the City will require the development of additional park spaces to meet future demand.

According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year 2023 data, approximately 46% of Walla Walla's population is younger than 35, with another 19% of the population over the age of 65. These age groups typically have a higher demand for parks and recreation activities, as younger adults are engaged in sporting activities and older adults are engaged in recreation programs and other social activities. A variety of recreation activities that meet the needs of all age groups should be provided, with the intent to engage all sectors of the community and to develop an inclusive recreation program.

Tournament Based Tourism

There is also a growing demand for recreational sports that promote tourism. Interest in tournament-based sporting activities such as volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, and swimming continues to expand, and there is a need to provide high-quality recreation facilities and amenities to support this growth. Expansion of parkland by adding fields, parking, and basic infrastructure will be needed to accommodate this growth. As recreational tourism and the population increase, existing open spaces will be programmed to promote outdoor events.

Indoor Recreation Space

Indoor recreation facilities owned by the City are limited, and future opportunities to provide flexible gym space for a variety of uses should be evaluated. In the short-term, finding opportunities to either expand existing recreation centers or shared-use facilities within the school system should be a priority.



Challenges and Opportunities

Funding

The Parks and Recreation Department faces a significant backlog of deferred maintenance projects due to limited funding. Historically, capital for the Department has come from the City's general fund, grants, and private donations.

Updating the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan will keep the City strategically aligned to plan and budget for park improvements, while also strengthening its ability to secure state grant funding.

While an assessed value levy will help build a sustainable funding source for future park improvements, immediate needs remain until sufficient funds have been collected. In the short term, expanding partnerships with outside organizations, collaborating with facility providers, and leveraging cooperative agreements will be essential to address critical gaps, particularly the lack of indoor recreation space. These partnerships can help meet community needs now, while longer-term funding strategies are implemented.

While these funding sources have been valuable, there is an opportunity to expand partnerships with external organizations, strengthen collaboration with facility providers, and explore additional funding mechanisms to support system-wide improvements and targeted facility upgrades. Addressing the Department's substantial backlog of deferred maintenance projects will require a more diversified and sustainable funding strategy.

Community Outreach and Stewardship

As the community grows, so should the communication tools for public outreach. Keeping the public informed of planned improvements, facility closures, upcoming recreational programs, and volunteer opportunities will increase stewardship and reduce costs. User-friendly enhancements to the City website, the use of social media, and public announcements are effective ways to disseminate information to the public with minimal effort and cost. Volunteer stewardship opportunities, such as tree planting, fundraising, and maintenance build partnerships with community organizations and advance park developments, improvements, or conservation efforts.

Preservation of the Urban Forest

The existing urban forest is a great asset to the City and contributes to the high quality of life. However, many of the trees are over 100 years old and are reaching the end of their expected lifespans. Replacement of this canopy is an important part of maintaining the quality of life, and will require public education, volunteerism, and adequate funding, including full implementation of the existing Urban Forestry Management Plan.

Public Safety

Public safety is a cornerstone of the City's successful park system and plays a vital role in encouraging park usage and supporting tourism. Active, well-maintained parks naturally promote a sense of security and community pride. To achieve this, City efforts will focus on public education and collaboration with community policing initiatives, keeping parks vibrant through events and programming, and ensuring that equipment and facilities remain clean, safe, and in excellent condition throughout the system.

Attracting New Park Users

There are many opportunities to schedule events such as concerts, cultural activities, and sporting events to attract park users and recreational tourism. This may mean that additional sports fields are needed in the existing sports complexes to attract larger tournaments, or facilities upgraded to support larger crowds. These types of events generate revenue for the City's general fund through increased hotel and sales tax revenue and for the park system through user fees and on-site vending.



Walla Walla's Plan

To meet the community's parks, recreation, and open space needs, the City is dedicated to providing proper funding and mechanisms to maintain existing parks and to develop new parklands.

- Collaboration with agencies, the public, and the private development community to provide more recreational programs, opportunities, and volunteerism.
- Preservation and enhancement of the City's urban forest.
- Offering services and programs to all ages and segments of society in order to build healthy and productive lives.
- Proactively supporting the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan and assisting in educating the public on what the park system has to offer.

The goals and policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan have been developed to reflect the values and future of the community. The intent of these policies is to provide the Parks Department with the flexibility they will need to achieve these goals.

Parks and Recreation Inventory Map

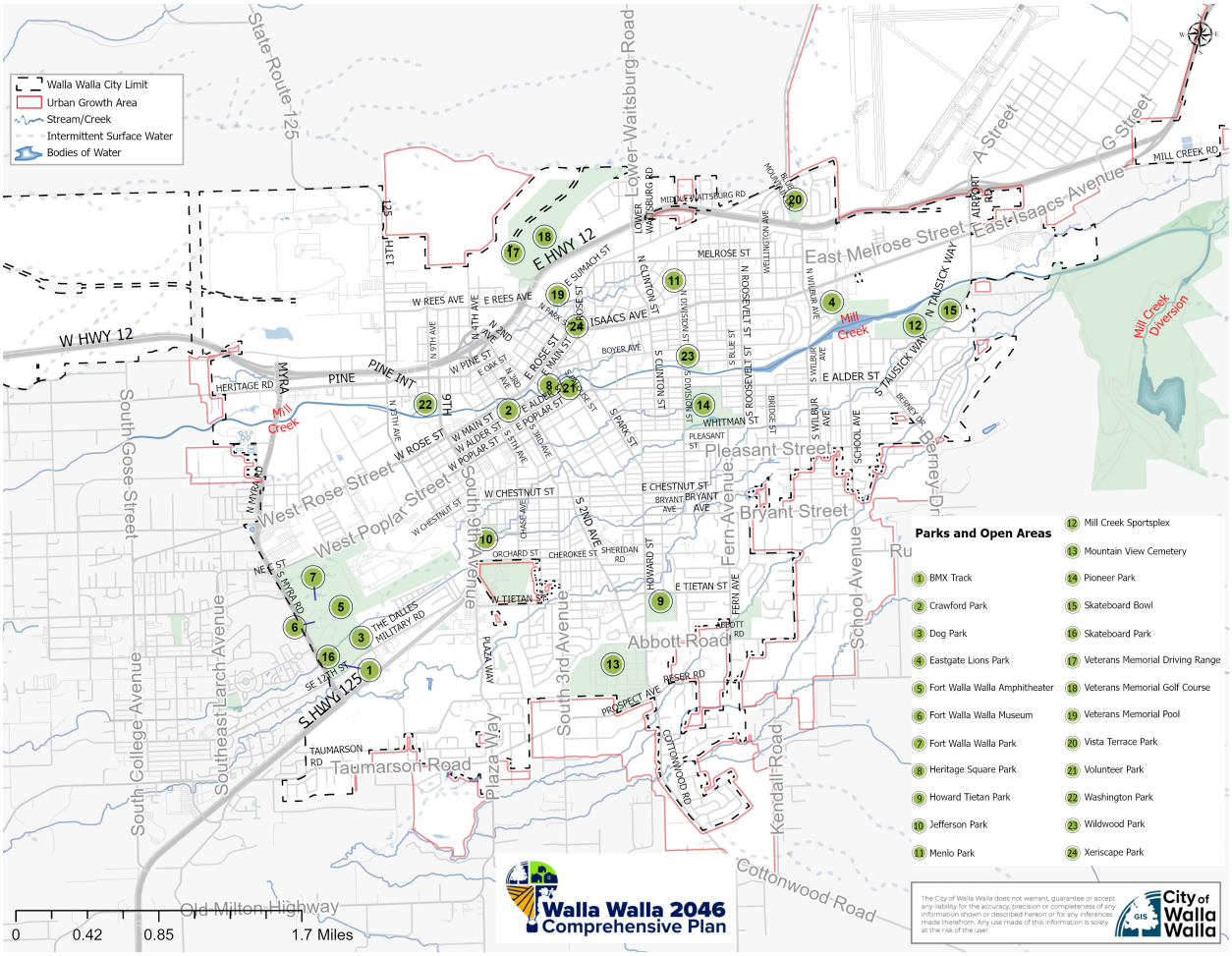


Figure 20. City Parks and Recreation Areas

Goals and Policies

PR Goal 1: Walla Walla provides high levels of parks and recreation services.

- PR 1.1: All parks and facilities shall achieve a Level of Service score of B or higher in resident satisfaction surveys.
- PR 1.2: All parks and facilities shall be maintained at a high level, with an emphasis on safety and security.
- PR 1.3: Continue to regularly survey residents at the conclusion of recreation programs to ensure programs are meeting the needs of the community.
- PR 1.4: Acquire sufficient land 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.
- PR 1.5: Maintain and expand funding in order to maintain parks at high levels of service.
- PR 1.6: Explore options to provide parks and recreation facilities within a 1/2-mile walk of 80 percent of Walla Walla's population.
- PR 1.7: Explore the feasibility of the city using a dedicated grant researcher and writer across multiple departments to raise funds and coordinate matching opportunities.
- PR 1.8: Explore the feasibility of establishing a Metropolitan Parks District for the purpose of creating dedicated funding for the Parks and Recreation Department.
- PR 1.9: Research and initiate the conversation of selecting natural grass fields to artificial turf.

PR Goal 2: Parks and recreation services are designed to meet the needs of a diverse population.

- PR 2.1: Maintain and expand partnerships with local organizations to assist with facility and program development.
- PR 2.2: Programs should have participation that mirrors the diversity of the community as a whole.
- PR 2.3: Maintain and expand scholarships for program registration to assist low-income families and participants.

- PR 2.4: Ensure that the advisory committee, Parks Recreation and Urban Forestry Advisory Board, is representative of the diversity of the community to guide the development of facilities and programs.
- PR 2.5: Survey and involve residents and stakeholders in outreach regarding their parks and recreation preferences, needs, and visions at least every six years.
- PR 2.6: Evaluate existing facilities for ADA compliance and schedule upgrades to increase accessibility as necessary.
- PR 2.7: Ensure that all future facilities are ADA compliant.
- PR 2.8: Provide all interpretive and regulatory signage in both English and Spanish.
- PR 2.9: To create and maintain a welcoming and inclusive environment for all members of our community, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status, age, language, religion, to access and enjoy the benefits of parks and recreation facilities.

PR Goal 3: Parks and recreation services enhance the quality of life for residents.

- PR 3.1: Identify opportunities to attract visitors to Walla Walla for parks and recreation facilities.
- PR 3.2: Ensure facility capacity is available to meet the needs of both residents and visitors.
- PR 3.3: Conduct a feasibility study for the development of a community center.
- PR 3.4: Continue to provide and expand recreation programs that improve health and wellness.
- PR 3.5: Conduct a feasibility study about future park acquisition, including development impact fees and other possible funding methods.
- PR 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.
- PR 3.7: Protect wildlife and natural habitat and minimize user conflicts.
- PR 3.8: Maintain and expand partnerships throughout the community.
- PR 3.9: Link parks via a coordinated wayfinding system using existing sidewalk and trail corridors.
- PR 3.10: Native plants should be used where appropriate in parks and recreation facilities.
- PR 3.11: Pest management strategies should be targeted and scaled appropriately.
- PR 3.12: Explore the feasibility of a seasonal ice rink facility.



Policy Connections

- **The Capital Facilities and Utilities Element** support the City's efforts to maintain parks and facilities while identifying funding for new parklands.
- **The Transportation Element** identifies the necessary connections for pedestrians and cyclists between parks, homes, and businesses.
- **The Community Character** Element supports the continued strength of the parklands and recreation facilities.
- **The Environment and Natural Resources Element** focuses on the preservation of open space and protection of air and water quality.
- **The Economic Development Element** recognizes the importance that parks and recreation facilities play in promoting opportunities through sports tourism and improving the general quality of life, leading to business relocation.

Translating Policy into Action

This section makes connections between other city plans, programs, and actions and the policy direction of this element.

Table 19. Parks and Recreation Implementation Action

Implementation Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan	Updated every 6 years	Parks and Recreation
Explore impact fees for park development	3 years	Community Development
Further developing partnerships with the public school system	3 years	Parks and Recreation
Make necessary upgrades to facilities to draw recreation tourism	5 years	City Council
Explore public/ private partnerships	5 years	Parks and Recreation
Plan for the acquisition of lands adjacent to Mill Creek for a trail corridor	10+ years	Parks and Recreation and Community Development





Environment and Natural Resources

Introduction

This Element provides an overview of the physical and environmental characteristics of the City and its unincorporated Urban Growth Area. The landscape is shaped by numerous small streams and by Mill Creek, the area's primary waterway, which flows through the City before joining the Walla Walla River. Within the urban area, Mill Creek is channeled through the Mill Creek Flood Control District, a major engineering project designed to reduce flood risk.

The City's broader physical character is defined by rolling hills, a fertile valley, and many waterbodies, situated at an elevation of approximately 965 feet. The region is also distinguished by its unique geographic soils, which contribute to moderate liquification risk and are addressed through appropriate geotechnical evaluation and development standards.

Today and Tomorrow

Geology and Topography

Walla Walla is located between the Cascade and Rocky Mountains in the Columbia Basin. This area is underlain by a series of lava flows, which are part of the basaltic materials known as the Columbia River Basalt. Lava was issued from vents and fissures during the Miocene Epoch, approximately 15 million years ago. From that time to the present, basalt in the western portion of the Columbia Basin has been folded and faulted into a series of east-west-trending anticlines and synclines called the Yakima Fold Belt. During the Pleistocene Epoch, violent floods from glacial Lake Missoula cut channels into the basalt. The resulting landscape is known as the Channelized Scablands and consists of a jumble of coulees, buttes, mesas, dry waterfalls, hanging valleys, and giant ripples.

Within the Columbia Basin, southeast of the basin's center, is the Walla Walla River Basin. This roughly triangular area of about 1,750 square miles extends 45 miles westward from the crest of the Blue Mountains in southeast Washington and northeast Oregon to the Columbia River. The Walla Walla River is a distributary system. The river and its tributaries drain an area nearly 40 miles wide, spanning the border between Washington and Oregon. Underlying the Walla Walla River basin is the Columbia River Basalt, over which layers of alluvial sedimentary deposits (from Mill Creek, the Walla Walla River, and its tributaries), loess (wind-blown sedimentary deposits), and depositional materials from the Missoula floods. This basin area is formed by anticlines of four folds in the basalt bedrock. See the figures of the Walla Walla River Basin that follow.

- To the east and south, the largest fold is the broadly arched anticline of the Blue Mountains.
- To the west and south is Horse Heaven Ridge, which extends eastward from the Cascades to the Blue Mountains to the north, and is a low arch formed by a monoclinal dip of the basalt, north of the Touchet River.
- To the west, the Divide anticline closes the lower part of the valley and forms a rock divide between the Walla Walla Valley and the Pasco Basin to the west.

The highest point in the Walla Walla Basin is 6,250 feet at Table Rock. The average elevation of the Blue Mountains is 5,000 feet. Lowland elevations range from 2,500 feet at the base of the Blue Mountains to less than 270 feet at the confluence with the Columbia River.

The Walla Walla River Basin and the Mill Creek Basin, as described above, should not be confused with the boundaries of the Walla Walla Basin Watershed (WRIA 32) and its five watershed implementation areas, including the Walla Walla Subbasin and Mill Creek Subbasin. These latter watersheds and subbasin geographic areas have been defined for watershed planning purposes by the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council and are referred to in the Walla Walla Subbasin Plan and its related documents/plans. WRIA 32 includes only the portion of the Walla Walla River Basin within Washington State.

Mill Creek is a major tributary of the Walla Walla River. It originates in Washington in the Blue Mountains at an elevation of 5,500 feet. The creek flows through 15 miles of mountainous terrain (entering Oregon and returning again to Washington) before it enters the Walla Walla Valley about two miles east of the City of Walla Walla. From there, it heads west, through the City of Walla Walla, to the Walla Walla River. The Mill Creek elevations range from 5,500 feet (at the headwaters) to 590 feet (at the mouth of Mill Creek, where it enters the Walla Walla River). The incorporated City of Walla Walla and the unincorporated portion of the UGA are within the Mill Creek Basin. The topography is relatively flat and slopes from the northeast (elevation 1,260 feet) to the southwest (elevation 850 feet), an overall grade change of approximately four percent.

Air Quality

Poor air quality can adversely affect human health and the environment. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) track air pollution in the State of Washington.

Ecology identifies the main sources of air pollution in the state as vehicle emissions and smoke from outdoor burning and wood stoves. In winter, temperature inversions can result in stagnant air conditions in the Walla Walla region, trapping pollutants and contributing to poor air quality.

With respect to air toxics, the EPA has identified multiple toxic air pollutants in Walla Walla County. The purpose of the EPA's toxic air pollutants assessment is to identify and prioritize air toxins, emission source types, and locations that are of greatest potential concern in terms of contributing to population risk.

The EPA's Air Quality Index (AQI) provides an indicator of overall air quality in the City of Walla Walla. For 2024, the most recent year for which complete data are available, the AQI indicates

that of the 365 days for which data were reported, 84% had air quality categorized as “good,” while 16% had air quality categorized as “moderate.”[2]

Smoke, which is measured as particulate matter, can contribute to the actual and/or perceived air quality of a region and can cause irritation for individuals with asthma or other respiratory problems. Sources of smoke can include outdoor burning, wood stoves and wildfires. Within Washington State, outdoor burning of household yard waste is prohibited in all UGAs. Ecology allows agricultural burning under certain conditions.

Soils

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) classifies soils throughout the United States, and this information is compiled in Soil Surveys. The Walla Walla Urban Growth Area (UGA) is included in the Soil Survey of Walla Walla County, Washington, which identifies 26 mapped soil types within the UGA.

Of these soil types, several are classified as prime farmland under USDA criteria, and others are designated as farmland of statewide importance. (See map of Prime and Important Farmland.)

The Soil Survey rates many of the UGA’s soil types as “very limited” for the construction of residential dwellings and small commercial structures. These limitations are typically associated with one or more factors, including flooding, depth to saturated zone, depth to a thin cemented pan, slope, shrink-swell potential, and depth to soft bedrock.

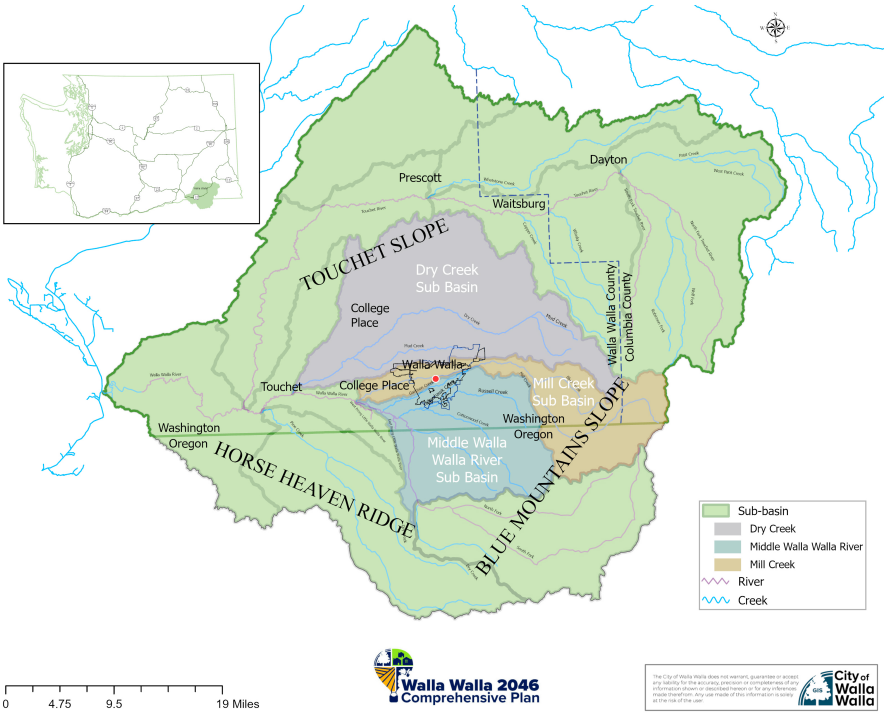
Despite the identified soil limitations, development occurs on several of these soil types, including those rated as limited due to shallow saturated zones, the presence of a thin cemented pan, and flooding concerns.



[2] EPA Air Quality Index Report from https://www.epa.gov/outdoor-air-quality-data/air-quality-index-report

Hydrology and Water Resources

Within the Walla Walla Basin, surface water and the shallow aquifer exhibit a high degree of hydraulic connection. Precipitation and river flow serve as the primary sources of water in the Walla Walla River valley, with water stored in mountain snowpack, groundwater aquifers, and surface water bodies. The river both recharges and sustains the aquifer system. Water availability in the basin depends on the relationship between precipitation, surface water runoff, and aquifer recharge and discharge. Within the Walla Walla Urban Growth Area (UGA), drinking water and irrigation rely on a combination of shallow gravel aquifer groundwater, deep basalt aquifer groundwater, and surface water. Because of the strong hydraulic connection among these sources, they are considered conjunctive—meaning withdrawals from one source can directly affect the availability of another.



Groundwater and surface water use have increased dramatically over the past century. As a result, the region is experiencing declining shallow aquifer levels, reduced spring and base flows, diminished river flows, and rising water temperatures in the Walla Walla River and its tributaries, including Mill Creek and Yellowhawk Creek.

Surface Water

Surface waters within the UGA include creeks, intermittent streams, springs, and ponds. The named creeks and springs include:

- Barber Creek
- Bryant Creek
- Butcher Creek
- Caldwell Creek
- College Creek
- Garrison Creek
- Gose Spring
- Greco Irrigation
- Kathy Creek
- Lincoln Creek
- Mill Creek
- Mudd Creek
- Owen Spring
- Peter Spring
- Reser Creek
- Stone Creek
- Titus Creek
- Yellowhawk Creek

There are 41 ponds within the UGA, ranging from one-eighth of an acre to almost six acres. Eleven of the ponds, including Pioneer Park, Jefferson, and Lincoln Ponds, are within city parks. The named ponds within the UGA are:

- Old General Hospital Duck Pond
- Jefferson Pond
- Lakum Duckum Pond
- Lincoln Pond
- Klicker Pond
- Pioneer Park Pond

Bennington Lake, at 50 acres, is located just outside the limits of the UGA and accepts diversion water from Mill Creek for recreational and flood control purposes.

Groundwater

Groundwater resources beneath the Walla Walla Basin are found in two distinct aquifers: a deep basalt aquifer that underlies the entire basin and a shallower gravel aquifer that underlies the lower central basin. In the eastern part of the Walla Walla Basin, groundwater movement, like the topography, is generally from east to west.

Several studies have contributed to the current understanding of the geology and hydrogeology of the basalt and gravel aquifers. The studies have been performed by the Department of Ecology Division of Water Resources, in cooperation with the US Geological Survey (USGS), and by consultants to the City of Walla Walla, Walla Walla County, the Walla Walla Watershed Planning Unit, and the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council. [3]

The recharge process of the basalt aquifer is described in the State Department of Conservation Division of Water Resources publication, Water Supply Bulletin No.7, as follows:

> "The Blue Mountains slope is dissected by steep-sided, narrow canyons as much as 1,500 feet deep. Mill Creek Canyon is one of the deepest of these. The gradient of the streams in general is less than the slope of the basalt beds; therefore, the outcrop pattern of each individual lava flow, as viewed from above, is V-shaped, pointing downstream. This outcrop geometry forms a favorable situation for natural recharge of groundwater into the permeable layers cropping out in the stream channels."
>
> As rainwater and snowmelt percolate down into the porous zones between the flows of basalt, the water moves by gravity down the dip of the basalt

[3] These include:

Piper, A.M., Robinson, T.W., Thomas, H.E., 1933, Groundwater in the Walla Walla Basin, Oregon-Washington-Part 2. Department of the Interior, US Geological Survey
Piper, A.M., Robinson, T.W., Thomas, H.E., 1933, Groundwater in the Walla Walla Basin, Oregon-Washington-Part 1. Department of the Interior, US Geological Survey
Price, C.E., 1960, Artificial Recharge of a Well Tapping Basalt Aquifers, Walla Walla Area, Washington: Washington Department of Conservation Division of Water Resources Water Supply Bulletin No. 7
Newcomb, R.C., 1965, Geology and Ground-Water Resources of the Walla Walla River Basin, Washington-Oregon: Washington Department of Conservation Division of Water Resources Water Supply Bulletin No. 21
Mac Nish, R.D., Myers, D.A., and Barker, R.A., 1973, Appraisal of Ground-Water Availability and Management Projections, Walla Walla River Basin, Washington and Oregon: Washington Department of Ecology Water Supply Bulletin No. 37
Barker, R.A. and Mac Nish, R.D., 1976, Digital Model of the Gravel Aquifer, Walla Walla

> toward the center of the Walla Walla Basin, which is a few miles southwest of the City of Walla Walla. Discharge from the basalt aquifer varies from one part of the basin to another. In the highlands, discharge occurs directly to streams and is the major factor in maintaining summer flows of Mill Creek and the Walla Walla River. Within the central valley, discharge is limited to pumpage from wells and may also discharge vertically into the shallow gravel aquifer. Beyond the west and northwest margins of the basin, the aquifer discharges by underground flow to the Columbia and Snake Rivers." [4]

Within the basalt aquifer, there has been a long-term decline in water levels, indicating that there is more water pumped out locally than is replaced by natural recharge or movement of water from adjoining areas.[5] The decline has been greatest in areas along the northeastern margin of the Walla Walla Valley, including the cities of Walla Walla, College Place, and Milton-Freewater.[6]

The gravel aquifer is linked with the network of natural springs, streams, canals, and ditches that cross the surface of the basin. The aquifer's recharge sources include precipitation, stream and canal leakage, basalt aquifer inflows, and infiltration of excess irrigation water. Discharge from the gravel aquifer includes uptake of water by plants and surface discharges (springs and wells), as well as downward leakage into the basalt aquifer. Water levels within the gravel aquifer have also been decreasing.[7]

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[4] Water Supply Bulletin 45, Walla River Basin, Washington and Oregon: Washington Department of Ecology
Mac Nish, R.D., and Barker, R.A., 1976, Digital Simulation of a Basalt Aquifer System, Walla Walla River Basin, Washington and Oregon: Washington Department of Ecology Water Supply Bulletin 44|YH
Pacific Groundwater Group, 1995, Initial Watershed Assessment, Water Resources Inventory Area 32, Walla Walla Watershed, Open File Technical Report 95-11
Lindsey, K., Kennedy Jenks Consultants, 2003, Candidate SASR Sites Hydrogeology, Walla Walla Basin Shallow Aquifer Recharge. Prepared for Economic and Engineering Services, Portland, OR.
Marti, P.B., 2005, Assessment of Surface Water and Groundwater Interchange in the Walla Walla River Watershed: Washington Department of Ecology Publication No. 05-03-020
Warinner PE, John, Fountainhead, 2006, Strategic Plan: Shallow Aquifer Recharge, Strategy for Restoring and Seasonally Recharging Shallow Gravel Aquifer(s) and Spring-Fed Streams of the Walla Walla Watershed, Walla Walla Watershed Alliance and NRCS|
Golder Associates, Inc., 2007 City of Walla Walla Extended Area Aquifer Storage and Recovery Groundwater Flow Model

[5] Price, C.E., 1960, Artificial Recharge of a Well Tapping Basalt Aquifers, Walla Walla Area, WA: WA Department of Conservation Division of Water Resources Water Supply Bulletin No. 7, p. 8-9
Pacific Groundwater Group, 1995, Initial Watershed Assessment, Water Resources Inventory Area 32, Walla Walla Watershed, Open File Technical Report 95-11, p. 34

[6] Mac Nish, R.D., Myers, D.A., and Barker, R.A., 1973, p. 13

[7] Lindsey, K., Kennedy Jenks Consultants, 2003, 4, p. 10-11
Warinner PE, John, Fountainhead, 2006, p. 2-4, p. 2-5, p. 4-2
Kennedy/Jenks Consultants, 2006, Results of the First Season of Shallow Aquifer Recharge Testing at the Hall-Wentland Site, Umatilla County, Oregon and Walla Walla County, Washington, 2, p. 11
Bower, Robert, Hydrologist, Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council, 2007, personal communication

Over the last century, increasing irrigation needs have placed a higher demand on water from the aquifer.[8] At the same time, changes in irrigation practices (e.g., ditch/channel lining, straightening of rivers for agricultural and flood control purposes, the active tilling of wetlands, and the reduction in the practice of flood irrigation) have reduced the amount of artificial recharge to the aquifer. Losses in natural function (e.g., flood control and channelization of the Walla Walla River, Mill Creek, and smaller streams) have also reduced the amount of natural recharge via infiltration from surface waters.

Decreases in water levels in the aquifers have negative economic and environmental impacts. Economically, as groundwater levels decrease, more energy is required to pump the water to the surface. Environmentally, lower water levels in the aquifer systems have resulted in degradation of water quality within the system, as well as reduced discharge to surface water streams. Reduced stream discharge, in turn, has negative impacts on aquatic function, water quality, habitat, and species.

Given these issues, management practices are necessary to maintain local groundwater within the aquifers at levels that will ensure groundwater use remains economical for current users and that will protect the environmental quality of surface water streams.

The City is coordinating at the watershed level to improve management of surface water, groundwater, aquatic habitat, and resilience. Several options are being considered or implemented to improve the utilization of existing groundwater resources. These include water rights transfer, water demand reduction, Shallow Aquifer Recharge (SAR), and Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR).[9] The City's Watershed Resiliency Plan includes more detail on the resiliency of the Mill Creek Watershed.

The City uses a deep basalt ASR program, which utilizes water from Mill Creek to recharge portions of the basalt aquifer for future municipal water supply use. The program, initiated in 1999, is designed to: reverse the historic decline of water levels in the basalt aquifer; meet peak water supply demands with groundwater, thereby reducing impacts to Mill Creek during periods of low instream flow; provide a secure, alternate source of drinking water should surface water supply be lost due to a wildfire within the watershed; and maximize the use of surface water rights during high draw periods. Recharge water, supplied from Mill Creek, is available for five to seven months each year. [10]

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[8] Lindsey, K., Kennedy Jenks Consultants, 2003, 4, p. 11 Mac Nish, R.D., Myers, D.A., and Barker, R.A., 1973, p. 20 Pacific Groundwater Group, 1995, p. 14-15

[9] HDR-EES, et al., May 2005, WRIA 32 Walla Walla Watershed Plan, Walla Walla WRIA 32 Watershed Planning Unit, ES-p. 5-6

[10] The following documents describe the progress of the ASR program:
Golder Associates, Inc., 2007 City of Walla Walla Extended Area Aquifer Storage and Recovery Groundwater Flow Model
Golder Associates, Inc., 2006 City of Walla Walla Aquifer Storage and Recovery Reservoir Permit Application
Golder Associates, Inc., 2006 Technical Memorandum—Attachment A, Streamflow Evaluation, Walla Walla Extended Area ASR
Golder Associates, Inc., 2006 Technical Memorandum—Attachment A, Streamflow Evaluation, Walla Walla Extended Area ASR, March 24, 2006
Golder Associates, Inc., 2006, Report on City of Walla Walla Updated Hydroecological Conceptual Model for Extended Area Aquifer Storage and Recovery Evaluation, Submitted to the City of Walla Walla

The Walla Walla Oregon Basin Aquifer Recharge Strategic Plan (2024 Water Year) summarizes aquifer recharge goals, activities, and data for Walla Walla watershed stakeholders so that they may use it while making sustainable water resource decisions for ecological, agricultural, and economic benefit.

Watershed Management

There are many agencies involved in the planning and regulation of surface and groundwater resources within the Walla Walla Basin. These include: US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington State Department of Ecology (ECY), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service, Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), Walla Walla County, the City of Walla Walla and others.

Since 2000, planning efforts have been organized at the watershed level in order to integrate the various efforts (see the Table 20 on the following page) into a comprehensive planning framework. In 2019, the Washington Legislature and Ecology tasked the Walla Walla Management Partnership, the organization tasked with managing the watershed, to develop a 30-year strategic plan for water management in the Walla Walla Basin. This effort was a collaboration with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the State of Oregon, and stakeholders on both sides of the state border. This effort has been named Walla Walla Water 2050. The group released a final strategic plan in June 2021 and is being implemented by the partners with the assistance of the Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee.

Table 20. Water Resource Planning Efforts

Planning Efforts	Managing Organizations	Purpose
Walla Walla Watershed Plan (Water Resource Inventory Area 32)	WRIA 32 Planning Unit, Walla Walla County	Surface & groundwater quantity, aquatic habitat, and instream flow planning
Snake River Salmon Recovery Plan	Snake River Salmon Recovery Board	Protection and restoration of salmon habitat
Walla Walla Subbasin Plan	Walla Walla County	Basin-wide assessment, inventory, and management plans for aquatic and terrestrial species
Flow Enhancement Feasibility Study	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR)	Assessment and feasibility of enhancement efforts for improvement of instream flows in the Walla Walla Basin
Walla Walla Water 2050 Initiative	Ecology, CTUIR, local agencies	Improve stream flows and water supplies in the Walla Walla River Basin.

Planning Efforts	Managing Organizations	Purpose
Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan	CTUIR, Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee, Ecology, local agencies in WA and OR	30-year strategic plan for water management in the Walla Walla Basin.
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Studies	Ecology, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council, City of Walla Walla	Water cleanup plans—to restore water quality in 'impaired' water bodies as identified by the Clean Water Act
Mill Creek Report	City of Walla Walla, CTUIR, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Report addressing improvements to the City's municipal water supply system and increasing flows of Mill Creek for salmonids and other native aquatic life.
Water System Plan	City of Walla Walla	Framework for the City's provision of water service
Stormwater Management Plan	City of Walla Walla	Identifies stormwater infrastructure needs and provides an overview of regulatory requirements for stormwater.
Watershed Resiliency Plan	City Walla Walla	Addresses potential risks to the municipal watershed, prepares for potential impacts of wildfire, and identifies opportunities to improve the resiliency of the Mill Creek Watershed.
Well System Plan	City of Walla Walla	Framework for the City's well system.
Coordinated Water System Plan	City of Walla Walla, Walla Walla County	Current or proposed measures to manage municipal water resources
Wellhead Protection Plan	DOH, City of Walla Walla	Groundwater source protection
Community Wildfire Protection Plan	Walla Walla County	Assess wildfire hazards for entire Mill Creek watershed and consider options for reducing risk and effects
Milton-Freewater Hydrological Simulation	Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council, Oregon State University	Model of surface water-groundwater interaction
Lower Mill Creek Habitat and Passage Assessment and Strategic Action Plan (Tetra Tech, 2016)	Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation	To resolve fish passage issues and improve fish habitat while maintaining or improving flood control, recreation, and economic values

Water resource planning efforts specific to the Walla Walla UGA are identified in the Walla Walla Watershed Plan and related documents (including the Walla Walla Subbasin Plan and Snake River Salmon Recovery Plan). Some of these actions include:

- Surface and Groundwater Supplies—improvements to water conservation and efficiency, implementation of ASR and water storage, establishment of a water budget for a residential area not served by a public water supply, exploration and implementation of a turbidity reduction system for water diverted from Mill Creek.
- Surface Water Quality—rerouting stormwater runoff, implementation of stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), including sediment basins, wetland protection/restoration.
- Groundwater Quality—protection of wellheads and critical shallow gravel aquifer recharge areas, wetland protection/restoration.
- Habitat Management—removal of fish passage barriers, screening of diversions, riparian revegetation and buffers, habitat improvements.

Within the Walla Walla UGA, the Walla Walla Watershed Plan identifies both Mill Creek and Yellowhawk Creek as Priority Protection Areas with respect to aquatic habitat and protection of focal or local aquatic species. See Natural Resource Lands below.

In 2019, the Washington Legislature tasked the Walla Walla Management Partnership and the Department of Ecology to collaboratively develop a 30-year strategic plan for water management in the Walla Walla River Basin. This initiative, called the Walla Walla Water 2050, includes stakeholders in both Washington and Oregon. The final Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan was released in June 2021 and is currently being implemented by the Plan's partners and the Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee.



Stormwater Runoff and Water Quality

During a rain event, rainwater either soaks into the ground or runs across it; the latter is termed stormwater runoff. As areas become more developed, a larger amount of stormwater runs off paved surfaces, roofs, and compacted soils and lawns, rather than soaking into the ground. As stormwater drains into local waterways, it carries with it sediment, as well as other pollutants, including fertilizers, pesticides, road salt, oil, and heavy metals. Large stormwater flows within streams and creeks cause erosion and degradation of riparian habitat. Stormwater management can help reduce these impacts.

Within the City of Walla Walla, stormwater runoff may be retained on site, directed to the municipal stormwater system, or may drain into ponds and creeks. Some existing stormwater infrastructure within the City of Walla Walla directs stormwater to streams and creeks without any treatment. Newer stormwater infrastructure within public streets and rights of way has been installed to collect and retain stormwater in catch basins. Catch basins then allow the water to infiltrate into the ground. New and modified private development projects are required to maintain stormwater runoff at pre-development rates. Excess stormwater runoff must be collected, retained, and infiltrated on site.

The Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington, maintained by the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), provides guidance on the measures necessary to control the quantity and quality of stormwater produced by new development and redevelopment. It also includes best management practices (BMPs) intended to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater.

Stormwater management techniques applied in accordance with the Manual are presumed to meet the technology-based treatment requirement of State law and can be utilized to meet State water quality standards. Ecology requires the City to either adopt this Manual or to develop its own stormwater regulations, certifying that they are consistent with the Manual. The City's Stormwater Management Program Plan describes applicable regulatory requirements, the status of current City activities, and a description of activities planned to be implemented.

The Federal Clean Water Act section 303(d) requires states to prepare a list of water bodies that do not meet water quality standards. All water bodies identified on the list must attain water quality standards within a reasonable period, either through a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study (Water Cleanup Plan) or other pollution control mechanisms. A TMDL establishes the maximum amount of pollutants allowed in a water body and serves as the starting point or planning tool for restoring water quality.

The current Washington State Department of Ecology Water Quality Assessment Tool for the State lists multiple waterbodies within the UGA as impaired waterways, violating water quality standards under the Clean Water Act. TMDL studies and BMPs are used to return water bodies to a healthy condition. TMDLs and BMPs are being implemented under the umbrella of the Walla Walla Watershed Resiliency Plan.

Table 21. Impaired Waterways

Waterway	How it is Impaired
Garrison Creek	Ammonia-N, Chloride, Chlorine, Dissolved Oxygen, Fecal Coliform, Temperature, 4,4'- (DDT, DDD, DDE), Hexachlorobenzene,
Lincoln Creek	Temperature
Mill Creek	Bacteria (Fecal Coliform), Dissolved Oxygen, Temperature
Titus Creek	Temperature
Yellowhawk Creek	Temperature
Stone Creek	Temperature

Wildfire

The main surface water supply for the City of Walla Walla is Mill Creek. The water supply is unfiltered and is therefore vulnerable to the effects of disturbances from watershed management activities and natural events such as landslides and wildfires. The impacts to surface water from wildfire includes immediate changes to water quality that will have significant consequences for water treatment. The Walla Walla County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)/Wildfire Vulnerability Study/FIREWISE describes the physical and chemical changes that can be expected to affect the water quality of Mill Creek after a wildfire.

As explained in the CWPP, the changes to the City of Walla Walla's source surface water quality after a wildfire can be expected to persist for several years or decades following a catastrophic fire.[11] Impacts to water quality are expected to be most severe during the first runoff season following the fire. Typically, peak concentrations occur with rain events or with the spring snowmelt.

Impacts can include:

- Erosion rates are generally highest in the first year after a fire and generally do not return to normal for up to 10 years after a fire.
- Debris and ash can block streams and water supply intakes.
- Stormwater runoff rates and peak flows will increase. Stormwater runoff flows typically remain elevated for seven to ten years.
- Water quality changes include sediment and turbidity loadings and increases in pH, and in concentrations of cyanide (from fire retardants), total organic carbon, nitrate-nitrogen, ammonia-nitrogen, metals, and cations (ions with a positive charge). Levels of cations typically remain elevated for two to three years.

Watershed recovery can be expected to take five to 10 years, while the reestablishment of forest areas will take more than ten years. The worst-case scenario would be that the Mill Creek supply can only be used intermittently for up to 10 years or more following a catastrophic fire. When Mill

[11] Walla Walla County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2025

Creek water is not available for the municipal water supply, the groundwater supply wells become the sole source of water for the system.

The City of Walla Walla Comprehensive Water System Plan states that if the City encountered a temporary loss of Mill Creek as a source, the City could be supplied with enough water using all available well sources, pumping at a near 24-hour duration. However, if the City experienced a long-term loss of Mill Creek, the City would need to implement upgrades and additional sources in the short term.

This information underscores the importance of protecting the Mill Creek Municipal Watershed from wildfire threats. The CWPP is intended to cover the Mill Creek Watershed and the entirety of Walla Walla County. The mission of the Plan is to assess wildfire hazards in and around the Mill Creek Drainage and Walla Walla County, and to identify options for reducing the risk of wildfire within the planning area and mitigating the impacts if a fire does occur.

The Plan notes that fire history in and around the Mill Creek Watershed and Walla Walla County has shown that the area experiences frequent fires. Given the current fuel load levels, coupled with hotter and drier summer conditions and an extended fire season, fires can be expected to increase in size, frequency, and severity compared to those of the past. While wildfire suppression has been successful in containing wildfires that threaten the Mill Creek Watershed, without proper mitigation efforts, this trend will not be sustainable. The historic Blue Creek Fire demonstrated that wildfire within the boundaries of the Mill Creek Watershed is inevitable.



Mill Creek water intake during the Paradise Fire, week of Aug. 24, 2026. Photo by Jeff Schardt.

Natural Resource Lands

Forest

Historically, logging of both the upland and riparian tree species has occurred throughout much of the Walla Walla Basin, including the Mill Creek Basin. Forest management activities have been conducted by both private and public entities. More recently, logging has not occurred in the upper portion of the Mill Creek Basin in order to protect the quality of the water supply for the City of Walla Walla. This area is included within the Umatilla National Forest; public access is limited to the Mill Creek area of the forest. There are no designated forest resource lands within the Walla Walla UGA.



Critical Areas

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that all cities and counties identify, designate and regulate critical areas. Critical areas are identified as:

- Wetlands
- Frequently Flooded Areas
- Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas
- Geologically Hazardous Areas
- Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas

Critical areas within the City are defined and protected by the City of Walla Walla Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO).

Five critical areas are discussed in the following sections.

Wetlands

The US Fish and Wildlife Service maintains the National Wetland Inventory (NWI), which maps the characteristics, extents, and status of wetlands within the US. According to the NWI, there are approximately 222 acres of wetlands within the UGA. These wetlands include Mill Creek from Roosevelt Street to the eastern boundary of the UGA and a portion of Mill Creek between Myra Road and 9th Avenue. Four of these wetlands, including two of the largest, are located within City parks. See the Surface Water and Wetlands map. Wetland buffers add protection for the wetlands and are enforced through the municipal code.

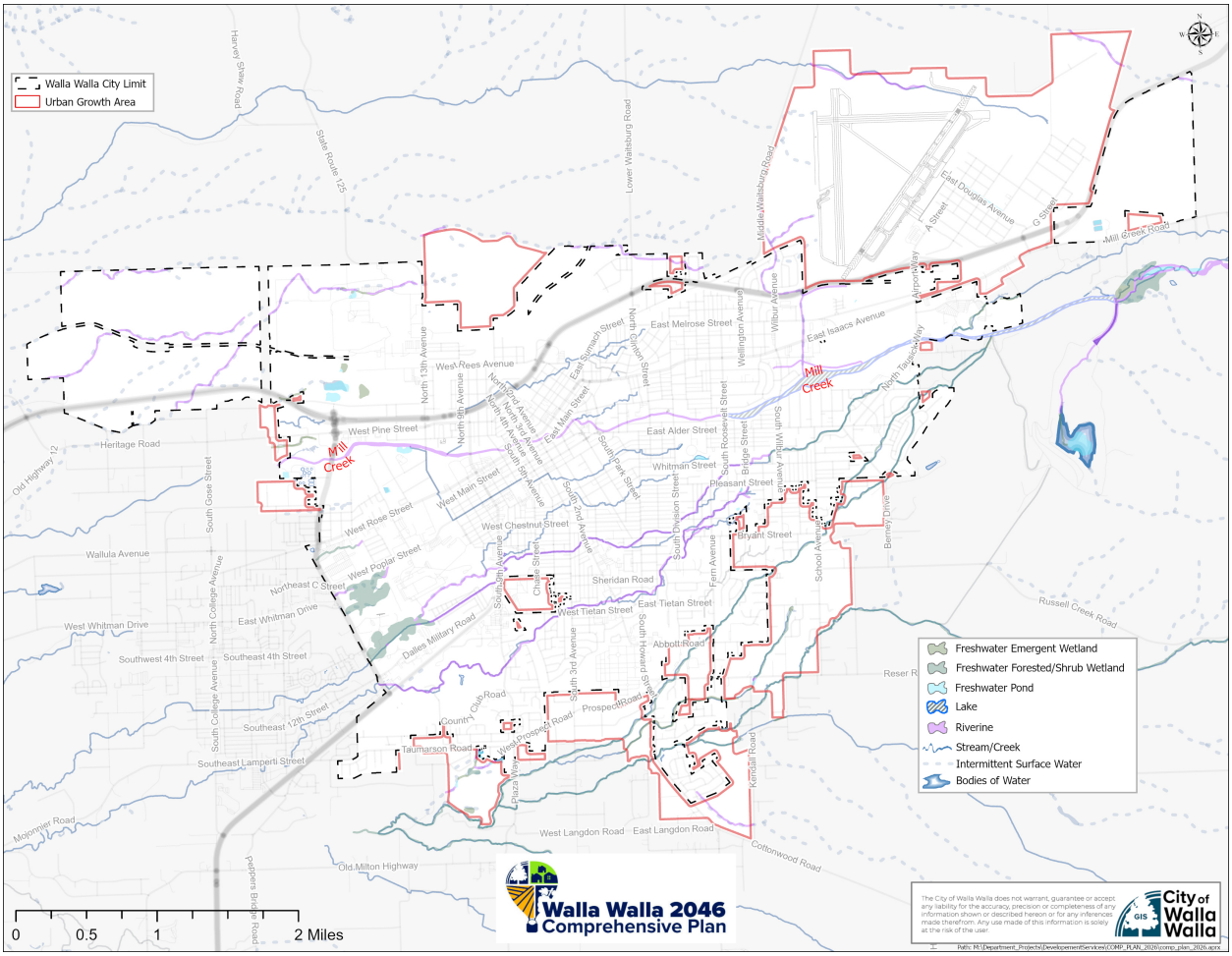


Figure 21. Wetlands and Surface Water Map

Frequently Flooded Areas



The Walla Walla area is prone to flooding from Mill Creek. In 1931, a devastating flood struck Walla Walla. As a result, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) completed two flood control projects along Mill Creek. Just northeast of the UGA at Rooks Park, a diversion was constructed to route water from the creek to the Bennington Lake reservoir. Another diversion was constructed to divert water from Mill Creek into Yellowhawk and Garrison creeks, directing the water south of the City. The second project channelized a section of Mill Creek within the UGA in a concrete channel with vertical sides. A portion of this channel flows beneath the buildings and streets in downtown Walla Walla. Other areas of the creek have been artificially widened with steep sides. The 1996 flood produced significant flows of 3,900 cubic feet per second (cfs). This flow exceeded the channel safety capacity of 3,500 cfs. Nonetheless, the flows were contained within the channel during this flood event.

These projects have been successful at protecting Walla Walla from floods, but have had negative impacts on aquatic species, on fishing and recreational opportunities, aesthetics, and on the quality of natural areas. Modified stream channels limit access for fishing, degrade stream habitat, and reduce water quality. Mill Creek flood control water diversions can redirect or harm fish. The USACE diverts water from Mill Creek into Bennington Lake when flows reach or exceed 1,400 cfs. This may occur about every three years. [12]

The diversions are a concern because Mill Creek is host to species listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act (see the following section, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas). The Mill Creek Work Group has recommended improvements to flood protection in the lower Mill Creek area (below 9th Avenue), which when implemented, would allow the USACE to raise the diversion threshold to 3,400 cfs. At 3,400 cfs, the USACE estimates that diversions could be reduced to approximately every 30+ years. [13] The Mill Creek Work Group is a group comprised of representatives from federal, state, and local agencies, tribal organizations, non-profits, and interested citizens with an interest in improving conditions in Mill Creek for fish, wildlife, and area residents.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program maps, there are approximately 169 acres within the UGA that are within the 100-year flood zone. These areas are along Middle Waitsburg Road, Russell Creek, and Reser Creek and are largely undeveloped (FEMA Panel Map 530194 0435 B).

The City's critical areas regulations briefly address frequently flooded areas. The regulations indicate that structures in designated flood areas are subject to other flood-related City codes.

[12] US Army Corps of Engineers Mill Creek Biological Assessment, March 2003
[13] US Army Corps of Engineers Mill Creek Biological Assessment, March 2003

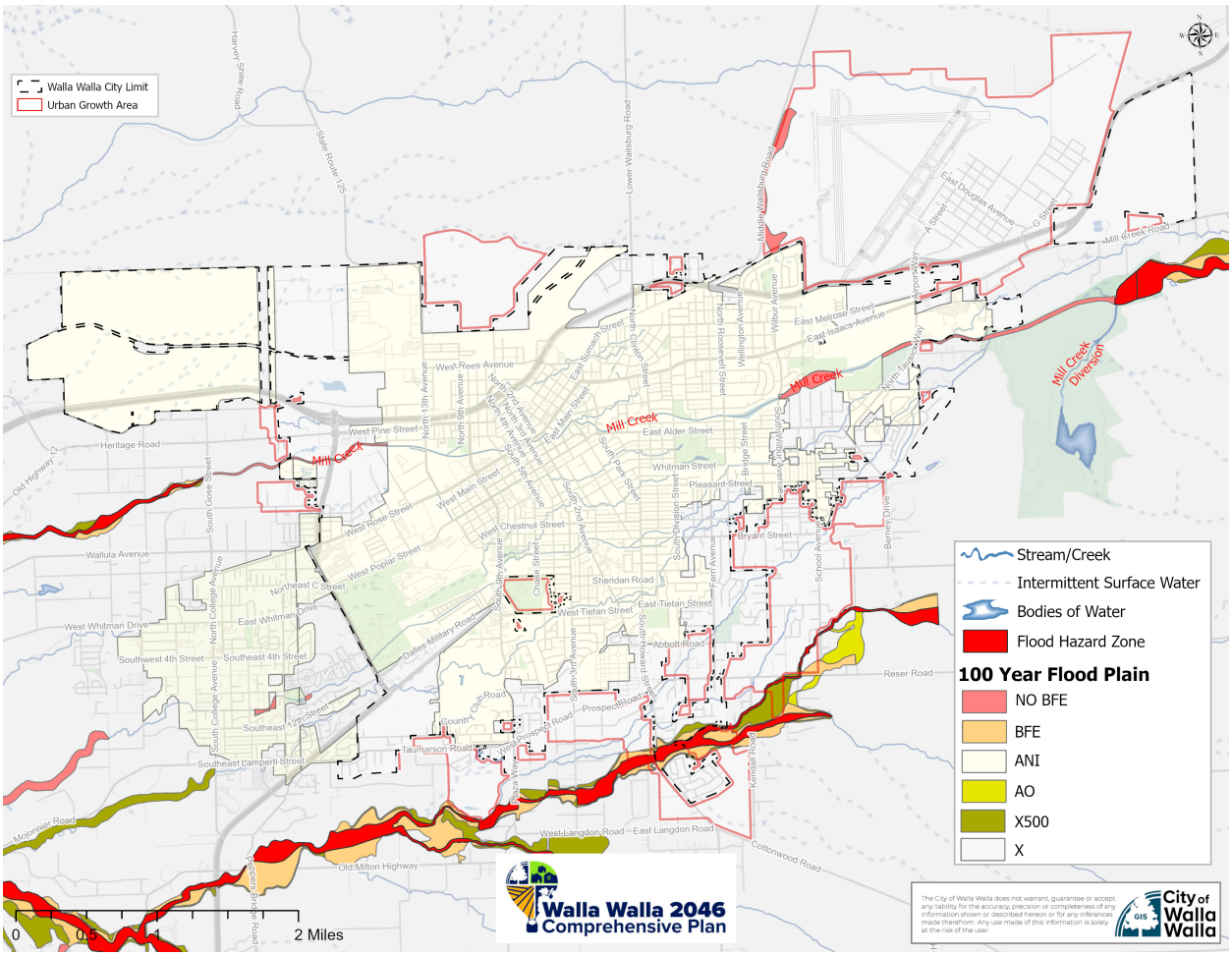


Figure 22. Frequently Flooded Areas Map

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas

Over the past 150 years, extensive water appropriation and inadequate fish-passage conditions have significantly harmed aquatic species. Although improvements in irrigation efficiency have reduced overall water demand, they have also diminished the seasonal recharge of the shallow groundwater aquifer. As groundwater levels decline, the natural discharge from springs into streams and creeks decreases as well.

In the Walla Walla Basin, including Mill Creek, heavy irrigation withdrawals combined with reduced groundwater levels have led to seasonal drying of creek channels. This dewatering poses serious risks for fish. It can strand fish and block their movement, cause direct mortality, increase vulnerability to predation and disease, and elevate downstream water temperatures, all of which further stress already impacted populations.

De-watering, expanding urban and agricultural development, and flood-control activities are reducing both the quality and quantity of aquatic habitat. The loss of riparian vegetation along

creeks within the UGA and the absence of vegetation along the channelized reach of Mill Creek leads to higher water temperatures, diminished fish cover, and reduced food availability. Sedimentation from stormwater runoff and unstable streambanks further degrades habitat by filling pools, widening and shallowing channels, and burying spawning gravel.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) lists Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout as candidate species. Additionally, within an area that includes the Walla Walla UGA, steelhead and bull trout are listed as threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Populations of these aquatic species within the Columbia Basin continue to decline due to the degradation of habitat. Chinook salmon and steelhead are anadromous (live in salt water and return to fresh water to spawn). Bull trout populations within the Walla Walla River and Mill Creek are fluvial (migrate between small tributaries and main rivers) and/or resident (remain non-migratory).

According to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's SalmonScape and Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) database, creeks in the City support the following species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA):

- Garrison Creek—Summer Steelhead (presumed)
- Yellowhawk Creek—Spring Chinook (documented), Summer Steelhead (documented)
- Mill Creek—Spring Chinook (documented), Summer Steelhead (documented), Bull Trout (documented)

The Wetlands and Surface Water map shows the location of wetlands, streams, and creeks. Wetlands function to improve water quality. By acting as a natural filter, wetlands remove pollutants from stormwater runoff while slowing stormwater peak flows.

Open space is generally a more compatible land use next to critical areas because it introduces fewer impervious surfaces and provides more vegetation, shade, and natural cover that help protect water quality. These characteristics reduce runoff and lessen the potential for degradation compared with more intensive urban uses.

The degree of benefit, however, depends on how the open space functions. Uses such as golf courses or sports fields with parking lots can generate higher pollutant loads, while natural parks designed for passive recreation tend to have fewer impacts. Maintenance practices, such as turf fertilization, irrigation, or the application of de-icing materials on roads and parking areas, also influence how well the open space supports adjacent critical areas.

Protection and restoration of aquatic habitat within the Walla Walla Basin is occurring as a result of the Walla Walla Watershed Plan (WWWP). Under the plan, the foundation of basin-wide aquatic habitat management is contained in the Walla Walla Subbasin Plan. Within the Walla Walla UGA, both Mill Creek and Yellowhawk Creek have been identified by the WWWP as Priority Protection Areas with respect to aquatic habitat and protection of focal aquatic species. Priority Protection Areas are stream reaches that, if allowed to further degrade, represent a substantial decline in abundance, productivity, and life history diversity. The WWWP and related plans/documents include specific management strategies and actions to improve aquatic habitat within the UGA.

In addition to identifying species of concern, the WDFW also identifies priority habitat. Through the Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) Program, the WDFW identifies the habitats and species of

priority and maps their locations. PHS literature identifies the needs of fish and wildlife based on the "best available science" and can be used in land use decisions that may affect these habitats. The Priority Habitat map shows the location of priority habitats within the UGA; these include wetland, riparian, ring-necked pheasant, and waterfowl habitats.

The City's critical areas regulations address fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, among other environmental elements. Wetland buffers add protection for wetlands and are enforced through the municipal code.

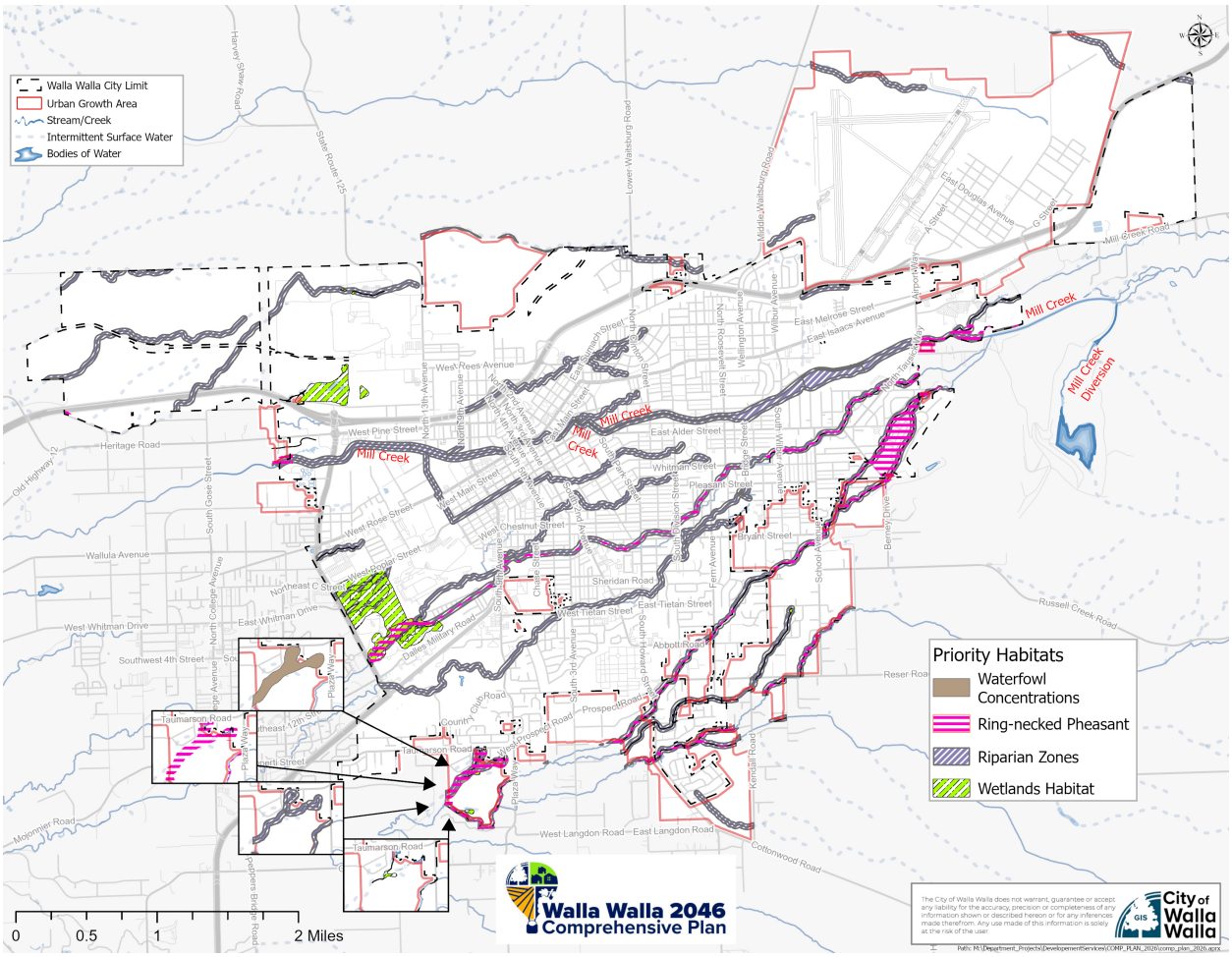


Figure 23. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas Map

Geologically Hazardous Areas

The City's critical areas regulations address geologically hazardous areas. Geologically hazardous areas are designated as those that are susceptible to one or more of the following types of hazards: erosion hazards; landslide hazards; seismic hazards; and other geological events, including mass wasting, debris flows, rock falls, and differential settlement.

The Washington State Hazard Mitigation Plan (2023) determines which counties within Washington are most vulnerable to future earthquakes, based on FEMA's HAZUS information. HAZUS is a computer-based system, available from FEMA, used to estimate potential losses from earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes. The counties considered most at risk are those with an Annualized Earthquake Loss of at least $1 million or with an Annualized Earthquake Loss Ratio equal to or greater than the state's ratio of 0.02. Twenty-three counties within Washington, including Walla Walla County, meet one of these two criteria. The City participates in the Walla Walla County Multi-Jurisdiction All-Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), which outlines mitigation strategies to reduce regional natural hazard risks.

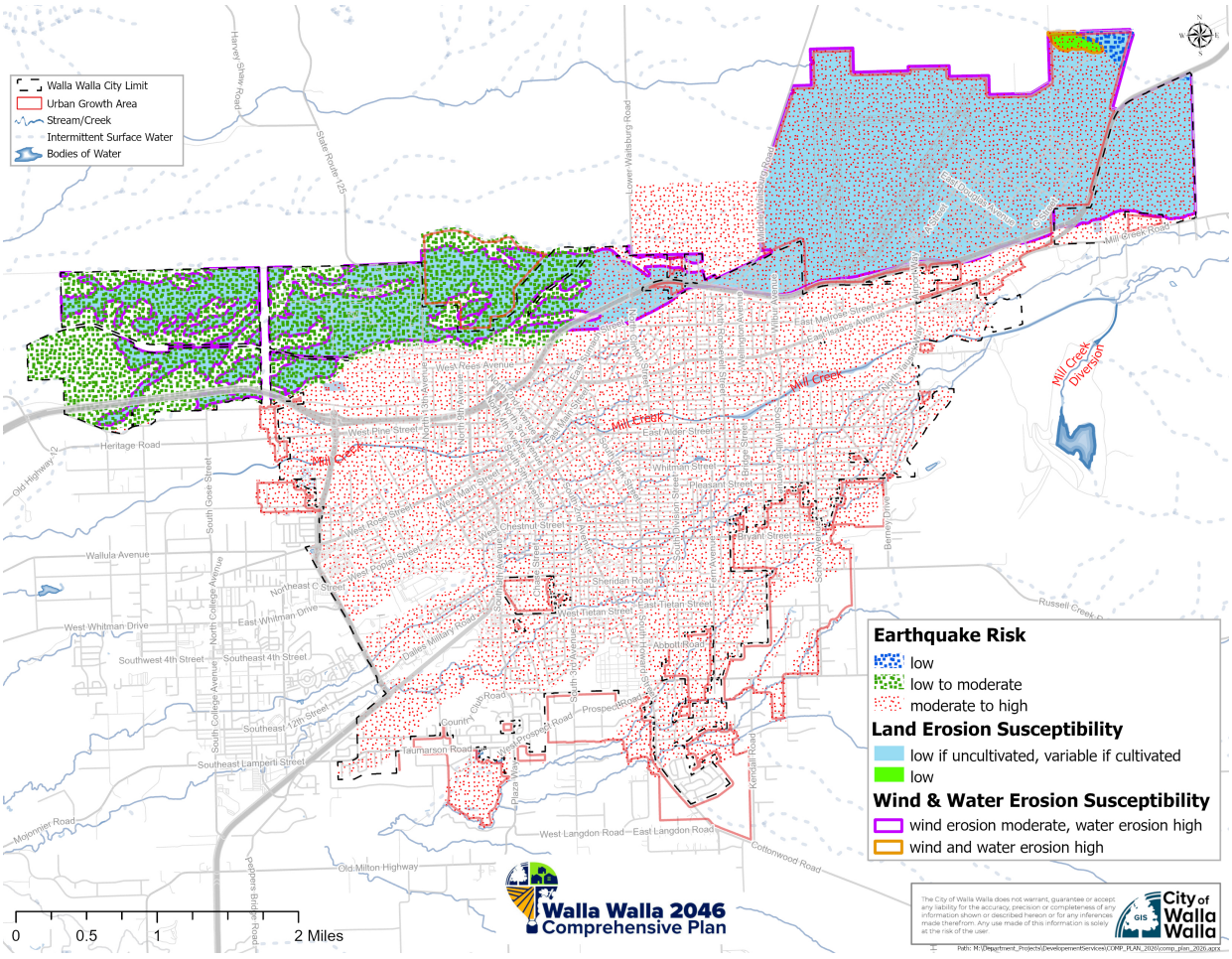


Figure 24. Geologically Hazardous Areas Map

Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas

Critical aquifer recharge areas (CARA) are those areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water as defined by WAC 365-190-030(2). CARA have prevailing geologic conditions associated with infiltration rates that create high potential for contamination of ground water resources or contribute significantly to the replenishment of ground water. CARA in the City of Walla Walla is designated as follows: sufficient to minimize the hazard.

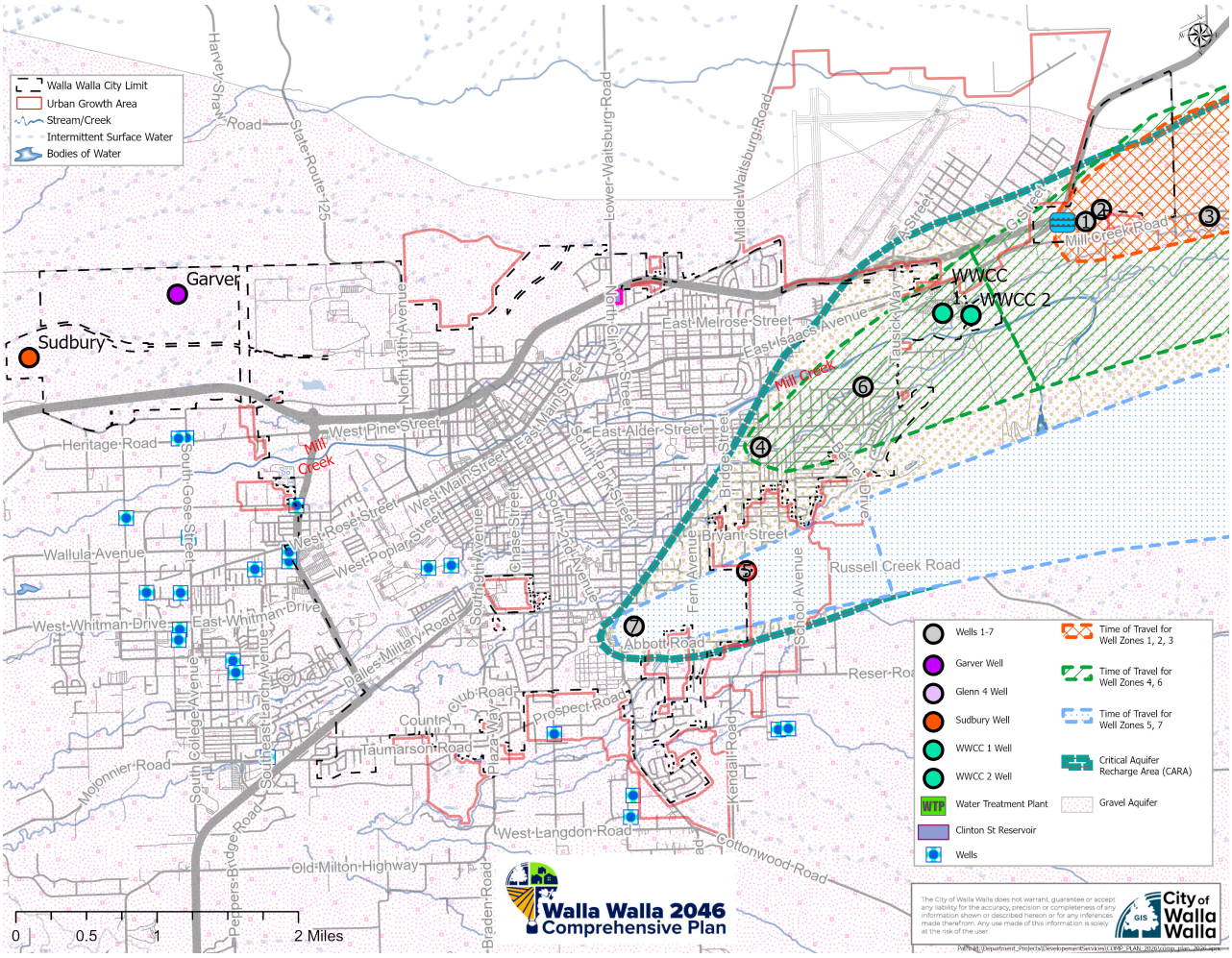


Figure 25. Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas Map

Urban Forestry

Trees have a special place in the City. Historically, local groups have sponsored annual tree planting activities. The first focused tree planting effort began in 1907 by local civic groups. Walla Walla 2020 championed tree-planting activities in the 1980s. Since then, tree planting has been the primary public service focus of the Rotary Club of Walla Walla.

There are over 50 state champion trees in Walla Walla. State champion trees are the largest of their species known in Washington State. Cuttings from several of these trees have been collected for cloning as part of the Champion Tree Project, the goal of which is to preserve, protect, propagate, and plant America's best and biggest trees. Over a third of the champion trees are located within Pioneer Park, and others are found on the Whitman College campus.

The City identifies, promotes, protects, and maintains Walla Walla's heritage trees. A heritage tree is defined as a tree or group of trees designated by the city because they meet the criteria of exceptional value. Exceptional value is determined by the urban forestry advisory commission based on association with historic figures or events, rare or unusual species, exceptional aesthetic quality, or large size.

Trees are valued for their beauty and large diameter and/or height. Trees also provide valuable environmental and economic benefits, such as shade. Trees that shade a building in the summer can help reduce energy consumption and cooling costs. In the winter, large evergreen trees can provide protection from cold winds, which may help reduce heating costs.

Trees in urban areas shade pavement and parking lots, helping to reduce the heat island effect. The heat island effect occurs when temperatures in urban and suburban areas can be elevated 2 to 10° above the surrounding rural area. Trees also intercept rainfall, which can help reduce peak stormwater flows. Trees reduce air pollution by absorbing carbon dioxide and air pollutants, such as ozone, carbon monoxide, and sulfur dioxide. The collection of trees in an urban area is often referred to as its urban forest.



The City of Walla Walla maintains an Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP). The UFMP includes management and maintenance recommendations; inventories of trees along city streets and within the city parks; and approved street tree lists. The Parks, Recreation, and Urban Forestry Advisory Board is a citizen

committee appointed by the City Council and provides recommendations to the City Council and the Municipal Arborist.

The City maintains a Tree City USA designation. The designation must be recertified annually. Walla Walla has been designated a Tree City USA since 1994. The National Arbor Day Foundation sponsors the Tree City USA program in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. To qualify for Tree City USA status, a town or city must meet four standards:

- A Tree Board or Department
- A Public Tree Care Ordinance
- Annual Expenditure of $2 Per Capita on Community Tree Care Activities
- An Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation



Challenges and Opportunities

Future Growth and Development

The City faces a wide range of environmental and natural resource challenges, such as reduced snowpack and rising temperatures. Balancing these concerns with future growth, development needs, and other municipal priorities, especially under limited resources—will require careful planning and sustained commitment. Even so, the City has a strong track record of addressing environmental issues and has built meaningful capacity, expertise, and partnerships that position it well for the work ahead.

Continued implementation of the City's Shoreline Master Program and critical areas regulations will play a central role in protecting natural resources and preserving fish and wildlife habitat. Together, these tools help ensure that environmental stewardship remains integrated into the City's long-term vision.

Walla Walla's Plan

The Environment and Natural Resources Element provides a background for the goals and policies described below. As the City grows, Walla Walla will implement the goals and policies through development regulations, which will ensure environmental compliance and the stewardship of natural resources.

Goals and Policies

ENR Goal 1: Water, air, and soil resources in Walla Walla are protected.

- ENR 1.1: Implement best management practices, where feasible, to ensure protection of surface and groundwater resources and ecosystems.
- ENR 1.2: Identify, study, and rehabilitate contaminated sites to support the safe reuse and, when feasible, repurpose them to community benefiting environments.
- ENR 1.3: Identify and protect critical areas, and keep the City's Critical Areas Ordinance updated, in accordance with the Periodic Update Cycle.
- ENR 1.4: Ensure that measures are in place to protect aquifer recharge areas from contamination.
- ENR 1.5: Encourage cooperation and coordination among communities involved in the Walla Walla 2050 Plan.

ENR Goal 2: Walla Walla residents are aware of local environmental issues and strategies to improve the environment.

- ENR 2.1: Work with partners to develop public awareness and educational programs for the protection and enhancement of natural areas.

ENR Goal 3: The Mill Creek fish habitat and its flood control functions are critical to the City.

- ENR 3.1: Support opportunities for a more naturalized channel that provides flood control for Mill Creek.
- ENR 3.2: Cooperate and coordinate with the Flood Control Zone District to protect properties in the UGA from flooding.

ENR Goal 4: The integrity of Walla Walla's riparian ecosystem is protected by avoiding development and other land use activities within Riparian Management Zones (RMZs).

- ENR 4.1: Take measures to safeguard existing wetlands to prevent continual loss and degradation.
- ENR 4.2: Encourage the voluntary restoration and enhancement of lost or degraded riparian corridors and wetlands to increase their connectivity, quantity and quality over the long term.
- ENR 4.3: Conservation of the natural environment and sustainable use of limited, renewable, and non-renewable resources protects and enhances the natural environment of Walla Walla.

ENR Goal 5: Walla Walla protects and expands its natural areas and tree canopies by prioritizing habitat preservation and strategic planting.

- ENR 5.1: Ensure that buffers are adequately defined, regulated, and controlled to limit the disturbance of vegetation and disruption of ecological function.
- ENR 5.2: Preserve and protect healthy mature trees in the community to the greatest extent possible and promptly plant replacements when they cannot be saved.

Policy Connections

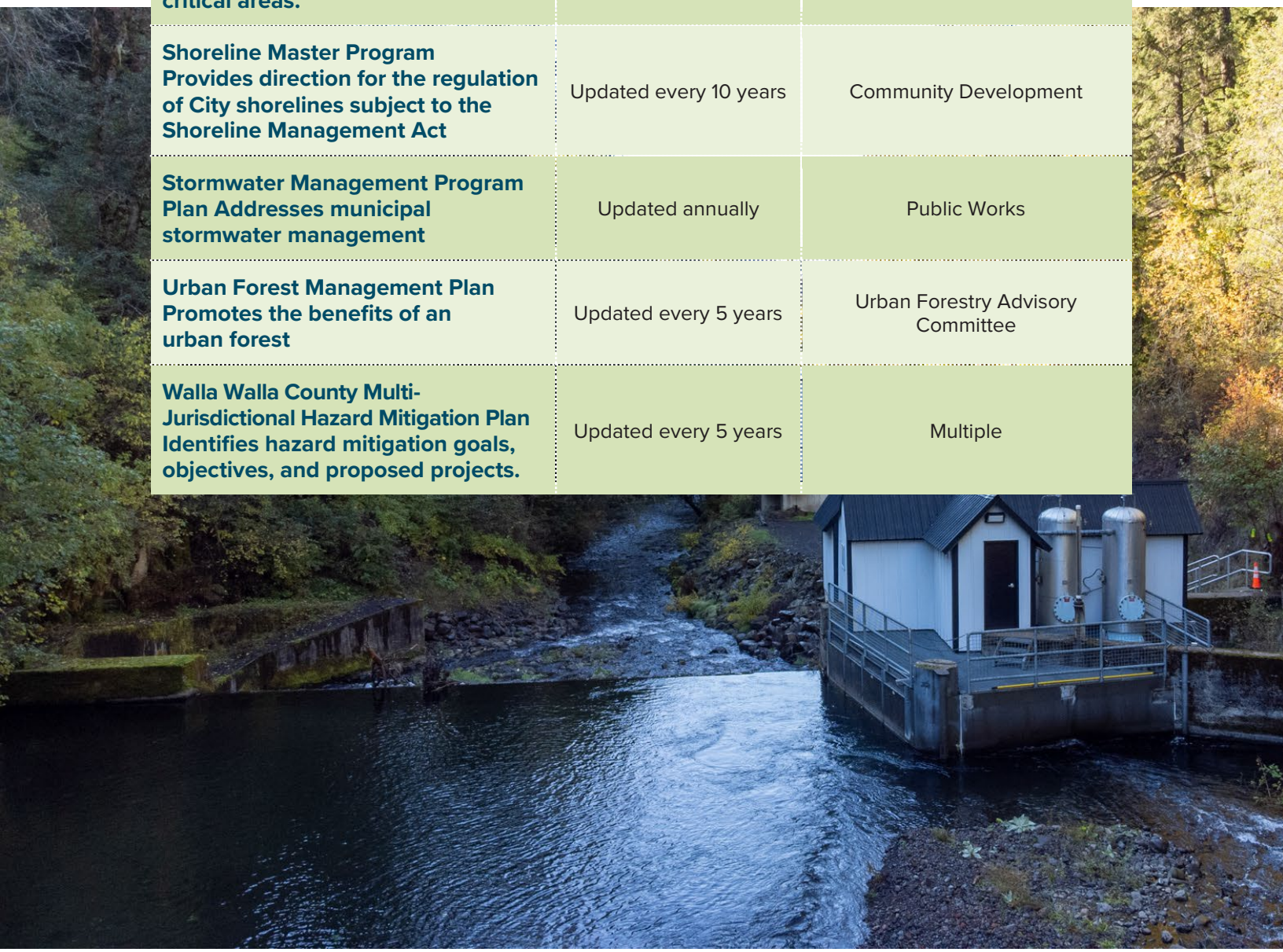
- **The Shoreline Element** contains policies that provide direction for the regulation of City shorelines subject to the Shoreline Management Act, inclusive of critical areas within the shoreline jurisdiction.
- **The Capital Facilities and Utilities Element** provides policies regarding community infrastructure needs, including fire facilities, and recognizes the potential for future development impacts from facility expansion.
- **The Housing Element** includes policies that promote increased diversity of housing types and affordability for all income levels.
- **The Transportation Element** identifies transportation needs to address future growth and expansion.



Translating Policy into Action

Table 22. Environment and Natural Resources Implementation Actions

Implementation Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Building and Land Use Permitting Ensures development complies with adopted City codes	Ongoing	Community Development
Critical Areas Ordinance Regulates environmentally critical areas.	As required by State law	Community Development
Shoreline Master Program Provides direction for the regulation of City shorelines subject to the Shoreline Management Act	Updated every 10 years	Community Development
Stormwater Management Program Plan Addresses municipal stormwater management	Updated annually	Public Works
Urban Forest Management Plan Promotes the benefits of an urban forest	Updated every 5 years	Urban Forestry Advisory Committee
Walla Walla County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Identifies hazard mitigation goals, objectives, and proposed projects.	Updated every 5 years	Multiple





Shoreline

Introduction

Relationship to Shoreline Management



The Shoreline Management Act (SMA), enacted by the State of Washington, was created to address growing concerns about unplanned and uncoordinated development along shorelines, which posed risks of serious and permanent environmental damage. The SMA's overarching goal is to prevent harm from fragmented shoreline development while balancing ecological protection with appropriate land use.

The SMA establishes three broad policies:

1. **Encourage Water-Dependent and Water-Oriented Uses**
   Prioritize uses that depend on shoreline access and are consistent with pollution control and environmental protection.
2. **Promote Public Access**
   Preserve opportunities for the public to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of natural shorelines to the greatest extent feasible.
3. **Protect Natural Shoreline Resources**
   Safeguard land, vegetation, wildlife, water, and aquatic life from degradation.

In June of 2018, the city adopted an updated version of its Shoreline Master Program (SMP). The Program reflects local visions while complying with state standards. For the City of Walla Walla, this Program becomes part of its development regulations, as required by RCW 36.70A.480. For any future updates, following the adoption of the 2018 Program, the SMP must be reviewed and approved by the Washington State Department of Ecology before taking effect. In 2023, the City of Walla Walla adopted amendments to the SMP under Ordinance 2023-15. The Shoreline Master Program is listed as a reference.

Purpose and Vision

It is the ultimate goal of the City of Walla Walla SMP to prevent harm that results from uncoordinated development of the state's shorelines and to provide plans, policies and regulations consistent with the SMA (RCW 90.58) and with the SMP Guidelines (WAC 173 – 26) which reflect the desires of the citizens of the city and its communities regarding the balanced use of the city shorelines to:

- Ensure no net loss of ecological functions along shorelines.
- Promote public health, safety, and welfare through comprehensive policies and reasonable regulations.
- Fulfill local government responsibilities under RCW 90.58.050.
- Implement state shoreline use preferences outlined in RCW 90.58.020.

Mill Creek is an asset to the city as the only shoreline of the state within the City of Walla Walla's jurisdiction. Portions of Mill Creek are part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mill Creek Project (Mill Creek Flood Control Project). The City's vision emphasizes restoring Mill Creek to a more naturalized system where feasible, while maintaining critical flood control infrastructure. The SMP seeks to preserve high-quality waters and shorelines for future generations, protect private property rights, and support economic vitality and sustainability.

Environmental Designations

To manage shoreline areas effectively, the SMP classifies them into five environmental designations, each tailored to ecological conditions and development patterns:

- **Urban Conservancy:** Protect and restore ecological functions in open spaces and floodplains within urban settings.
- **Urban Residential:** Accommodate existing and planned residential development while providing public access and recreation.
- **High Intensity:** Support commercial, industrial, transportation, and multi-family residential uses while restoring degraded ecological functions.
- **Urban Downtown:** Apply to areas where Mill Creek flows through artificial or underground channels, allowing urban uses.
- **Mill Creek Flume:** Designate intensively developed areas adjacent to flood control works, accommodating mixed water-oriented and non-water-oriented uses.

These designations ensure that development aligns with ecological protection, public access, and community goals.

Key Outcomes

The City of Walla Walla SMP provides a framework for:

- Coordinated shoreline planning and development.
- Balancing environmental stewardship with economic and recreational opportunities.
- Maintaining compliance with state law while reflecting local priorities.
- Protecting Mill Creek as a vital community asset through restoration and flood control integration.

The shoreline maps are available in the SMP.

Goals and Policies

S Goal 1: To foster a pattern of land use along the shorelines of the City of Walla Walla that balances human use with protection of existing character, habitat, and ecological systems.

- S 1.1: Allow breakwaters, weirs, and groins to be located waterward of the Ordinary High-Water Mark only where necessary to support water-dependent uses, public access, shoreline stabilization, ecological restoration, or other specific public purpose.
- S 1.2: Consider alternative structures with less impact where physical conditions make such alternatives feasible.
- S 1.3: Institutional development in shoreline jurisdiction should be designed and located to result in no net loss of ecological function.
- S 1.4: Develop application processing guidelines that will streamline the review of restoration-only projects.
- S 1.5: Locate and design new development to avoid the need for future shoreline stabilization to the extent feasible.

- S 1.6: Require residential development to make adequate provision for wastewater, water, and stormwater facilities and apply best management practices to protect shoreline water quality and meet the needs of the development.
- S 1.7: Design residential development to prevent the need for new shoreline stabilization or flood hazard reduction measure.
- S 1.8: Design residential subdivisions in shoreline jurisdiction to be compatible with the physical and aesthetic character of the shoreline.
- S 1.9: Where shoreline conditions permit, promote a variety of housing types along shorelines in the City of Walla Walla to increase pedestrian activity and increase market area for local businesses while ensuring no net loss of shoreline ecological function.
- S 1.10: Ensure that signs located in the shoreline jurisdiction do not disrupt visual access to water areas.
- S 1.11: Limit the size and number of signs in the shoreline environment to be compatible with the applied environment designation.
- S 1.12: Locate, design, and maintain signs to minimize impacts to views and be visually compatible with local shoreline scenery as seen from both land and water, especially on shorelines of statewide significance.

S Goal 2: To encourage shoreline development and modifications that are wisely placed, consistent with the physical limitations of the area, serve the needs and desires of the local citizens, and ensure no net loss of ecological function.

- S 2.1: New or expanded agricultural activities should not be allowed within the shoreline jurisdiction.
- S 2.2: Allow shoreline modifications if the use or activity is permitted under the SMP and the modifications are consistent with WWMC Chapter 21.10 Floodplain Management, or where it can be demonstrated that the proposed activities are necessary to support or protect an allowed use or development.
- S 2.3: Allow shoreline modifications if the use or activity is permitted under this SMP and only when adverse individual and cumulative impacts are avoided, minimized, and then mitigated as necessary to result in no net loss of shoreline ecological functions, in accordance with the mitigation sequence of this SMP.
- S 2.4: Allow upland excavation only when necessary to support a use or modification otherwise allowed by this Shoreline Master Program.
- S 2.5: Forest practices shall not be allowed within shoreline jurisdiction.
- S 2.6: Mining activities shall not be allowed within shoreline jurisdiction.

- S 2.7: Allow fill when it is demonstrated to be the minimum extent necessary to accommodate an allowed shoreline use or development and with assurance of no net loss of shoreline ecological functions and processes.
- S 2.8: Allow fill when it is associated with restoration projects.
- S 2.9: Upland fill and excavation should be designed to meet the character of the surrounding shoreline.
- S 2.10: Use structural shoreline stabilization measures only when nonstructural methods are infeasible. Nonstructural methods include building setbacks, structure relocation, groundwater management, and other measures.
- S 2.11: Ensure soft structural shoreline stabilization measures are used prior to hard stabilization measures unless demonstrated to be insufficient.
- S 2.12: Allow new or expanded structural shoreline stabilization only where demonstrated to be necessary to support or protect an allowed primary structure or a legally existing shoreline use that is in danger of loss or substantial damage, or for reconfiguration of the shoreline for mitigation or enhancement purposes.
- S 2.13: Ensure all proposals for structural shoreline stabilization, both individually and cumulatively, do not result in a net loss of ecological functions.

S Goal 3: To give priority to preferred uses of the shoreline, as well as those uses that contribute to the unique character and economic prosperity of the City of Walla Walla, where those uses will not cause a net loss of shoreline ecological function.

- S 3.1: New aquaculture for commercial propagation should not be allowed in shoreline jurisdiction. Encourage aquaculture that supports the recovery of endangered or threatened fish species.
- S 3.2: Restrict aquaculture in areas where it would result in a net loss of ecological functions or significantly conflict with navigation or other water-dependent uses.
- S 3.3: Promote aquaculture in such a manner as to protect the aesthetic quality of the shorelines and adjacent lands, and to protect the soil, air, water, fish, and wildlife.
- S 3.4: Allow aquaculture that supports the propagation of native species, whether for the purposes of recreational activities or the restoration of species.
- S 3.5: Locate new utilities outside shoreline jurisdiction unless alternative locations are unfeasible, the utility requires a shoreline location, or the utility is necessary to support an approved shoreline use.

S Goal 4: To encourage a system of diverse public access opportunities that is safe and convenient, consistent with shoreline character and ecological functions, and compatible with adjacent land uses while recognizing private property rights.

- S 4.1: Ensure that shoreline commercial development provides public or visual access to the shoreline where opportunities exist, provided that such access would not pose a health or safety hazard or such access is demonstrated to be infeasible.
- S 4.2: Limit over-water, and non-water-oriented commercial uses in the shoreline environment.
- S 4.3: Ensure that the provision of public access does not degrade natural features or otherwise contribute to a loss of shoreline ecological function.
- S 4.4: Encourage shoreline institutional development to provide public access to the shoreline where opportunities exist, provided that such access would not pose a health and safety hazard or a security risk.
- S 4.5: Encourage public access as part of new shoreline development, commensurate with the level of public access demand created by the development, and consistent with public safety.

S Goal 5: To encourage coordinated public shoreline access across the City through partnership with Federal, State, and local governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, through incentives to property owners and developers.

- S 5.1: Promote the provision and maintenance of quality physical and visual access to shorelines, with a focus on both public properties and private properties under development.
- S 5.2: Allow for provision of communal public access as part of new commercial and residential shoreline developments.
- S 5.3: Encourage community shoreline access points for multifamily residential development in the shoreline jurisdiction.
- S 5.4: Promote public access or shoreline restoration as potential mitigation measures for impacts associated with shoreline commercial development where opportunities exist, and provided that public access would not pose a health or safety hazard to the public.

S Goal 6: To meet the recreational needs of City residents and visitors while protecting existing recreational resources, shoreline ecological functions, and private property rights.

- S 6.1: Prioritize development and improvement of recreational facilities identified in the City of Walla Walla's parks and recreation plan, to the extent that development of these facilities will not result in a net loss of ecological function.

S Goal 7: To encourage a variety of recreational opportunities tailored to the ecological and land use conditions of the City's diverse shoreline environments.

- S 7.1: Promote public access to and enjoyment of the shoreline at existing and future City parks in shoreline jurisdiction.

S Goal 8: To ensure that economic activity along shorelines is encouraged while also developing in a manner that protects the shoreline environment, is compatible with adjacent land uses, and ensures no net loss of shoreline ecological function.

- S 8.1: New industrial development should consider providing shoreline public access as mitigation for disruption of shoreline resources and values, unless such public access would result in a security risk or life and safety hazard.
- S 8.2: Design new industrial development in the shoreline environment to result in no net loss of ecological function and to minimize disruption of navigation and use of the shoreline by adjacent property owners.
- S 8.3: Allow future industrial and port facilities that are dependent upon a shoreline location in areas where the shoreline is already characterized by industrial development or planned for such uses.

S Goal 9: To recognize the value of water-oriented development to the local economy and promote future economic development activity in shoreline areas where ecological conditions and land use patterns are appropriate for such uses.

- S 9.1: Encourage institutional development in shoreline jurisdiction that provides public benefit with respect to the objectives of the Shoreline Management Act or which provides other scientific, educational, or cultural benefits to the public.

S Goal 10: To recognize that healthy, attractive shoreline areas provide value for the local economy and serve as amenities to citizens and businesses.

- S 10.1: Recognize the urban character of Mill Creek within the City of Walla Walla and give preference to industrial development which encourages cooperative use of existing facilities that promote economic activity and public enjoyment of the shoreline.

S Goal 11: To create and maintain a comprehensive circulation system which provides for the safe and convenient movement of people, goods, and services while minimizing disruption of shoreline areas and the environment.

- S 11.1: New or expanded boating and moorage facilities should not be allowed within shoreline jurisdiction.
- S 11.2: Encourage circulation planning systems for pedestrian and bicycle transportation where appropriate.
- S 11.3: Require that circulation planning and projects support existing and proposed shoreline uses that are consistent with this SMP.
- S 11.4: Design, implement, and locate new roads, railroads, and parking facilities in such a manner as to result in no net loss of shoreline ecological function.

S Goal 12: To maintain adequate safety, environmental, and aesthetic standards for existing and new circulation systems within the shoreline jurisdiction.

- S 12.1: Encourage a circulation system which will efficiently and safely move people, goods, and services to minimize disruption or adverse effect on the shoreline areas.
- S 12.2: Consider viewpoints, parking, trails, and similar improvements for transportation system projects in shoreline areas.
- S 12.3: Ensure new utilities utilize existing transportation facilities (e.g., bridges) and utility rights-of-way easements, or existing cleared areas to the greatest extent feasible.
- S 12.4: New roads and railroads in shoreline jurisdiction shall be located as far landward from the shoreline as possible.

S Goal 13: To protect and preserve shoreline natural resources, including wetlands, native vegetation, fish and wildlife habitat, and scenic resources, both through responsible management of public land and incentives for private landowners and developers.

- S 13.1: Where new developments, uses, and/or redevelopments are proposed, ensure shoreline vegetation, both upland and waterward of the OHWM, is conserved to maintain shoreline ecological functions and processes.
- S 13.2: Encourage management and control of noxious and invasive weeds. Control of such species should be done in a manner that retains onsite native vegetation, provides for erosion control, and protects water quality.
- S 13.3: Vegetation removal not associated with development should be limited to that which is necessary to achieve the intended purpose while maintaining shoreline ecological functions and processes.
- S 13.4: Protect all shorelines of the state in a manner consistent with all relevant constitutional and other legal limitations on the regulation of private property so that there is no net loss of ecological functions from both individually permitted and exempt development.
- S 13.5: Sustain a diverse, productive, and high-quality natural environment for the use, health, and enjoyment of City residents.
- S 13.6: Identify and protect critical fish and wildlife habitat from destruction or encroachment of incompatible uses.
- S 13.7: Preserve wetlands that are important wildlife and game habitat or recreational areas.
- S 13.8: Protect life and property by avoiding inappropriate developments in areas susceptible to natural disasters and hazards, such as floodplains and steep slopes.
- S 13.9: Maintain and improve the water quantity and quality of the shoreline waterbodies and preserve surface and groundwater for the beneficial and economic use of the area's citizens, and to provide for wildlife and wildlife habitat.
- S 13.10: Ensure dredging and dredge material disposal are done in a manner that avoids or minimizes significant ecological impacts. Impacts that cannot be avoided should be mitigated in a manner that assures no net loss of shoreline ecological functions.
- S 13.11: Discourage the disposal of dredge material on shorelands or wetlands within a channel migration zone, unless part of an approved restoration project.

S Goal 14: To encourage restoration of shoreline ecological functions where they have been impaired and to facilitate restoration of shoreline ecological functions and aesthetics to achieve regional goals for water quality and habitat recovery.

- S 14.1: Restoration of impaired shoreline ecological functions and processes should be a component of new industrial development, where applicable.
- S 14.2: Promote restoration and enhancement actions that improve shoreline ecological functions and processes and target the needs of sensitive plant, fish and wildlife species as identified by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Natural Resources, affected tribes, National Marine Fisheries Service, and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- S 14.3: Ensure restoration and enhancement of shorelines are designed using principles of landscape and conservation ecology and restore or enhance chemical, physical, and biological watershed processes that create and sustain shoreline habitat structures and functions.
- S 14.4: Seek funding to implement restoration and enhancement projects, particularly those sources that are identified in the Restoration Plan of this SMP or in other pertinent plans. Funding may be sought by the City or other entities.
- S 14.5: Ensure restoration and enhancement of shorelines is implemented using best management practices and protects adjacent natural resources.
- S 14.6: Protect and, where necessary, apply planning and land use measures to improve the quality and productivity of the City's environmental resources (air, ground and surface waters, and indigenous biology).
- S 14.7: Require that new developments, expansions, or retrofits of existing developments assess the effects of additional stormwater runoff volumes and velocities and mitigate potential adverse effects on shorelines through design and implementation of appropriate stormwater management measures.
- S 14.8: Site and design new development to avoid or, if that is not possible, to minimize the need for new and maintenance dredging.
- S 14.9: Ensure that the location, design, construction and maintenance of in-stream structures give due consideration to the full range of public interests, watershed functions and processes, and environmental concerns, with special emphasis on aquatic species, passage, connectivity, and restoring priority habitats and species.
- S 14.10: Encourage non-structural and non-regulatory approaches as an alternative to in-stream structures. Non-regulatory and non-structural approaches may include public facility and resource planning, land or easement acquisition, education, voluntary protection and enhancement projects, or incentive programs.

S Goal 15: To identify, protect, and preserve shoreline sites that have historic, cultural, educational, or scientific significance or value.

- S 15.1: As part of shoreline permit application review, coordinate with tribal, State, and Federal agencies that maintain inventories of known significant historic, cultural, and archaeological sites.

S Goal 16: Ensure that shoreline development provides for protection and restoration of areas and sites on Walla Walla shorelines that have historic, cultural, archaeological, educational, or scientific value, in compliance with State and Federal laws.

- S 16.1: Avoid potential damage to cultural or archaeological resources and protect such resources if they are discovered during development, including compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.

S Goal 17: To protect property in the City of Walla Walla from losses and damage caused by flooding by applying consistent flood hazard regulations.

- S 17.1: Recognize that existing flood control works, such as levees, are an existing and important feature to protect life and property.

S Goal 18: To guide future shoreline development in a manner that avoids the need for unnecessary new shoreline stabilization or flood control infrastructure.

- S 18.1: Recognize and protect the hydrologic functions of floodplains by limiting the use of structural flood hazard reduction measures.
- S 18.2: Ensure developments subject to damage or that could result in loss of life do not locate in areas of known flood hazards unless it can be demonstrated by the project proponent that the development is sited, designed and engineered for long-term structural integrity impacts to ecological functions are mitigated, nonstructural measures are not feasible, and that life and property on and off-site are not subject to increased hazards as a result of the development.
- S 18.3: Limit new development or uses in shoreline jurisdiction, including subdivision of land that would likely require structural flood hazard reduction measures.

Policy Connections

- **Community Character Policy 5.1:** Work with public and private partners to enhance the Mill Creek corridor with ecological restoration and trails to become a keystone asset in the city's physical identity.
- **Land Use Policy 2.7:** Continue coordination with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and Walla Walla County Flood Control District to restore Mill Creek.
- **Land Use Policy 4.5:** Ensure that landowners are educated regarding responsibilities of properties abutting or surrounding surface waters such as wetlands or other water bodies.
- **Parks and Recreation Policy 1.5:** Encourage contiguous access to the Mill Creek corridor through easements and land acquisition.
- **Environment and Natural Resources Goal 3:** Restore Mill Creek to a natural ecosystem and improve fish habitat while recognizing the vital flood control functions of the channel.

Translating Policy into Action

This Element is implemented through City plans and programs, projects, and review of development applications.

Table 23. Shoreline Implementation Actions

Implementation Action	Purpose	Timeline	Responsibility
Critical areas ordinance	Regulates environmentally sensitive areas	Updated every 10 years	Community Development
Shoreline Master Program	Provides direction for the regulation of City shorelines subject to the Shoreline Management Act	Updated every 10 years	Community Development
Stormwater Management Program Plan	Addresses municipal stormwater management	Updated annually	Public Works
Urban Forestry Management Plan	Promotes the benefits of an urban forest	Updated every 5 years	Urban Forestry Advisory Committee
Walla Walla County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan	Identifies hazard mitigation goals, objectives, and proposed projects	Updated every 5 years	Walla Walla County Emergency Management, Police, and Fire



Transportation

Introduction

This chapter tells the story of how the City of Walla Walla's planning efforts are helping the community achieve its desired transportation system. Crucial aspects of the plan are explained in the following sections:

- **Goals and Policies –** explains the City's overall vision.
- **Existing Conditions –** summarizes the current system.
- **Future Conditions –** identifies future transportation needs.
- **Transportation Improvements –** outlines projects and strategies to address needs.
- **Transportation Standards Summary –** summarizes standards that support progress toward the transportation vision.

As the City of Walla Walla grows through the planning horizon, it will remain important for the community to work collaboratively toward a shared transportation vision. The updated Transportation Element establishes a policy framework intended to guide transportation investments, development review, and coordination with regional and state partners. The City's updated goals and policies are intended to support a transportation system that is safe, connected, resilient, and responsive to the needs of people walking, bicycling, riding transit, driving, and moving freight.





Existing Conditions

Walla Walla's transportation system provides a strong framework for travel within the City and for regional access. The City is served by a network of local streets, collectors, arterials, state highways, freight routes, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, transit service, bridges, and traffic control systems. The system generally provides good mobility for motor vehicles and key regional connections via Highway 12 and State Route 125, while also including substantial existing bicycle facilities, pedestrian options, and transit infrastructure.

However, the existing system includes several important gaps and deficiencies. These include discontinuities in the bicycle network, incomplete sidewalks and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) barriers in some areas, aging bridge infrastructure, and several corridors where improved multimodal access would better serve existing residents and future growth.

Existing Multimodal Systems

The City's existing bicycle network consists of approximately 16 miles of bicycle lanes, 44 miles of designated bicycle routes, and 19 miles of trails. Key bicycle connections to downtown include Isaacs Avenue, Rose Street, Poplar Street, Alder Street, 2nd Avenue, and the Mill Creek and Highway 12 trail systems.

The pedestrian system includes an extensive sidewalk network, with approximately 289 miles of sidewalks citywide. However, sidewalk coverage is incomplete in some areas, especially in the south and southwest parts of the City, and the City's Sidewalk Condition Rating identifies segments with higher repair and ADA priority.

Valley Transit provides fixed-route transit service throughout Walla Walla and College Place, supplemented by FLEX service, Connector, Job Access, Dial-A-Ride, and rideshare programs. Existing transit routes provide broad community coverage, although access to stops and service frequency remain important long-term considerations.

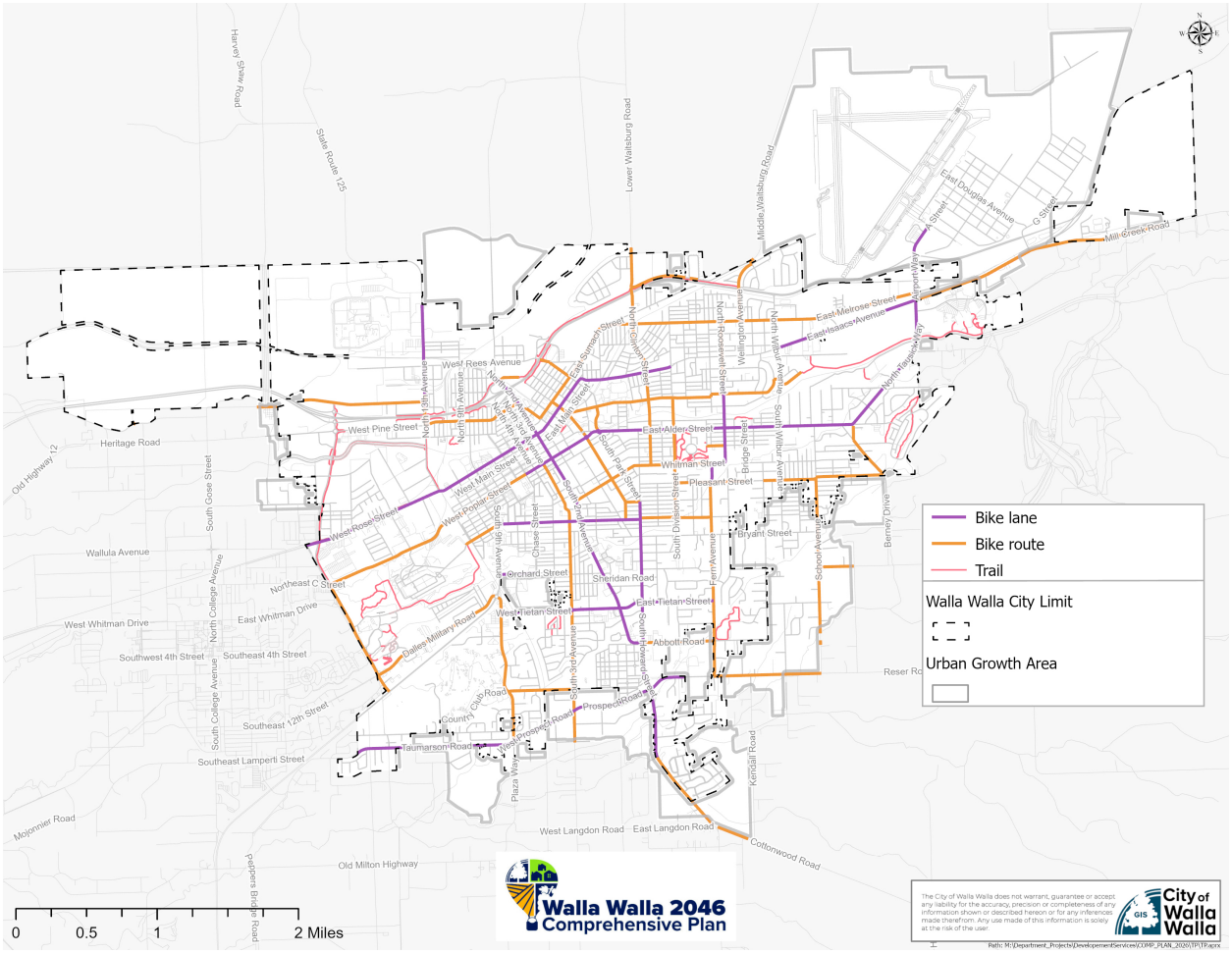


Figure 26. Existing Bicycle Facilities

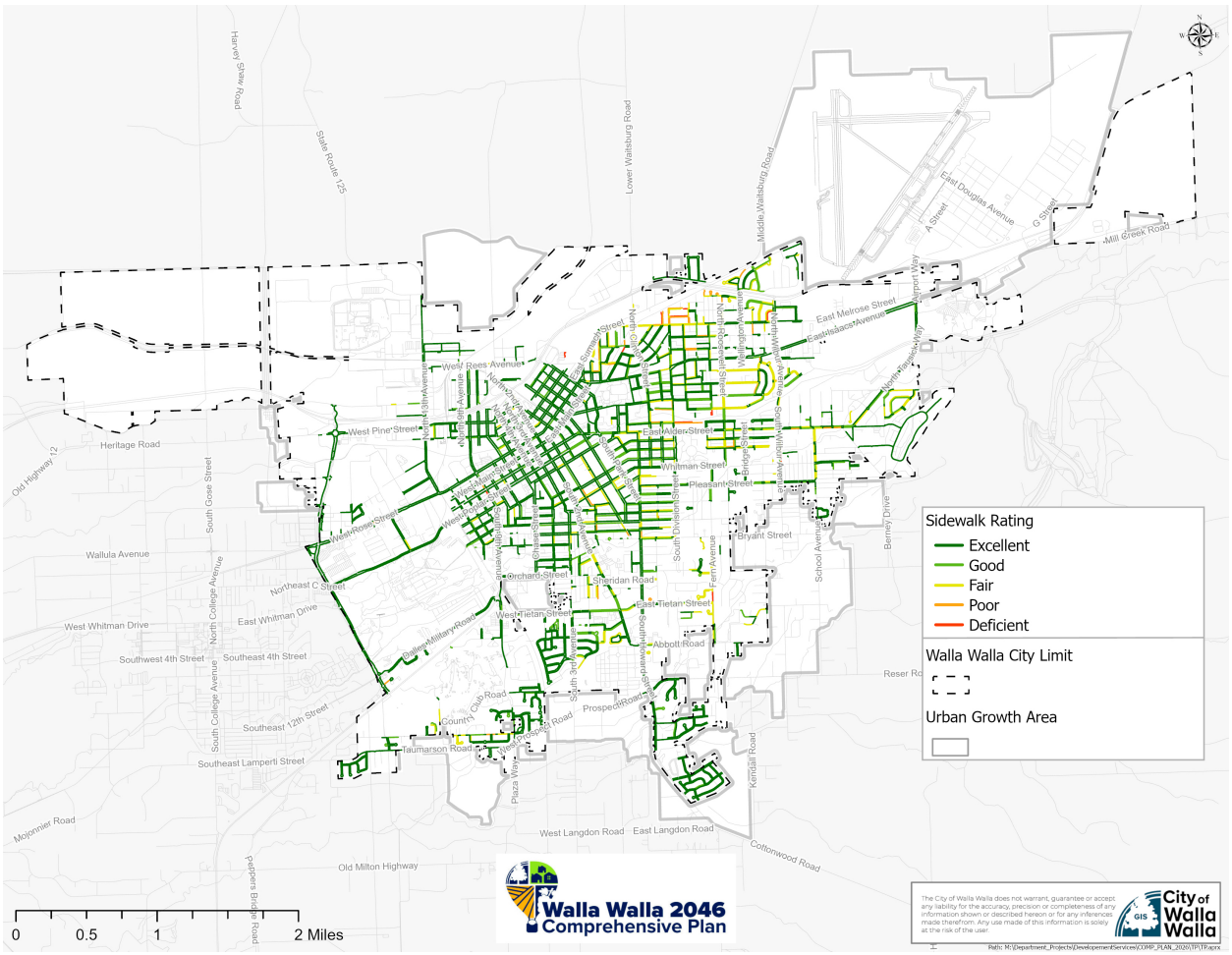


Figure 27. Existing Pedestrian Facilities and Conditions

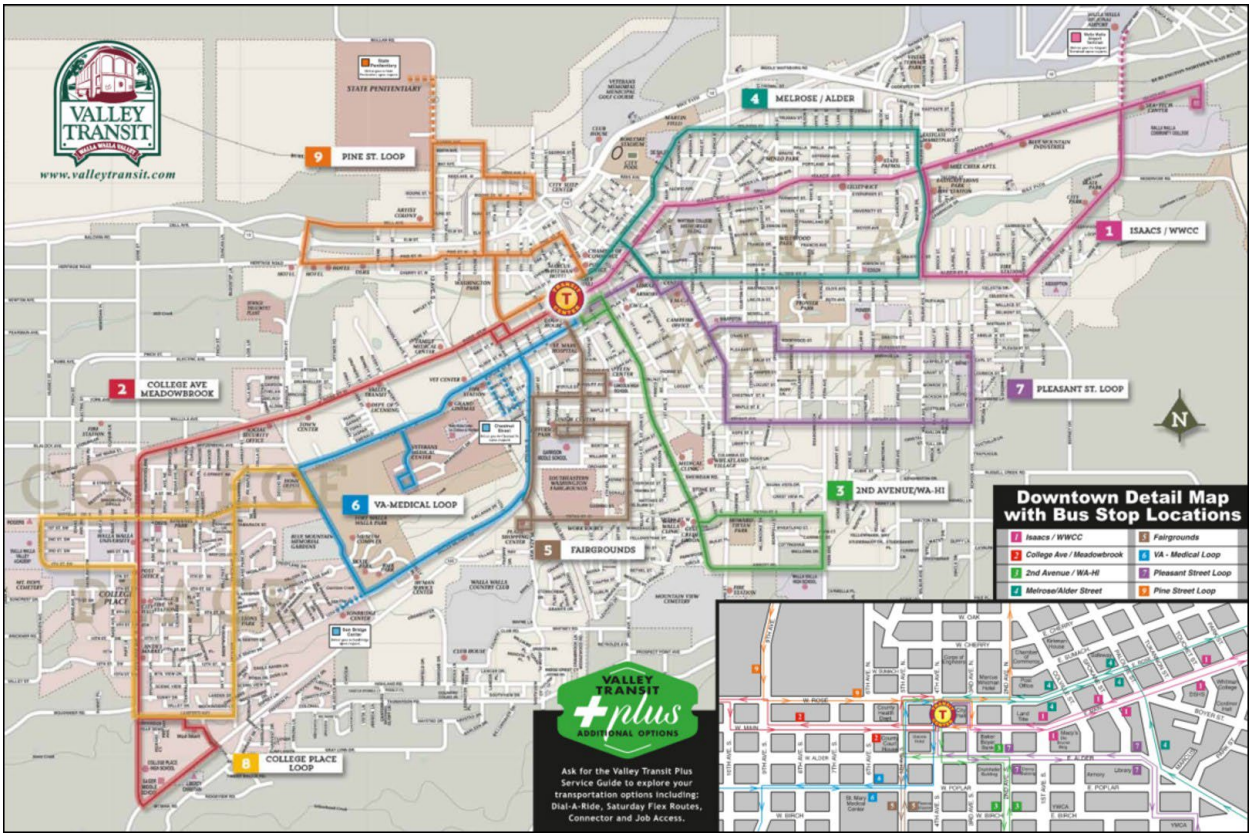


Figure 28. Existing Transit Routes

Street Network, Freight, and Bridges

The existing street system includes the City, Walla Walla County, and WSDOT facilities and serves a mix of local and regional functions. Functional classification helps define roadway roles and guides future design and operations decisions. Existing freight routes connect industrial and commercial areas to regional facilities and are concentrated along Highway 12, SR 125/9th Avenue, Pine Street, Myra Road, Isaacs Avenue, Rees Avenue, Howard Street, and related corridors.

Bridge infrastructure remains an important part of the transportation system. The City's bridge prioritization work identified several structures with significant replacement or rehabilitation needs, and since the prior plan update several bridges have been replaced or are scheduled for replacement. Remaining needs continue to influence system preservation and resiliency priorities.

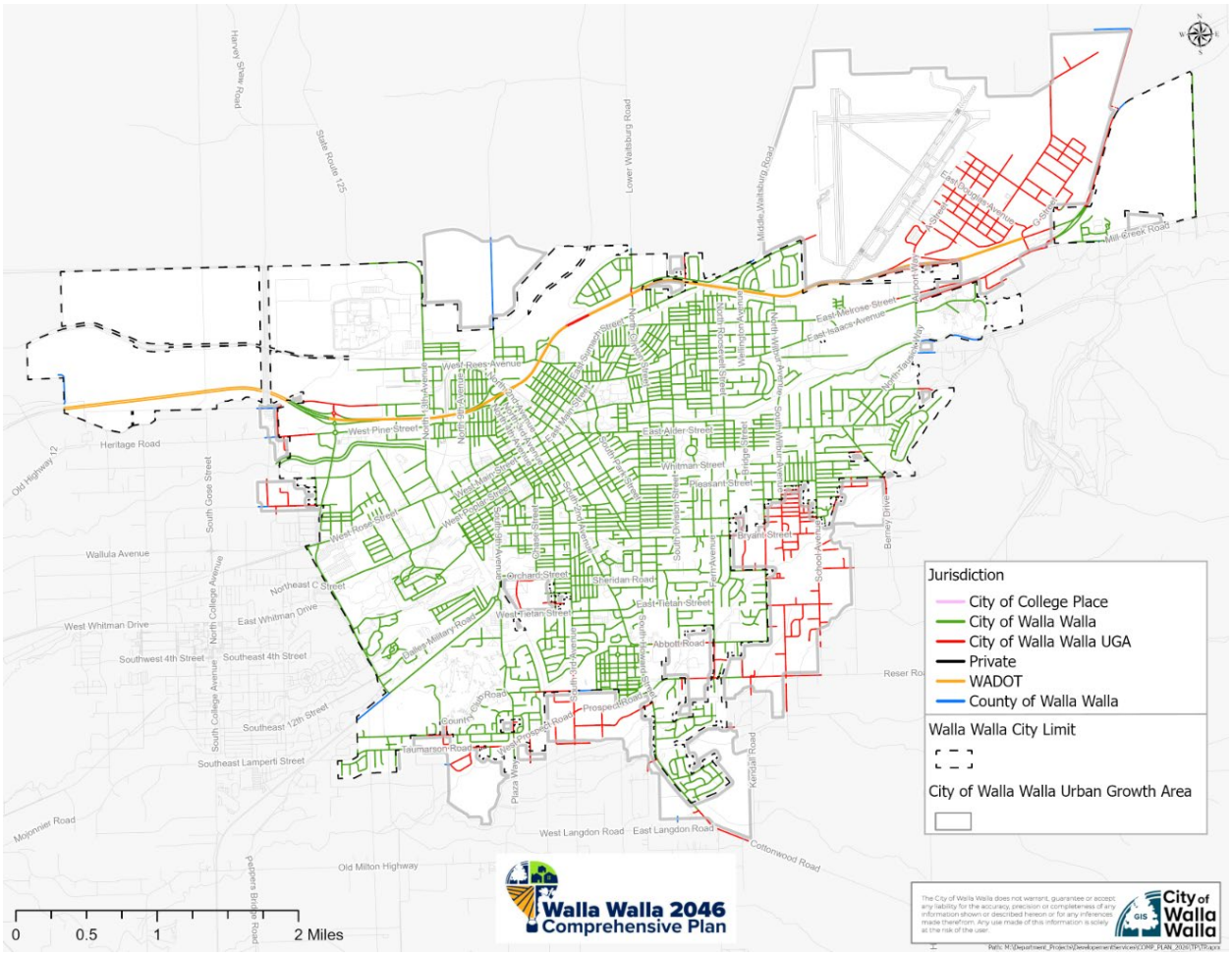


Figure 29. Street Jurisdiction

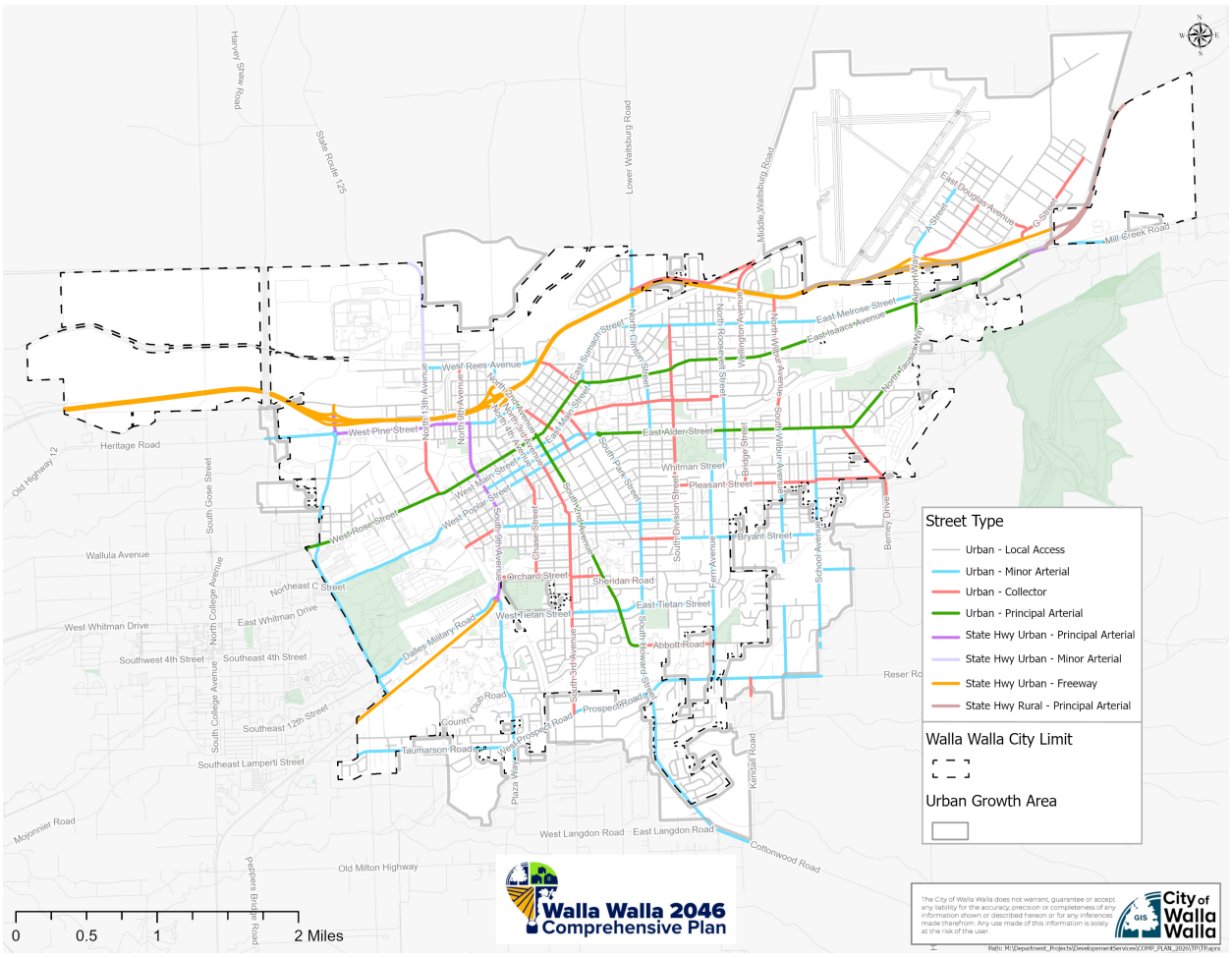


Figure 30. Functional Classification



Figure 31. Existing Freight Routes

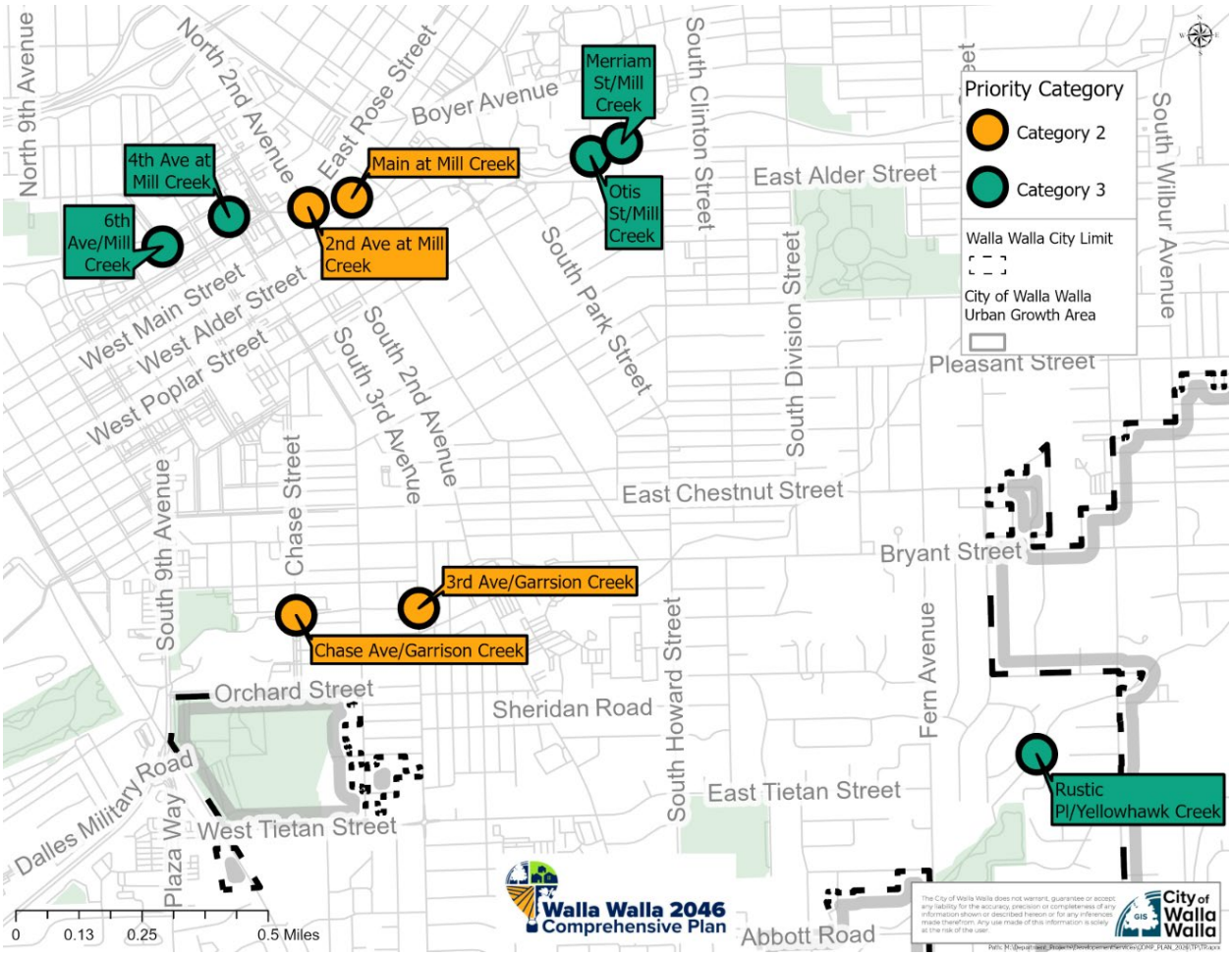


Figure 32. Bridge Conditions

Existing Traffic Control and Operations

The City's existing traffic control system includes traffic signals, roundabouts, railroad crossing signals, flashing beacons, and school zone flashers. Since the prior plan update, additional roundabouts and rectangular rapid flashing beacons have been added to improve safety and traffic operations. Existing intersection operations were evaluated during the PM peak period as part of the Transportation Element update, providing a baseline for identifying current and future needs.

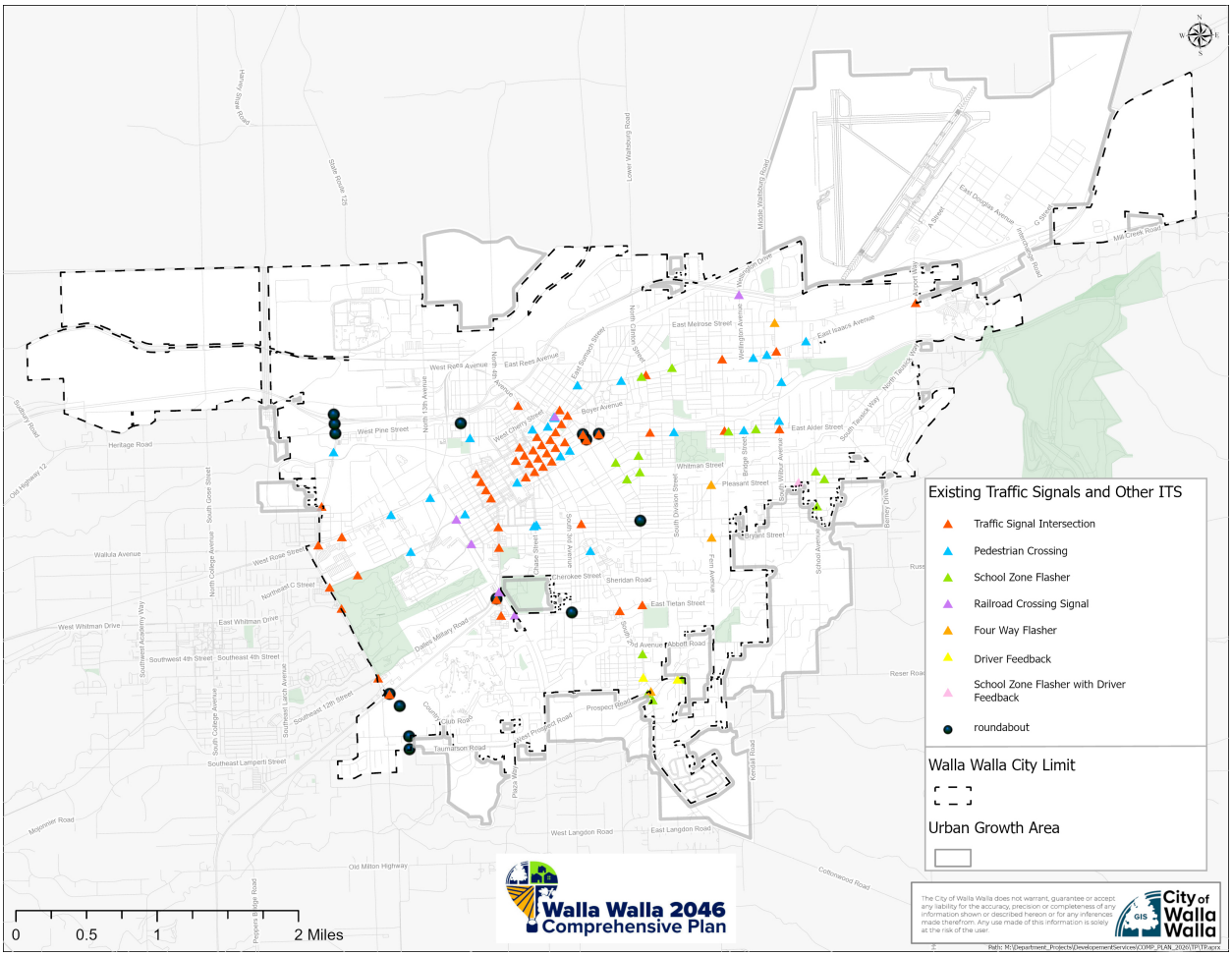


Figure 33. Existing Traffic Signals and Other ITS Systems

Future Conditions

The future transportation system is expected to continue functioning effectively for motor vehicles while accommodating anticipated growth through the 2046 planning horizon. However, meeting the City's long-term vision will require targeted improvements to address multimodal connectivity, accessibility, safety, and system resilience.

Motor Vehicle Operations

An assessment of the City of Walla Walla's future transportation system gaps and deficiencies was completed for all modes of travel to help the City identify projects and strategies needed to support anticipated growth through 2046. The vehicular system is generally expected to continue operating acceptably at most study intersections, with only limited future operational deficiencies identified. Specifically, one of the 25 study intersections evaluated, Bryant Avenue/Howard Street, is projected to exceed the City's operating standard in the 2046 baseline condition.

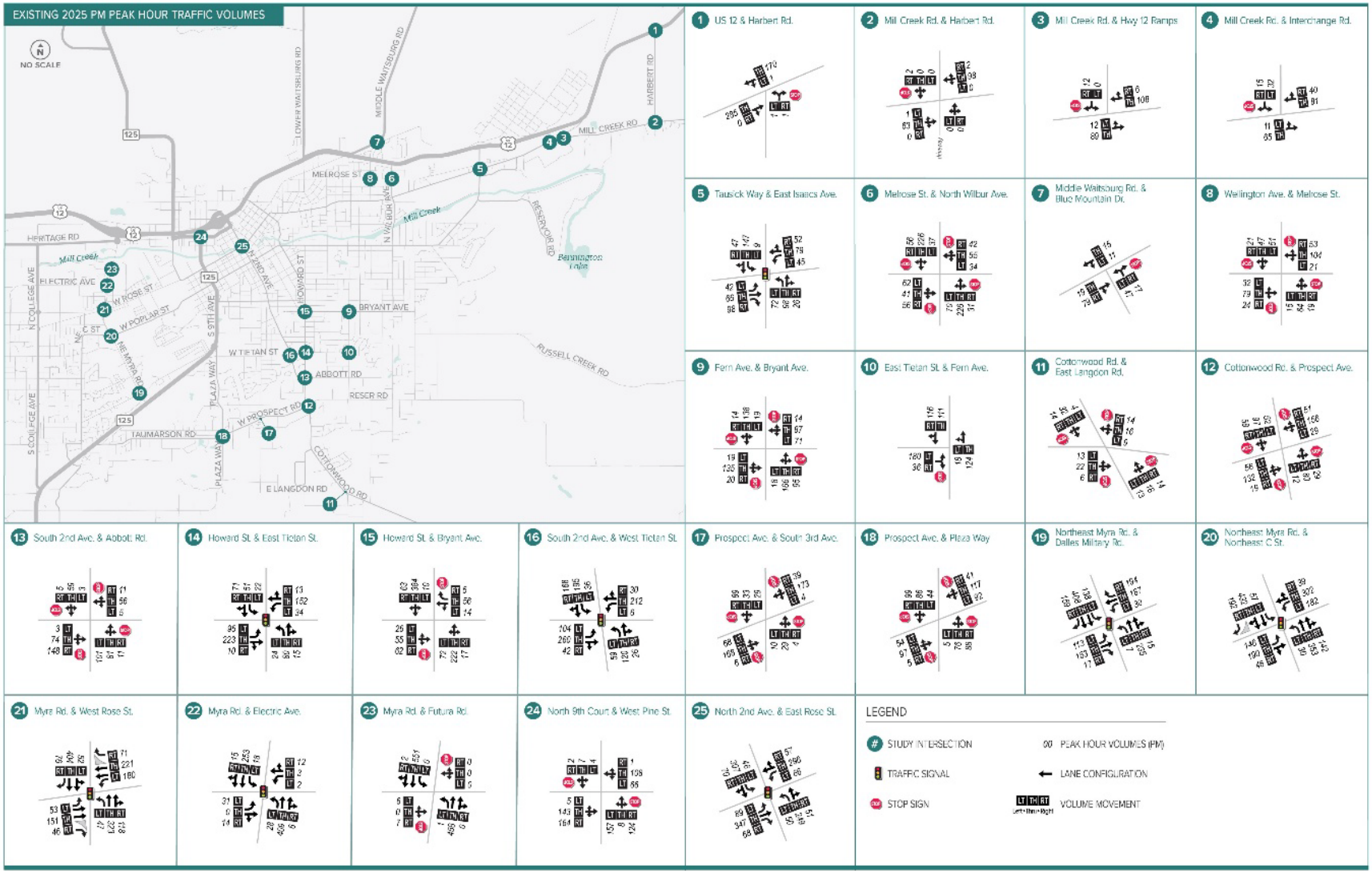


Figure 34. Existing Study Intersection Operations/Conditions. (Existing 2025 PM Peak Hour Traffic Volumes)

Bicycle and Pedestrian Gaps and Deficiencies

The City has made substantial improvements since the last comprehensive plan update, particularly on Isaacs Avenue, Park Street, Rose Street, Chestnut Street, and sections of Poplar Street, among others. Nonetheless, the bicycle network remains fragmented in places, sidewalk coverage is incomplete in selected areas, and additional connections will be needed to serve growth areas and maintain system resiliency. Key bicycle needs through 2046 include improving continuity, expanding facility coverage, and providing more comfortable facilities for a wider range of users. Identified corridors for improvement include Melrose Street, Poplar Street, Pleasant Street, Division Street, School Avenue, 3rd Avenue, and other corridors that can support citywide travel and access to major destinations.

Pedestrian needs include continued sidewalk infill, ADA improvements, improved crossings, and better access to transit, schools, parks, and commercial destinations. These needs are central to achieving the City's safety, connectivity, and quality of life goals.

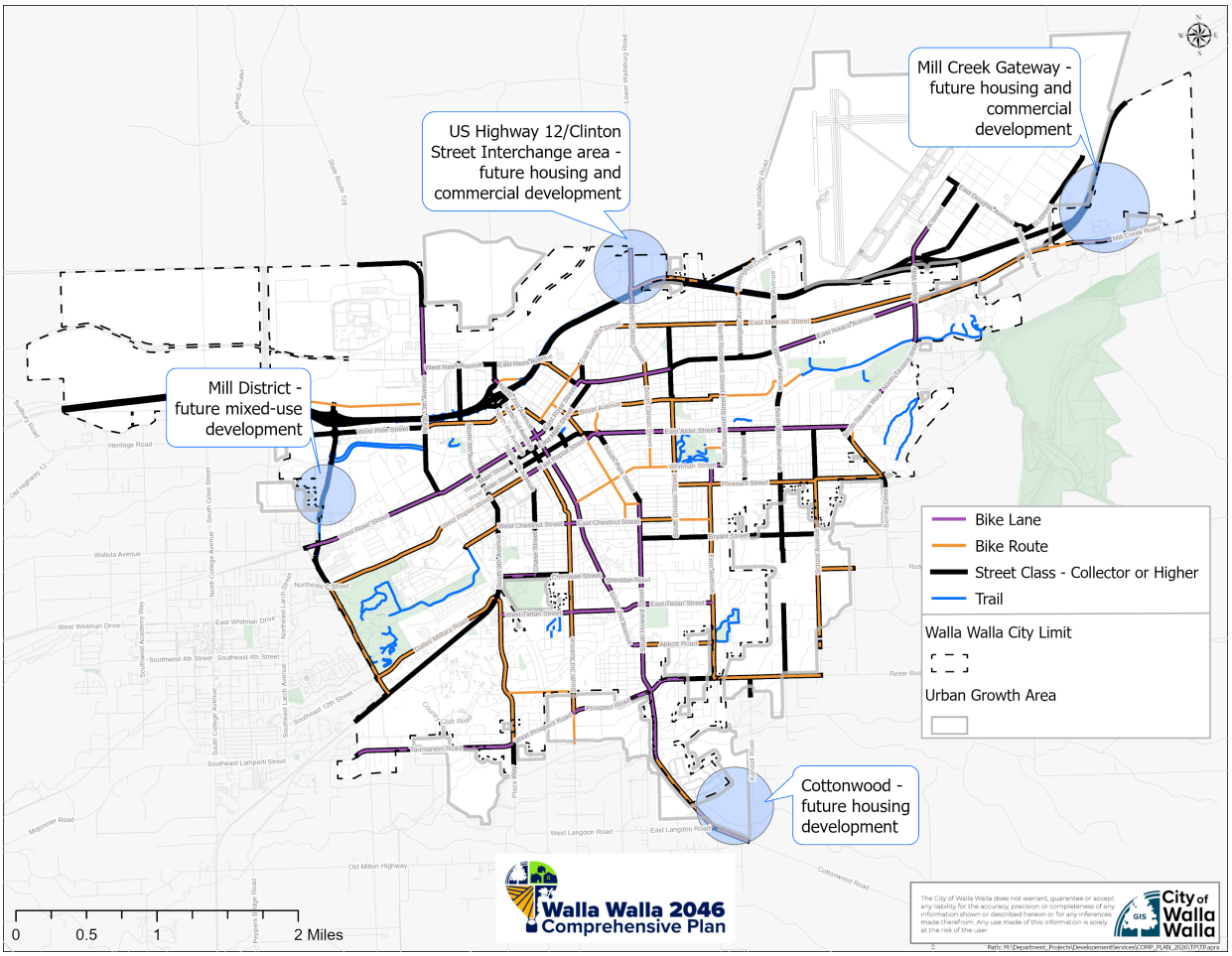


Figure 35. Bicycle Facility Improvement Opportunities

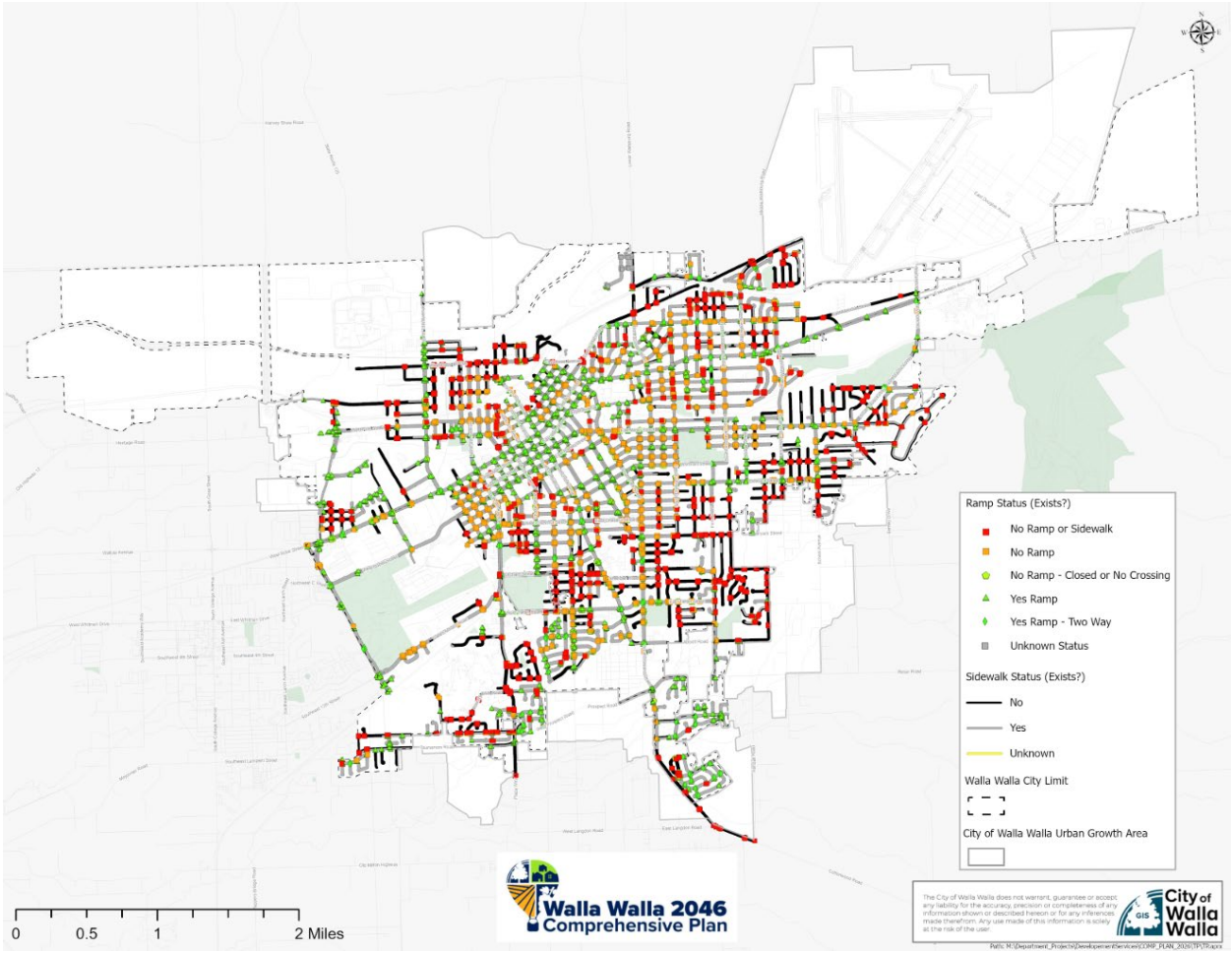


Figure 36. Pedestrian/ADA Priority Areas

Transit Gaps and Deficiencies

Transit service remains an important part of the City's multimodal system. While fixed-route coverage serves much of the developed area, long-term transit effectiveness will depend on continued coordination with Valley Transit. Improving access to transit stops, implementing supportive land use regulations, and utilizing appropriate street design will support pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit.

Freight Gaps and Deficiencies

The transportation system must continue to support efficient movement of goods while balancing safety and multimodal access. Freight-related needs include maintaining reliable freight access to industrial and commercial areas, coordinating with regional routes, and reducing conflicts where freight traffic travels through areas with higher multimodal activity. Existing and future planning work has also identified the importance of maintaining reliable connections to Highway 12 and SR 125/S 9th Avenue.

Freight traffic is currently routed through downtown along S 9th Avenue and Pine Street, creating congestion and inefficiencies. In addition, a 14-foot height restriction at the Pine Street railroad undercrossing limits freight movement, preventing taller vehicles from using this route. Rerouting freight to SE Myra Road would improve travel conditions, particularly if paired with signal coordination and timing enhancements. In the long term, SE Myra Road could also serve as a new alignment for SR 125.

Transportation Improvements

The recommended transportation improvements respond to the needs and deficiencies identified through the Transportation Element update process. The City's recommended projects are organized into eight categories:

- Multimodal projects
- Intersection improvements
- Safety projects
- Future studies
- Freight projects
- New roadways
- Bridge improvements



The proposed solutions represent a comprehensive, multimodal program of improvements designed to address identified transportation needs and deficiencies while supporting anticipated growth through the 2046 planning horizon. Collectively, these projects reflect a balanced approach that emphasizes connectivity, safety, accessibility, and system performance.

A total of 96 projects were identified and organized into eight categories that correspond directly to the project list structure. The full project list is available in Appendix XII. 20-Year Funding Forecast. Table 24 summarizes the number of projects in each category, followed by a discussion of the purpose and role of each project type.

Table 24. Summary of Proposed Projects by Category

Category	Number of Projects
Multimodal (MM)	53
Intersection (INT)	25
Bridge Improvement (BR)	9
New Roadway (NR)	3
Future Study (FS)	3
Safety (SA)	2
Freight (F)	1

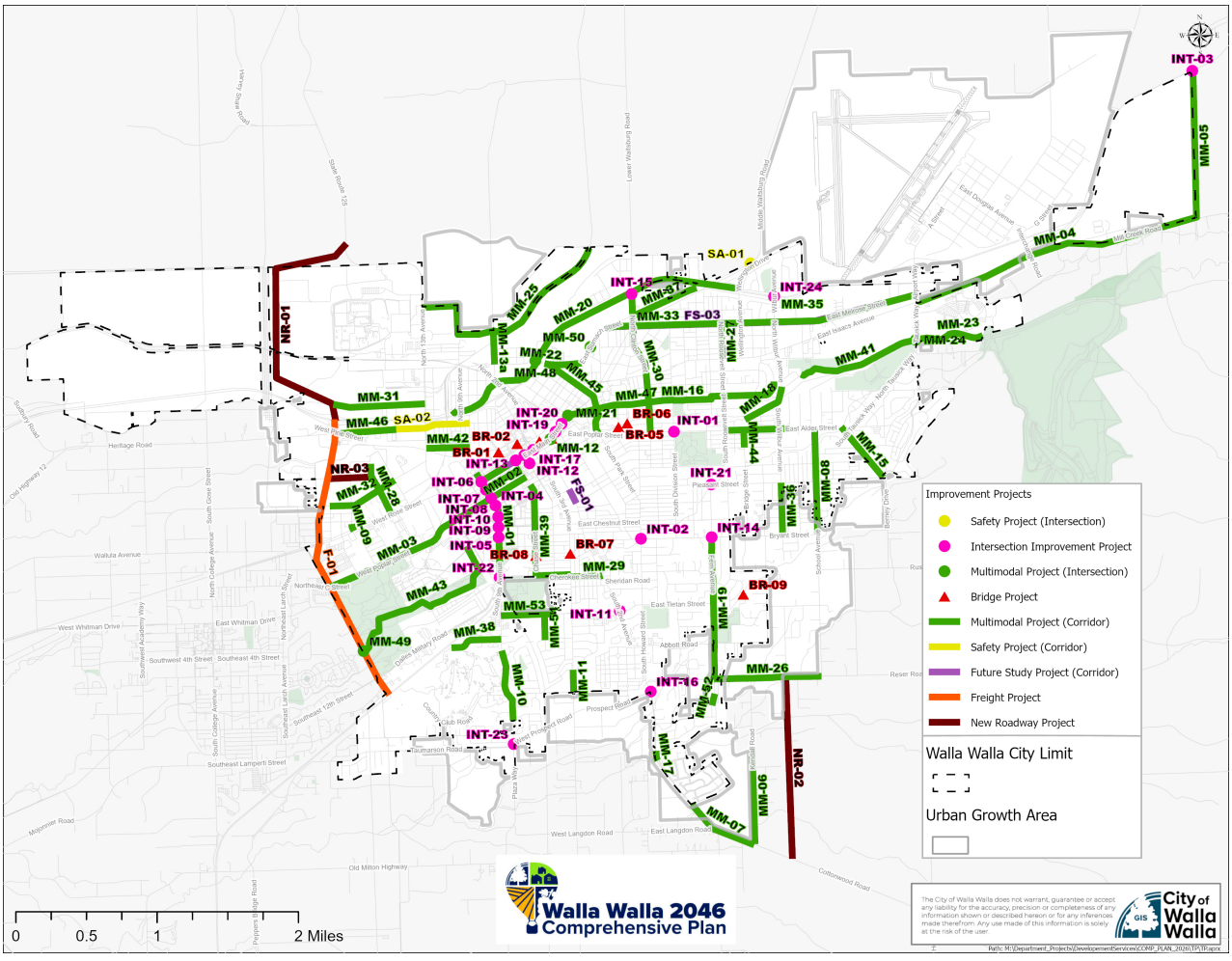


Figure 37. Transportation Improvement Projects



Multimodal Projects

Multimodal projects represent the largest share of the proposed solutions, with 53 projects focused on improving conditions for all modes of transportation but mostly focused on active transportation and the connection to transit. This emphasis reflects the City's policy direction to support a balanced transportation system and the identified need to improve network connectivity and accessibility.

These projects primarily address gaps and discontinuities in the existing system. While the City of Walla Walla has an established network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, portions of the network remain incomplete, requiring users to travel in mixed traffic or navigate areas without adequate infrastructure. In addition, sidewalk coverage is not uniform across the city, with some areas lacking continuous or ADA-compliant facilities. The City continues to address sidewalk gaps through annual capital projects, development frontage improvements, and grant-funded projects. As new development occurs, frontage improvements required through development review will expand the sidewalk network, improving pedestrian and ADA connectivity.

Typical improvements in this category include:

- Bicycle facility expansion and corridor completion.
- Sidewalk infill and ADA upgrades.
- Enhanced pedestrian crossings.
- Connections to schools, parks, downtown, and employment areas.

Together, these projects are intended to create a more continuous, comfortable, and accessible network that supports users of all ages and abilities.

Intersection Projects

A total of 25 intersection projects are proposed to address localized operational and safety needs at key nodes in the transportation system. Although the most intersections are expected to operate within acceptable standards, targeted improvements are necessary to maintain performance and accommodate future traffic growth.

These projects focus on improving intersection efficiency, reducing delays, and enhancing safety for all users. In many cases, intersection improvements also provide opportunities to incorporate multimodal elements, such as improved crossings or signal timing adjustments that benefit pedestrians and bicyclists.

Common types of improvements include:

- Intersection control modifications (e.g., roundabouts or traffic signal updates).
- Turn lane additions or geometric improvements.
- Pedestrian and bicycle crossing enhancements.

These projects help ensure that intersections continue to function effectively as critical points of interaction within the network.





Bridge Improvement Projects

Bridge improvements represent a significant component of the project list, with nine projects focused on maintaining and upgrading critical infrastructure. Bridges play a key role in maintaining connectivity across physical barriers such as Mill Creek and are essential to the overall functionality of the transportation network.

Existing conditions have found that several bridges have been identified as priorities for replacement or rehabilitation based on condition and performance. Addressing these needs is critical to ensuring long-term system reliability and safety.

In addition to structural improvements, many bridge projects also incorporate multimodal enhancements to improve access for pedestrians and bicyclists.

New Roadway Projects

A total of three new roadway projects are included to expand the street network and improve connectivity, particularly in areas of anticipated growth. These projects are essential for supporting long-term development and reducing pressure on existing corridors.

New roadway projects generally include:

- Street extensions to complete the planned network or provide future connectivity within the Urban Growth Area.
- New connections to improve east-west and north-south travel.

By providing additional routes, these projects improve overall network redundancy, support emergency response, and create a more connected and resilient transportation system.

Future Study Projects

A total of three future study projects are included to address locations or issues that require additional analysis before specific improvements can be defined. These projects recognize that certain transportation challenges are complex and may require further coordination, data collection, or feasibility assessment before recommending an infrastructure improvement.

Future study projects allow the City to:

- Evaluate corridor-level improvements in more detail.
- Assess long-term or emerging transportation needs.
- Coordinate with partner agencies on shared facilities.
- Seek public input to help identify preferred solutions.

By identifying needs early, the City can position itself to respond proactively as conditions evolve.

Safety Projects

The project list includes two safety projects, which are derived directly from the City's adopted Transportation Safety Action Plan. These projects reflect a data-driven approach to addressing locations with elevated crash risk and are consistent with the City's Vision Zero and Safe System policies.

Consistent with the project scope, these safety improvements were not re-analyzed or re-prioritized as part of this effort. Instead, they are incorporated to ensure that the Transportation Element remains aligned with the City's broader safety initiatives.

These projects typically focus on targeted interventions at specific locations or corridors to reduce crash frequency and severity and improve overall system safety.

Freight Project

The project list includes two safety projects, which are derived directly from the City's adopted Transportation Safety Action Plan. These projects reflect a data-driven approach to addressing locations with elevated crash risk and are consistent with the City's Vision Zero and Safe System policies.

Funding

Preservation

Although this Comprehensive Plan identifies numerous projects that expand or improve the transportation system, available funding must also support preservation of the City's existing infrastructure. Pavement maintenance, bridge rehabilitation, traffic signals, sidewalks, ADA improvements, and other preservation needs compete for many of the same funding sources used for new transportation projects. As a result, project implementation will continue to balance investments in system expansion with maintaining existing transportation assets in a state of good repair.

State and Federal Grants

State and federal funding programs represent an important source of funding for larger transportation projects. These funds are typically competitive and may be limited to specific project types or eligibility criteria.

Common grant programs may include:

- State transportation funding programs administered through the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT).
- Federal funding programs administered through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or other agencies.
- Regional funding opportunities through the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (WWVMPO).

State and federal grants are often used to fund:

- Major capital improvements.
- Bridge replacement projects.
- Multimodal infrastructure projects.
- Safety improvements.

These funding sources typically require a local match and are not guaranteed, which introduces uncertainty into long-range planning. However, they are essential for advancing higher-cost projects that exceed the City's local funding capacity.

Estimated Future Funding Levels

Future funding levels through to 2045 were estimated through discussion with City of Walla Walla staff and are summarized in Table 25. REET and IRRP were assumed to remain flat over the 20-year period, while a 1% annual escalation was applied to TBD and grant funds.

Table 25. 20-year Transportation Funding Estimates

Revenue Source	Funding Restrictions	Estimated Through 2045
Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)	Must be used on capital projects	$13,000,000
Transportation Benefit District (TBD)	Can only be used towards projects identified on the citizen's TBD priority project list	$44,000,000
Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Program (IRRP)	Must be used on streets determined to have failing water, sewer, and street infrastructure	$20,000,000
State and Federal Grants	Varies	$88,000,000
	Total:	**$165,000,000***

**estimate to the nearest million*

Project Cost Estimation

Planning-level cost estimates were developed for each of the proposed projects. The full list of projects is available in Appendix XII. 20-Year Funding Forecast. Table 26 summarizes the total number and cost of projects by project type.

Table 26. Proposed Projects- Total Cost Estimate

Project Type	Number of Projects	Project Cost Estimates
Multimodal	54	$332.7 million
Bridge	9	$39 million
New Roadway	3	$36 million
Intersection	22	$35.8 million
Safety	2	$3.2 million
Freight	1	$500,000
Future Study	3	$240,000
Total	**94**	**$447,000,000***

**estimate to the nearest million*

Prioritized Project List

The Prioritized (financially constrained) Project List identifies the highest priority projects that are expected to provide the greatest benefit while remaining reasonably achievable within anticipated funding available through the 2045 planning horizon. Projects were evaluated based on their consistency with the Transportation Element goals and policies, transportation needs, implementation considerations, estimated costs, anticipated development contributions, and available funding. The resulting prioritization is intended to guide future capital programming and grant applications and may be updated over time as conditions, funding opportunities, and community priorities evolve.

Full Project List

The full project list serves as planning guidance for future transportation investments and identifies projects that may be pursued as funding opportunities arise. The following information is provided for each project:

Project ID: Each project is given a Project ID number according to the project type (MM-XX for Multimodal, INT-XX for Intersection, and so on)

Project Name: The location of the project

Project Type: The type of project

Evaluation Rating: The evaluation rating given to the project based on how it achieves the City's established Goals and Policies.

Cost Estimate: Planning-level cost estimate to construct or implement the project

Estimated Costs Borne by Development: Total costs estimated to be paid for by private funds as part of development

Development Comment: Notes related to development taking place along project extent

Estimate Costs Borne by City: Estimates costs that can be expected to be borne by the City after development costs are subtracted

In 2026-2031 CFP: Whether the project is included in the 2026-2031 CFP

Sponsoring Agency(ies): The expected primary source of planning and funding for implementation purposes, although such designations do not create any obligation for funding.

Prioritized Project: Whether the project is part of the Prioritized Project list, or is only part of the broader full project list

Estimated Prioritized Project Expenditures: This column totals the prioritized projects; the City has $165,000,000 for prioritized projects through the 2045 plan horizon

Description: A short explanation of the project's scope and relevant information

2027-2032 Capital Facilities Plan Projects

Project List

The Project List identifies the projects that could be constructed with anticipated transportation funding through 2045. Developing this list establishes reasonable expectations for planning purposes but does not commit the City to constructing them, nor does it limit the City to constructing those projects first. The list is derived from the Transportation Element Project List. Note that all 2026-2031 CFP projects were included in the Project List.

Table 27. Project List

Project	Project Name	Project Type	Project Total Estimated Cost	Estimated Cost to City *(Subtracting Estimated Costs Borne By Development)*
MM-35	Clinton Street/Highway 12 Interchange	Multimodal	$75,000,000	$4,000,000
MM-33	Melrose Street	Multimodal	$8,350,000	$7,100,000
MM-32	Electric Avenue	Multimodal	$7,900,000	$0
MM-30	Clinton Street	Multimodal	$8,650,000	$8,045,000
MM-39	Chase Avenue Reconstruction	Multimodal	$5,900,000	$5,900,000
INT-15	Wilbur Avenue/Highway 12 Intersection Improvements	Intersection	$2,500,000	$2,500,000
MM-04	Isaacs Avenue	Multimodal	$51,000,000	$12,750,000
MM-10	Plaza Way	Multimodal	$5,300,000	$5,300,000
MM-34	Orchard Street	Multimodal	$2,500,000	$2,500,000
MM-14	Alder Street - Roosevelt to Brock IRRP	Multimodal	$5,250,000	$5,250,000
INT-22	9th Avenue/Orchard Street	Intersection	$4,250,000	$4,250,000
MM-45	Park Street Bike and Pedestrian Improvements	Multimodal	$2,700,000	$2,700,000
MM-38	Village Way Improvements	Multimodal	$2,150,000	$1,955,000

Project	Project Name	Project Type	Project Total Estimated Cost	Estimated Cost to City *(Subtracting Estimated Costs Borne By Development)*
MM-46	Pine Street Sidewalk Infill	Multimodal	$1,600,000	$1,600,000
MM-53	Tietan Street Sidewalks - 4th to Plaza	Multimodal	$1,800,000	$1,350,000
MM-11	3rd Avenue	Multimodal	$600,000	$100,000
MM-19	Fern Avenue	Multimodal	$4,650,000	$4,650,000
MM-36	Wilbur Avenue	Multimodal	$3,700,000	$3,700,000
INT-06	9th Avenue/Main Street	Intersection	$1,650,000	$1,650,000
MM-09	Offner Road	Multimodal	$400,000	$400,000
MM-17	Cottonwood Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities	Multimodal	$650,000	$325,000
INT-05	9th Avenue/Emma Street	Intersection	$320,000	$320,000
FS-03	Melrose Street Corridor Study	Future Study	$150,000	$150,000
MM-03	Poplar Street	Multimodal	$26,600,000	$26,600,000
MM-02	Poplar Street	Multimodal	$15,000,000	$15,000,000
INT-08	9th Avenue/Poplar Street	Intersection	$2,800,000	$2,800,000
INT-09	9th Avenue/Chestnut Street	Intersection	$1,700,000	$1,700,000
INT-07	9th Avenue/Alder Street	Intersection	$1,650,000	$1,650,000
MM-44	Bridge Street Sidewalk Replacement	Multimodal	$1,050,000	$1,050,000
INT-19	Main Street/Colville Street	Intersection	$1,000,000	$1,000,000
INT-20	Main Street/Spokane Street	Intersection	$1,000,000	$1,000,000
MM-50	DeSales School Zone Safety Enhancements	Multimodal	$400,000	$400,000

Project	Project Name	Project Type	Project Total Estimated Cost	Estimated Cost to City *(Subtracting Estimated Costs Borne By Development)*
MM-47	Odd Fellows Home Area - Boyer Avenue - Clinton Avenue	Multimodal	$350,000	$350,000
MM-49	Garrison Village Way at Myra Road Intersection Improvements	Multimodal	$750,000	$0
NR-03	Futura Road Extension	New Roadway	$5,000,000	$0
MM-08	School Avenue	Multimodal	$13,100,000	$13,100,000
INT-02	Bryant Avenue/Howard Street	Intersection	$3,200,000	$3,200,000
INT-24	Fern Avenue/Abbott Road	Intersection	$3,200,000	$2,125,000
INT-11	2nd Avenue/Tietan Street	Intersection	$1,000,000	$1,000,000
INT-12	4th Avenue/Alder Street	Intersection	$1,000,000	$1,000,000
INT-13	5th Avenue/Main Street	Intersection	$1,000,000	$1,000,000
INT-17	Main Street/3rd Avenue	Intersection	$1,000,000	$1,000,000
INT-18	Main Street/4th Avenue	Intersection	$1,000,000	$1,000,000
MM-20	Highway 12 Trail	Multimodal	$550,000	$550,000
MM-28	Avery Street	Multimodal	$1,000,000	$0
INT-16	Reser/Howard/Cottonwood/Prospect Intersection	Intersection	$3,850,000	$1,925,000
INT-01	Alder Street/Division Street	Intersection	$1,300,000	$1,300,000
MM-12	1st Avenue/Main Street	Multimodal	$1,650,000	$1,650,000
BR-01	6th Avenue/Mill Creek	Bridge	$7,300,000	$1,460,000
BR-02	4th Avenue at Mill Creek	Bridge	$5,550,000	$1,110,000
BR-07	3rd Avenue/Garrison Creek	Bridge	$3,250,000	$3,250,000

Project	Project Name	Project Type	Project Total Estimated Cost	Estimated Cost to City *(Subtracting Estimated Costs Borne By Development)*
MM-21	Main/Palouse/Boyer	Multimodal	$700,000	$700,000
MM-23	Mill Creek Bike Path Repaving	Multimodal	$200,000	$200,000
MM-05	Harbert Road	Multimodal	$11,900,000	$0
MM-52	Fern Avenue Pedestrian Bridge	Multimodal	$750,000	$750,000
FS-02	Main Street	Future Study	$50,000	$50,000
MM-40	Alder and Main Re-striping	Multimodal	$200,000	$200,000
	Total (To nearest million $)		**$317,000,000**	**$165,000,000**



Transportation Standards Summary

This section documents the City's functional classification system, designated freight routes, and intersection operation standards. Additional transportation-related standards, including desired cross-sections, minimum access spacing, pedestrian crossing improvements, and lighting requirements, are provided in the City of Walla Walla Transportation Impact Analysis Guidelines and municipal code.

Functional Classification

A street functional classification system is an important tool for managing the transportation system. It establishes a hierarchy of roads based on the balance between mobility and access, helps guide roadway design, supports access management, and provides a framework for identifying future transportation improvements.

The City of Walla Walla's street network is organized into four functional classifications:

- Major Arterials connect major activity centers and the interstate system. They typically include four or more travel lanes, bicycle lanes, and limited access, with a preference for connections to minor arterials.
- Minor Arterials provide direct connections across the city and generally avoid penetrating identifiable neighborhoods. They typically include two to three travel lanes, bicycle lanes, and access to larger developed areas and neighborhoods.

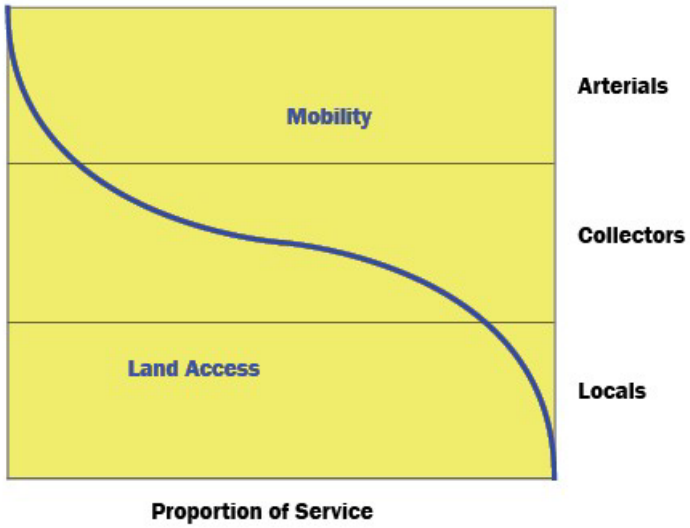


Figure 38. Functional Class Hierarchy

- Collectors support circulation within residential, commercial, and industrial areas, channeling traffic from neighborhoods to the arterial network. They generally include two to three travel lanes, bicycle lanes, optional on-street parking, and some access restrictions.
- Local Streets serve residential, commercial, and industrial areas while discouraging through traffic. They allow on-street parking and provide access to every parcel for all modes.

Functional classification provides a framework for managing the City's transportation system and supports related standards discussed in the following sections, including connectivity, spacing, freight routes, cross-sections, and access management.

Freight Routes

The City of Walla Walla's freight routes connect industrial and commercial areas with the regional and statewide transportation network. Maintaining and improving these routes remains important for economic vitality, while also recognizing the need to protect neighborhoods and enhance safety for people walking and bicycling along or across freight corridors. The updated freight route map, Figure 39, and related discussion reflect current City and regional freight planning and the updated project list.

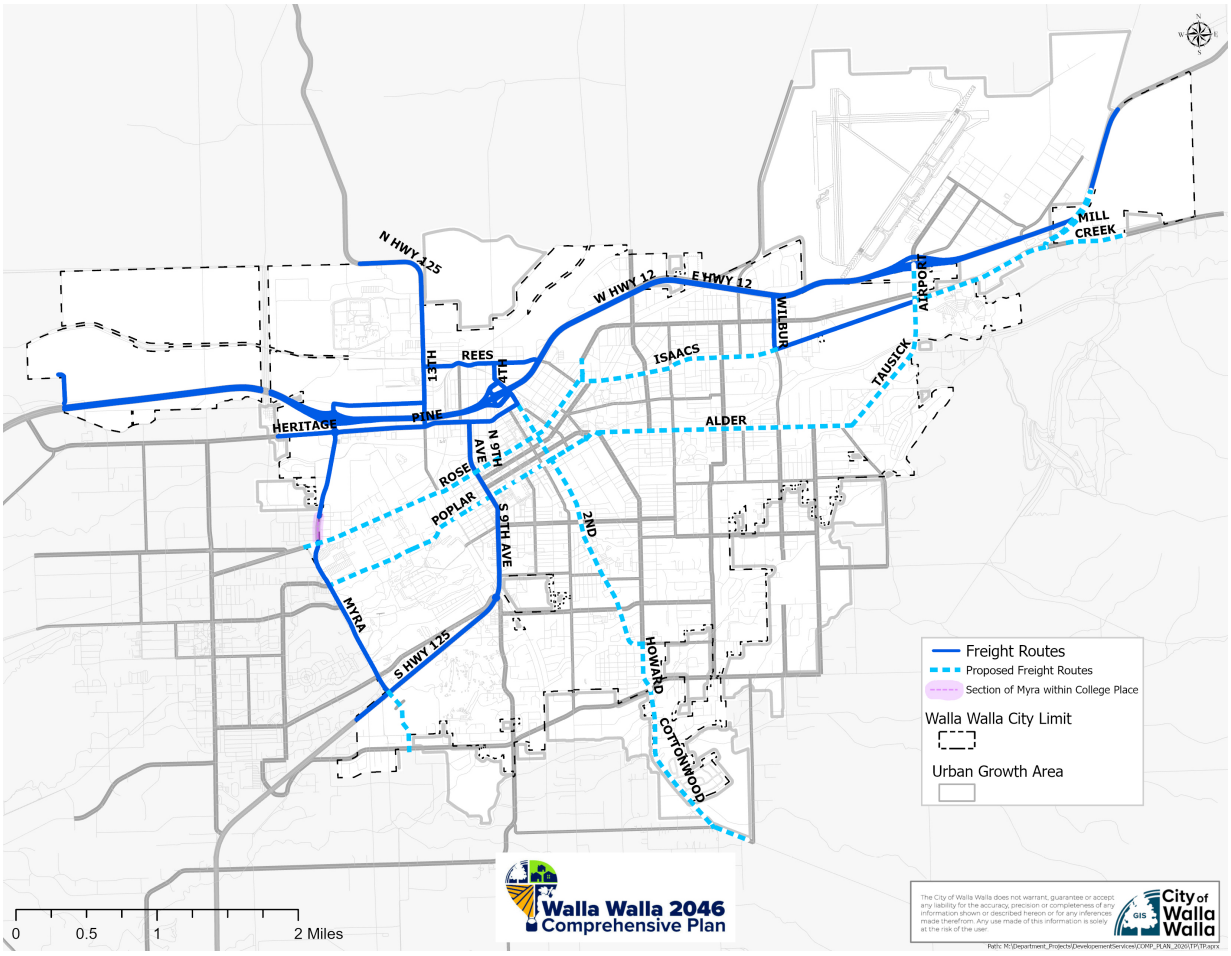


Figure 39. Updated Freight Route Map.

Intersection Operations

Intersection operational standards for long-range planning and development review are established in the City's Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) Guidelines. These guidelines use Level of Service (LOS) as the primary performance measure, based on Highway Capacity Manual calculations of delay, with thresholds that differ for signalized and unsignalized intersections.

In addition to LOS, the City applies a volume-to-capacity (v/c) standard to provide additional context in cases where LOS alone may not fully reflect operating conditions, such as at all-way stop intersections where a single approach may exceed capacity even if overall delay meets the standard.

The recommended standards are shown in Table 28. The City requires a higher level of service for streets where capacity is greater in quantity and/or importance, such as major arterials and freight routes.

Table 28. City of Walla Walla Operational Standards

Facility	Minimum LOS	Maximum v/c
Myra Road, Poplar Street, Rose Street, 2nd Avenue (excluding CBD), Isaacs Avenue, Tietan Street, Alder Street, Tausick Way, and Mill Creek Road	D	0.90
All other Facilities	E	0.95

Additional Transportation Standards

Additional transportation-related standards are addressed through other City documents and regulations, including:

- Street design standards
- Street lighting standards
- Access spacing standards
- Traffic Impact Analysis standards
- ADA implementation requirements
- Development frontage and multimodal improvement requirements

These standards work together with the Transportation Element to ensure that transportation facilities are improved in a way that is consistent with City policy and supportive of long-term system performance.

Multimodal Level of Service (MMLOS)

Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(6), the City shall evaluate transportation system performance using Multimodal Level of Service (MMLOS) standards that consider the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, freight movement, and motor vehicle travel.

The City recognizes that transportation system performance should be measured by the ability of people to safely and efficiently access destinations using a variety of travel modes, rather than solely by vehicle delay. MMLOS standards shall serve as a gauge to evaluate transportation system performance and progress toward community goals related to safety, accessibility, mobility, environmental justice, and transportation choice.

For active transportation facilities, the City's preferred framework for evaluating bicycle and pedestrian comfort and connectivity is Level of Traffic Stress (LTS). LTS ratings range from 1 (lowest stress) to 4 (highest stress). The current WSDOT guidance is LTS 2 or better on designated bicycle and pedestrian corridors, providing facilities that are comfortable for most users, including youth, older adults, and less experienced bicyclists.

The City shall continue coordinating with the Walla Walla Valley MPO, WSDOT, Valley Transit, and other transportation partners to develop and refine MMLOS performance measures for locally owned arterials, transit services, active transportation facilities, freight routes, and state facilities. As statewide MMLOS guidance evolves, the City may update its MMLOS standards and performance measures to maintain consistency with state requirements and best practices.



Goals and Policies

T Goal 1: Walla Walla provides a safe and secure transportation system for residents.

- T 1.1: Improve safety for walking, biking, transit, motor vehicles, and freight at high collision locations identified through data-driven safety analysis.
- T 1.2: Enhance existing and promote new crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists where appropriate.
- T 1.3: Provide facilities for all modes of transportation.
- T 1.4: Look for opportunities to increase separation between pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of roadway improvements when deemed appropriate by the City Engineer.
- T 1.5: Seek opportunities to improve safety for all road users.

T Goal 2: The transportation system supports the movement of goods and services to boost and support the economy.

- T 2.1: Support safe, coordinated, and efficient truck-freight corridors that maintain connections between land uses that generate or receive significant freight trips and the state's strategic freight corridors.
- T 2.2: Seek stable and diverse revenue sources to meet the need for transportation investments in the City.
- T 2.3: Identify transportation improvements that will support and enhance access to and from major employment areas, the Walla Walla Regional Airport, and local tourism destinations.
- T 2.4: Identify transportation improvements needed to support future development in Urban Growth Areas.

T Goal 3: The transportation system is designed and maintained to provide the predictable and reliable movement of all goods, services, and people.

- T 3.1: Implement new or improved transportation connections to enhance efficiency and reliability.
- T 3.2: Develop new and preserve existing arterial and collector corridors to provide alternative routes to US 12 and SR 125 for local traffic.
- T 3.3: Improve travel reliability, safety, and efficiency with system management solutions (e.g., coordinated traffic signal timing).

- T 3.4: Manage roadway access to support mobility and safety. To meet adopted access spacing standards, or where necessary to alleviate safety or traffic operations concerns, require consolidated and joint access as part of development.
- T 3.5: Apply transportation system management and demand management strategies, such as traffic signal coordination, ride sharing, parking management, and travel options programs to reduce dependance on motor vehicles.

T Goal 4: Walla Walla's transportation system connects neighborhoods, parks, schools, employment centers, and retail areas for all users.

- T 4.1: Implement Complete Streets projects where feasible and consider Target Zero/Vision Zero and Context Sensitive Solutions to improve the transportation experience for all modes of transportation.
- T 4.2: Require developments evaluate and provide multi-modal improvements to ensure access and connectivity is provided for all modes of travel.
- T 4.3: Improve multimodal connections to community facilities and amenities (e.g., neighborhoods, parks, schools).
- T 4.4: Coordinate with transit providers on coverage, quality, and frequency of services.
- T 4.5: Integrate multimodal system performance metrics in planning and project prioritization to ensure a connected network for all travel modes.
- T 4.6: For multimodal levels of service, consider frequency, presence, and span of services to evaluate system Level of Service, needs, and deficiencies.
- T 4.7: Work with the Washington State Department of Transportation and other agencies to identify cross-jurisdictional improvements needed to meet multimodal connectivity and safety.

T Goal 5: The City of Walla Walla seeks to maintain, preserve, and extend the life of transportation infrastructure for current and future residents.

- T 5.1: Inventory and prioritize preservation of existing transportation infrastructure (roads, bridges, traffic control devices, lighting, etc.).
- T 5.2: Maintain the existing transportation infrastructure to preserve the intended function and extend the useful life.
- T 5.3: Modify design standards where applicable to build cost effective transportation facilities.
- T 5.4: Require a Traffic Impact Analysis where additional information is needed regarding the transportation impacts of a development proposal on the existing and planned transportation system. Require mitigation as needed to protect and improve transportation facilities in the City.

- T 5.5: When probable funding is insufficient to meet identified needs of the transportation system, consider additional funding sources or reassess land use assumptions or Level of Service (LOS) standards.

T Goal 6: The transportation system is designed to enhance the livability of the City.

- T 6.1: Create a well-connected network of streets, paths, and transit service to provide active transportation options.
- T 6.2: Encourage end-of-trip facilities, such as bicycle parking and changing/showering facilities to support active transportation.
- T 6.3: Support and encourage active transportation such as walking, bicycling, and transit use.
- T 6.4: Require development to provide street frontage improvements consistent with plan and code requirements, either through construction of the project or through deferral or a fee-in-lieu payment, as permitted by adopted code.
- T 6.5: Promote and implement streetscapes that are aesthetically pleasing, safe, and comfortable to residents, visitors, businesses, and property owners.
- T 6.6: Where determined to be needed by the City Engineer, implement neighborhood traffic management using techniques such as curb extensions, median islands, diverters, speed humps, and traffic circles to reduce traffic speeds and enhance safety.
- T 6.7: Identify and remove accessibility barriers in transportation facilities.
- T 6.8: Incorporate Complete Streets principles into design and reconstruction projects to enhance safety and accessibility for all users.

T Goal 7: Transportation facilities and services are planned, funded, and constructed concurrently with development, maintaining adopted multimodal performance.

- T 7.1: Utilize multimodal performance standards for locally owned arterials, transit routes, and active transportation facilities that reflect equitable access.
- T 7.2: As needed, coordinate concurrency analysis methods and standards with WSDOT and other agencies to ensure consistency for state and regional facilities.
- T 7.3: Prioritize safety in developing multimodal transportation alternatives.



Policy Connections

The Transportation Element is closely connected to other parts of the Comprehensive Plan and to related City planning documents. Key connections include:

- **The Land Use Element**, which identifies future growth areas and development patterns that shape transportation demand.
- **The Capital Facilities and Utilities Element**, which helps coordinate transportation improvements with infrastructure investment.
- **The Economic Development Element**, which identifies employment, freight, and access needs.
- **The Safety Action Plan and Local Road Safety Plan**, which guides safety-focused project identification.

This coordination helps ensure that transportation planning supports broader City objectives and that future land use, capital investment, and transportation decision-making remain aligned.

Translating Policy into Action

This section connects the Transportation Element's policy direction to specific implementation tools, plans, and programs. Table 29 shows implementation actions the City uses to move from policy to action through ongoing updates, project programming, development review, and interagency coordination.

Table 29. Transportation Policy Implementation Timeline and Responsibility

Implementation Action	Timeline	Responsibility
6-Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)	Annually Updated	Engineering Division
6-Year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP)	Annually Updated	All City Departments
Development Regulation Guide	1 Year	Community Development



Capital Facilities and Utilities



Introduction

The purpose of this Element is to ensure that the City of Walla Walla has adequate facilities and utilities to serve anticipated growth. Policies in the Capital Facilities and Utilities Element address critical issues such as sustainability, resiliency, urban design, and equitable facility siting.

This Element provides a plan to ensure city facilities and utilities provide acceptable levels of service and a plan for how to fund the maintenance, expansion, and construction of new facilities and utilities. Capital facilities are public assets and infrastructure like roadways, buildings, parks, and utilities such as water and stormwater systems. Capital facilities and utilities included in this plan are operated by the City of Walla Walla, other governmental agencies, (such as the School District) and private providers. City-owned facilities include drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, parks and recreation, fire and emergency medical services (EMS), police, library, and municipal buildings. Non-City-owned facilities are public schools, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications.

This Element includes information about current capital facilities and utilities. It also identifies where to find detailed system plans with inventories, projected future needs, Level of Service standards, and goals and policies.

Today and Tomorrow

This section contains information on Walla Walla's facilities and public services available today, along with anticipated future needs.

Population Projection

Understanding future needs for capital facilities and utilities requires estimating future population growth. Walla Walla is using population forecasted through 2046.

Table 30. Population in the City of Walla Walla by Year

Year	Population
2025	34,580
2030	35,810
2035	37,080
2040	38,392
2046	39,884



City-Owned Services

The City of Walla Walla provides infrastructure for drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, fire and EMS, police, streets, parks and recreation, the library, and municipal services. (Streets are covered under the Transportation Element.)

Many city-owned capital facility systems are governed by a dedicated functional plan, including water, wastewater, and stormwater. These plans contain detailed inventories of existing facilities and infrastructure, as well as descriptions of planned improvements.

On the following page is a summary of major city facilities and their functional plans.

Table 31. City-Owned Services, Facilities, and Functional Plans

Service	Facilities	Functional Plan
Water	Infrastructure for providing drinking water.	Water System Plan (2020); update scheduled for 2028. Water System Plans must meet the requirements of WAC 246-290-100.
Wastewater Treatment	Facilities to treat wastewater.	2015 General Sewer Plan Update and Addendum No. 1 to the 2015 General Sewer Plan Update (2021). An updated Facility Plan will be completed in 2026. General Sewer Plans must meet the requirements of WAC 173-240-050.
Stormwater	Infrastructure to convey and treat stormwater.	Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan (2015).
Solid Waste	Facilities to collect and dispose of residential and other solid waste.	Walla Walla County Comprehensive Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan (2024); Landfill Facility Master Plan (2023). Plan must meet the requirements of RCW 70A.205.045.
Sewer Collection	Infrastructure for conveying sewage	2015 General Sewer Plan Update and Addendum No. 1 to the 2015 General Sewer Plan Update (2021). An updated General Sewer Plan will be completed in 2026. General Sewer Plans must meet the requirements of WAC 173-240-050.
Fire & EMS	Fire stations and emergency service facilities.	N/A
Police	Headquarters building.	N/A
Parks and Recreation	Parks, trails, recreation facilities.	Walla Walla Parks and Recreation
City-Owned Facilities	Capital Facilities and Infrastructure	Capital Facilities Plan that includes level of service standards, concurrency, and capital structures, improvements, and equipment.
Library	Library Building.	Library Expansion and Renovation Master Plan (2024).





Water

The City of Walla Walla operates a Group A community water system, providing service to approximately 35,000 people through 11,800 connections, with 10,222 connections being residential. The City's Mill Creek surface water supply is classified as an unfiltered supply, which originates from the protected Mill Creek Watershed and provides 85 to 90 percent of the City's water.

The City also operates seven municipal wells which are primarily used during summer low-flow periods, high-turbidity-water-quality events affecting Mill Creek, and emergencies. The water right from Mill Creek allows for a diversion of up to 18.1 million Gallons per Day (MGD). The total instantaneous water right from the municipal wells is 26.46 MGD. Even if Mill Creek is temporarily unavailable, the City can meet projected Maximum Day Demand (MDD) through the 20-year planning horizon.

The Mill Creek Water Treatment Plant (WTP) utilizes UV Light for primary disinfection, and chlorination to maintain distribution system residual disinfection. The WTP has a capacity of 24 MGD and produces roughly four billion gallons of water per year.

The City's Comprehensive Water System Plan (WSP) update was prepared by Murray Smith and adopted by the City Council in March 2020. The WSP is a guiding document for future water system improvements and documents key information and recommendations for operational decisions. The WSP updated the framework for the City's water service through 2038 and the capital improvement plan to 2028. The City's water facilities include water storage, water treatment, pump stations, and the distribution system, and are described in the 2020 Water System Plan Update and 2021 Well Master Plan.

There are approximately 180 miles of water mains in the distribution system (excluding the 14.5 miles of raw water pipeline), 88 miles of which are considered at risk of failure due to age, condition, and material type. Forty-three of these miles were eligible for the City's Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Plan (IRRP) when established by the City Council and funded by a six-year utility rate increase in the 2017–2022 Capital Facilities Plan. As of 2025, the IRRP has completed 28 projects, which replaced 14.2 miles of pipe.

The City began the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Plan in the 1990s and received a permit from the Washington State Department of Ecology in 2016 to draw, treat, and store water during times of surplus. This water is used when surface water is unavailable. The City operates two ASR wells, which help to meet water demand by providing a consistent supply of water year-round. The City hopes to expand ASR capabilities further in the future.

Future Needs

The 2020 Water System Plan includes a summary of past water use and projections for future water demand. Future projections were based on population growth estimates and accounted for intertie agreements, water losses, increased demand, and a reduction in demand from the water conservation program.

Population projections in the Water System Plan were based on a 2016 service population of 34,754 with an estimated 1.0 percent compounded population growth rate. The Plan showed water demand would be relatively steady through 2028 because of low population growth and a significant reduction in water system losses resulting from the City's efforts associated with the Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Program (IRRP), water capital projects, and operations.

Table 32. Forecast Water Use (With Conservation) by Millions of Gallons per Day

Service	2028	2038	2068
Population	39,162	43,259	58,306
Average Daily Demand (ADD)	8.6	9.4	12.7
Maximum Daily Demand (MDD)	18.4	18.4	27.2

The Water System Plan Update was based on a slightly higher rate of growth than the Comprehensive Plan, projecting a larger population in 2038 than the Comprehensive Plan projects for 2046 (43,259 compared to 39,884). Thus, the 2038 water demand projections account for a higher population than is currently projected for 2046.

Funding for water projects for the next six years is shown in the 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan. Most of the funding comes from rate revenues, grants, and/or loans. In 2026, the City will review rates to determine if revenues can cover projected infrastructure needs.

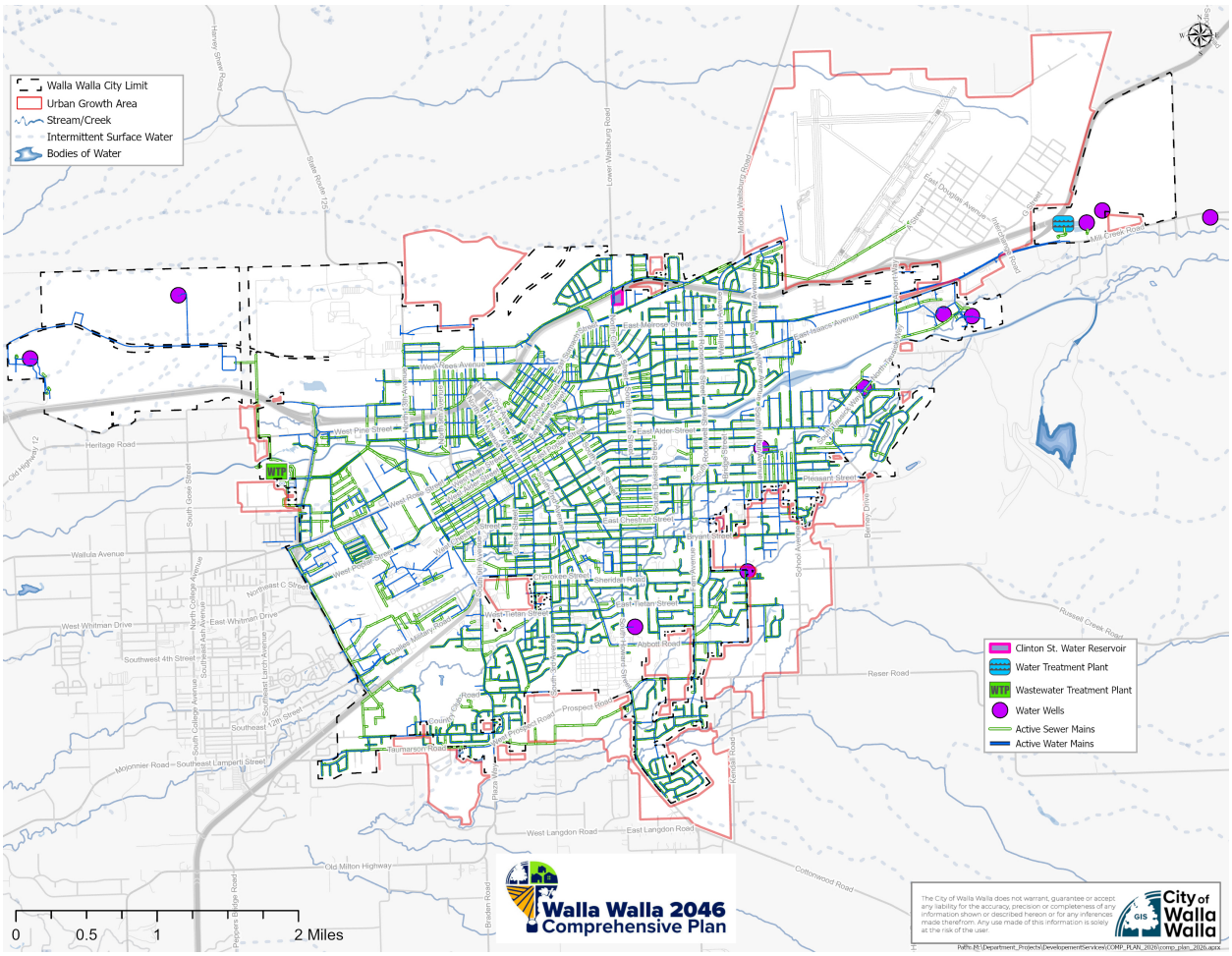


Figure 40. Water Mains, Wells, and Sewers Map

Wastewater

The City adopted a General Sewer Plan Update in 2015 and an amendment in 2021, both prepared by J-U-B Engineers. The City is currently updating the General Sewer Plan and Facility Plan (for the wastewater treatment plant, WWTP), which will be finalized in 2026.

The City of Walla Walla operates an advanced secondary domestic wastewater treatment plant, which provides Class A effluent. The facility is permitted by the Washington State Department of Ecology. A 1927 court-ordered water rights agreement obligates the City to provide reclaimed water to two irrigation districts, Gose and Blalock. Both irrigation districts provide water for food crop production, and therefore, the facility required an upgrade to meet Class A reclaimed water standards.

Sewage generated in the City is collected and transported to the treatment plant via gravity service laterals, collection sewers, five lift stations, including Myra Road, Spring Terrace, Cottonwood, Fairway, and Valley Acres, and force mains. The system contains approximately 146 miles of sewer mains and 3,200 manholes. Funding for wastewater projects is listed in the General Sewer Plan Update and in the 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan.



Future Needs

The City is in the process of updating the General Sewer Plan, and during that update, the consultant has found that the Wastewater Treatment Plant has adequate capacity for the 20-year planning horizon, but there is a need for renewal and replacement of equipment that is nearing the end of its useful life.

Planning for both near-term and long-term replacement needs of the wastewater system is ongoing for both the capacity and replacement needs of the wastewater system. The 2026–2031 Capital Facilities Plan shows capital projects for Wastewater Utility over the next six years. Much of the funding comes from the wastewater fund, but some money comes from loans. In 2026, the City will review rates to determine if revenues are able to cover projected infrastructure needs.

Stormwater

Stormwater infrastructure includes storm drains, inlets, pipes, swales, ponds, and other structures to collect, move, treat, and dispose of rainfall and snowmelt. The City designs and maintains its stormwater facilities to prevent flooding and to protect water quality. A Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan was prepared for the City by URS in 2015.

The City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) serves a population of approximately 34,000 people within approximately 13.2 square miles (650 impervious acres).

The system consists of approximately 800 manholes, 2,400 catch basins, 400 drywells, 50 stormwater management facilities, 50 miles of storm pipe, 36 miles of open conveyance channels, 200 outfalls, and 300 culverts.

At this time, the City has no plans to construct additional stormwater facilities. Stormwater management for new development is handled on a site-by-site basis. New regulations require on-site stormwater management whenever feasible. The Stormwater Management Plan addresses service standards for future development.

The 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan identifies capital projects funded through rates and/or grants.

Solid Waste

The City has adopted the Walla Walla County Comprehensive Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan, which guides long-term solid waste management in the region through 2029. The City has also adopted (by reference) the 2023 Sudbury Road Landfill Facility Master Plan, which guides the capital facilities planning for solid waste handling for the next 20 years.

Refuse from Walla Walla County is primarily disposed of at the City-owned Sudbury Road Landfill, with a smaller amount (22% in 2021) at the Finley Buttes Landfill in Oregon. In 2025, Sudbury Landfill received approximately 64,000 tons of waste. The Sudbury Landfill facilities include a household hazardous waste facility, composting facility, and municipal solid waste handling operations.

Future Needs

The Solid Waste Management Plan projects waste generation for the period 2020-2043, based on Washington State Office of Financial Management population projections, past per capita disposal and recycling amounts, and estimated diversion rates. The Solid Waste Management Plan projects approximately 55,500 tons of disposed waste per year with increased recycling and organics diversion in the year 2043.

According to an evaluation in 2018, the landfill has potential capacity to last at least another 240 years. Capital projects for the Solid Waste utility for the next six years are shown in the 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan. Landfill funds are the primary source of funding, with some grants and loans.



Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The Walla Walla Fire Department (WWFD) endeavors to minimize the loss of life and property, pain and suffering endured by the residents of the City of Walla Walla, and the surrounding areas because of accidents or natural disasters.

The Department operates two fire stations with a full-time staff of 56 employees, including 45-line firefighters, many of whom are cross-trained as firefighters and paramedics.

The WWFD provides comprehensive all-hazards emergency services, including fire suppression, advanced and basic life support emergency medical services, fire prevention and public education, training, and specialized technical rescue capabilities. These technical response specialties include hazardous materials response, high-angle rope rescue, confined space rescue, and swift water rescue. WWFD delivers these services throughout the City of Walla Walla and supports surrounding jurisdictions through established mutual aid and interlocal agreements. The department provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) services to the City of College Place and to multiple Walla Walla County fire agencies, including Fire District 2, North County Fire, Fire District 8, and Fire District 6. Collectively, WWFD's service and response areas encompass approximately 1,200 square miles

When utilizing the county population of approximately 62,068 residents, the Walla Walla Fire Department operates at .72 responders per 1,000 population. Utilizing the City of Walla Walla's 2025 population of 34,580, the Department operates at 1.36 responders per 1,000 population.

CARES Program

A division of the Walla Walla Fire Department, the CARES team, provides community outreach and assistance to residents to improve population health and advance injury and illness prevention within our community. Our program identifies members of the community who use the 911 system or emergency department for low acuity assistance calls (calls that are nonemergency or nonurgent) and connects them to their primary care providers, other health care professionals, low-cost medication programs, and other social services.

We aim to reduce hospital readmissions and emergency room visits by navigating resources for chronic health and social needs. We provide nonemergency contact information to provide an alternative resource to the 911 system.

The City of Walla Walla has two fire stations: Fire Station No.1 is located at 200 S. 12th Ave., and Fire Station No.2 is located at 170 N. Wilbur St. The Department also has a drill and training facility at 300 Cayuse St. WWFD operates several pieces of specialized equipment, including engines, a ladder truck, and ambulances. A full list of WWFD facilities is included in the 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan.

Future Needs

Today, WWFD can respond to 90 percent of all reported fire and EMS emergencies in the city limits, within 5 minutes and 20 seconds. A response capability that meets the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710. While the Department strives to meet NFPA standards and recommendations, it should be noted that this is not a formally adopted level of service by the Department. To maintain our current effective level of service based on forecasted population projections, an additional eight responders would be needed by 2046.

Population growth through annexation of the Urban Growth Area (UGA) south of the city may require new facilities to ensure response capabilities are maintained. The 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan identifies a new fire station in the south end of the city. Future road connections, such as the Myra Road extension or Wilbur Avenue connection, could also improve response times to the south.

The 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan identifies a number of repair, rehabilitation, and maintenance projects for fire and EMS facilities, in addition to the new fire station. These will be funded through the General Fund and through bonds.



Police

The Walla Walla Police Department (WWPD) maintains the quality of life in the community by providing a safe environment for residents through responding to calls for service, community policing, and other community-based efforts.

The WWPD has a Headquarters building at 54 East Moore Street, which was built in 2012, and a Police Evidence Storage Building north of the City Service Center. A full list of WWPD facilities is included in the City's 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan. There are currently 47 commissioned officers and 14 civilian employees. Based on the 2024 population of 33,901 for the City of Walla Walla, the department has 1.39 officers per 1,000 people.

Walla Walla Emergency Services Communications (WESCOM) provides emergency services communications in Walla Walla County. WWPD operates an enhanced 911 call center for all law enforcement, fire, and ambulance services in Walla Walla County, except Walla Walla County Fire District 5. WESCOM has 17 employees.



Future Needs

Calls for service to the WWPD fluctuated between 2019 and 2025, ranging from a low of 22,948 in 2023 to a high of 30,349 in 2019. As the population grows, the number of calls will grow. To maintain the current level of service, approximately eight new commissioned officers will be needed by 2046.

The WWPD Headquarters building was designed for 54 officers and 42 civilian staff. This should provide adequate space for future needs until 2046. However, as city limits expand, there may be a need for additional facilities to provide more efficient and timely service. The 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan anticipates the development of a satellite police station in conjunction with a south side Fire Station. This station would not be staffed full-time but would provide a workspace for officers assigned to that area. This is anticipated to be paid for with General Funds and/or bonds. The 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan also includes funding to support WESCOM operations, including maintenance and repair, new equipment, and a new dispatch center. Funding for these facilities is a shared WESCOM expense. The voters in August 2025 passed a two-tenths-of-one-percent sales tax to fund public safety/dispatch. Funding for WESCOM operations and capital expenses will come from this revenue beginning in 2027.



Parks and Recreation

Walla Walla has three categories of city parks: community parks, neighborhood parks, and mini parks. Community parks are the largest category, with a desirable size of 25 acres and a service area radius of two miles. There are four community parks that include a total of 325 acres. Neighborhood parks have a desirable size of 5-10 acres and a service area radius of a half mile. The city has seven of those, and they are a total of 72 acres. Lastly, mini parks are typically 1 acre or less and have a service area radius of under one-quarter mile; there are four total, and they cover an area of 2.2 acres.

The City also owns other park facilities, trails, and recreational facilities. This includes the Senior Center, a 15,000 square foot space at 720 Sprague Ave. serving primarily seniors but also providing programming for all ages, including a pottery studio. Other recreational facilities include an 18-hole golf course and a seasonal swimming pool.

An inventory of current park and recreation facilities and planned projects is included in the 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan. Funding for the projects over the next six years comes primarily from the General Fund, although other sources of funding include donations, loans, bonds, grants, and local funds. In June 2018, the City of Walla Walla published a comprehensive park and recreation plan, which goes into further detail on the future of parks and recreation in Walla Walla.

Future Needs

With approximately 600 acres of parkland for 34,580 people, the effective level of service for parks is currently 17.3 acres of parks per 1,000 people. The historic standard for the level of service for parks and open space is 10 acres per 1,000 people, but there are multiple accepted methods to calculate this, ranging from 2.1 acres to 9.3 acres per 1,000 people. This means Walla Walla exceeds all standards of service. To maintain this level of service, the projected demand for additional park space in 2046 would be approximately 92 acres.



Municipal Services

Walla Walla's City Hall is located at 15 N. 3rd Ave. and houses several government offices, including the City Manager's office, City Council Chambers, City Attorney's office, Human Resources, Support Services, Technology Services, and Finance. It has 22,170 square feet of general office space and houses 38 full-time employees. The Service Center is located at 55 E. Moore St. on an 8.7-acre site with seven buildings that total about 106,680 square feet. The Service Center is used by 81 full-time employees from Public Works, Fleet Services, and Community Development. The Parks and Recreation Department, with 24 full-time employees, is housed in the Veterans Memorial Golf Course facility, which occupies 16,468 square feet. The Sudbury Regional Landfill, located at 414 Landfill Road, houses 14 employees and consists of multiple structures totaling 10,468 square feet. The Mill Creek Water Treatment Plant, at 581 Mill Creek Road, is used by eight employees and consists of several buildings, totaling 29,764 square feet.

Future Needs

The latest space planning guidelines from the Washington State Department of Financial Management recommend a minimum standard of 79 square feet per resident user or full-time worker, and 40 square feet per person for shared spaces, such as workrooms. The total City office space square footage exceeds the recommended ratio for full-time workers. Remodeling or reprogramming existing spaces would improve efficiency and enhance the quality of the workspace.

The City has planned several upgrades, repairs, and rehabilitation projects for certain municipal facilities over the next six years, as shown in the 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan. Funds will come primarily from the General Fund, supplemented by grants, bonds, and loans.

Public Library

The Walla Walla Public Library provides Walla Walla residents with lifelong learning and community resources. The library is located at 238 East Alder Street and has 18,140 square feet of space. The level of service today is approximately 535 square feet per 1,000 residents. The library served an average of 400 people per day in 2024.

A full library renovation is planned for completion in 2027, which will reprogram the space and add 711 square feet, bringing the total to 18,851 square feet. The plan will address current building deficiencies and create flexibility as library service continues to evolve. After the renovation and addition, the library will have adequate space to serve the projected population to 2046.

Summary of Projected Demand for City-Provided Services

Table 33. Future Needs and Adopted Level of Service by Facility Type

Facility Type	Future Needs and Adopted Level of Service
Water	The City must provide sufficient supply to meet the projected Average Daily Water Demand and Maximum Daily Demand. The Comprehensive Water System Plan estimates that the current capacity of 24 MGD is enough to serve a population of 41,058. This exceeds the growth projection of 39,884 in 2046.
Wastewater	The General Sewer Plan estimates there is adequate capacity within the system until at least 2046.
Stormwater	Future needs are addressed on a site-by-site basis for new development.
Solid Waste	Sufficient capacity to meet disposal needs for 200 years.
Fire and EMS	Approximately eight new responders would be needed by 2046. Additional facilities are already being planned for the south area of the City in the 2026-2031 Capital Facilities Plan.
Police	Approximately eight new officers would be needed by 2046. The current facilities are adequate to meet this increased need.
Parks and Recreation	Approximately 92 acres of new parks would be needed by 2046. Additional details about the type of facilities and locations will be determined through Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.
Public Library	The Library Expansion and Renovation Master Plan includes expansion of the library to 18,851 square feet. This should meet future needs for library service in 2046 and beyond.
Municipal Services	Facilities are adequate but may require remodeling, reprogramming, or upgrades.

Source: City of Walla Walla, 2025



Non-City Owned Services

There are several utilities and capital facilities that are not owned by the City, including schools, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, and other services.

Public schools are operated by Walla Walla Public Schools, while electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications are provided by private companies.

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) oversees privately-owned utilities that offer service to the public in the State of Washington. Electric, gas, and wireline telecommunications companies are among the eight industries regulated by WUTC. Companies under the jurisdiction of the WUTC are required to provide service upon demand. Cellular phone companies and internet service providers are not regulated by the WUTC; cellular service is regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Schools

Walla Walla Public Schools served 5,490 students and employed a total of 782 staff members for the 2024-2025 school year. The student-to-teacher ratio was approximately 15.9:1. In June 2018, Walla Walla Public Schools approved a long-range Capital Facilities Plan, overseen by a Community Facilities Task Force. No updates have been made to the CFP since its adoption.

Electricity

Pacific Power, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, provides electric service to the City of Walla Walla and a majority of its Urban Growth Area. Pacific Power also obtains energy from a hydroelectric generation plant that is owned and operated by the City of Walla Walla. Pacific Power conducts annual studies of substation capacities to ensure that capacity exists to accommodate growth in demand.

Columbia Rural Electric Association distributes power purchased from the Bonneville Power Administration to serve its customers in the City of Walla Walla and Walla Walla UGA.

Natural Gas

Cascade Natural Gas Company is the primary natural gas provider for the City of Walla Walla and Walla Walla UGA. AmeriGas also provides natural gas for the area. Cascade Natural Gas can efficiently serve its approximately 300,000 customers across Washington and Oregon with 385 dedicated employees. The company anticipates being able to accommodate the projected population with existing facilities and pipeline extensions. Offices are located at 324 W. Rose Street in the City of Walla Walla.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications services include phone (landline and cellular), cable television, and internet. A variety of private companies compete for the telecommunication services business within the Walla Walla market. Carriers include AT&T, Ziply Fiber, Columbia iConnect, EarthLink, Verizon, T-Mobile, Spectrum, PocketiNet, CenturyLink, and others. Satellite internet providers include Columbia iConnect, HughesNet, and Viasat. The capital facilities and expansion plans of these businesses tend to be private and are based on market demand and private capital investment. At this time, however, there are no current or expected future gaps in telecommunications service within the Walla Walla city limits or UGA.

State and Regional Facilities

Other community facilities include hospitals and medical facilities, higher education institutions, the Washington State Penitentiary, and the Walla Walla Regional Airport. Long-range planning for these facilities is often done in consultation with the City of Walla Walla. However, these facilities serve state and/or regional needs that go beyond an assessment of local growth.



Figure 41. Aerial of the Walla Walla Regional Airport

Challenges and Opportunities

Aging Infrastructure

Walla Walla is facing failure of three infrastructure systems: water, sewer, and streets. In 2010, the City had 115 miles of failing facilities, and 43 miles where all three systems were failing along the same stretch of road. To address this issue, the City Council established the Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Plan (IRRP) in 2010, funded by a six-year utility rate increase. The program is funded by utility revenues at an annual rate of approximately $5 million per year. Through 2024, the City has replaced 14.2 miles of the 43 miles of failing infrastructure.

Accommodating Future Demand

The City is projecting moderate population growth over the next 20 years, with an increase of 5,034 new people for a total estimated population of 39,884 people expected within the City by 2046. There are two ways to address demand: adding capacity or managing demand. Capacity can be added by increasing the number of facilities or services provided, for example, by increasing the capacity of a water treatment plant or extending or enlarging water mains to increase service. Demand can be managed by reducing consumption or limiting the use of a facility, for example, by programs that improve water conservation. Ultimately, successful demand management may improve levels of service. For example, water conservation could reduce the average daily demand for water despite population growth.

Maintaining Community Character

Capital facilities and utilities create the need for utility boxes, cell towers, substations, and other facilities. Facilities should be located in places necessary to provide adequate service, while minimizing visual aesthetic and other aesthetic on community character. With good locational criteria and design guidelines, utilities and capital facilities can be integrated into the City in a way that supports the community.

Walla Walla's Plan

Access to high-quality utilities and capital facilities, from drinking water to parks to law enforcement, is essential to the health and well-being of Walla Walla residents. The City is committed to maintaining this access as the community grows. We will also ensure that facilities are located to provide safe and equitable access while maintaining community character. We will keep plans, regulations, and facilities up to date to meet advancing technology and evolving community needs. We will accomplish these goals through coordination with other public agencies and private companies, and with a focus on fiscal sustainability.

The following goals and policies guide how the City plans for, provides, and regulates capital facilities and utilities to maintain these values.

Goals and Policies

CFU Goal 1: Walla Walla's capital facilities and utilities are well maintained to meet the current demands of the City and forecasted growth.

- CFU 1.1: Maintain updated plans for the provision of public utility services.
- CFU 1.2: Monitor all public or private water systems; regularly maintain public systems.
- CFU 1.3: Ensure that the City's wireless communication facilities ordinance is updated to account for new technology, so it remains consistent with the community's vision and needs.
- CFU 1.4: Ensure that telecommunications services are provided at a level that enables residents and businesses to compete in the global marketplace while minimizing negative impacts on the aesthetic character of the community.
- CFU 1.5: Decommission public facilities that are no longer needed and where applicable, reallocate land for appropriate uses.
- CFU 1.6: Recognize the Walla Walla Regional Airport as an Essential Public Facility and comply with state and federal regulations that place limitations on land development within the influence area of the airport.

- CFU 1.7: Reassess the Land Use element if the City cannot provide funding to maintain adopted levels of service for public facilities and utilities that it manages.

CFU Goal 2: Capital facilities and utilities are located in such a way as to provide safe and efficient service to all residents.

- CFU 2.1: Provide community facilities and public services that are appropriate for the size and composition of the population.
- CFU 2.2: Plan to provide utility services in areas of the city and where appropriate in the UGA.
- CFU 2.3: Design and distribute public facilities and services, including streets and utilities, to ensure equitable supply and access to all segments of the population.
- CFU 2.4: Locate emergency service facilities to maximize ease of access and minimize response time.
- CFU 2.5: Require underground installation of new utility services and encourage conversion of existing overhead systems to underground systems.
- CFU 2.6: Ensure that facilities and infrastructure are designed and located with consideration of their impacts on community character.

CFU Goal 3: The provision of capital facilities and utilities is coordinated through collaboration with neighboring governments and private providers.

- CFU 3.1: Work with State and regional partners to ensure a safe and sufficient supply of potable water is provided to residents, keeping demand in balance with natural supply and growth.
- CFU 3.2: Cooperate and coordinate with private utility providers to ensure sufficient and uninterrupted service to residents as growth occurs.
- CFU 3.3: Coordinate and collaborate with public agencies to site essential public facilities and to ensure their impacts on adjacent uses at proposed or alternative locations have been anticipated.
- CFU 3.4: Encourage coordination among utility providers as they undertake improvement projects to minimize impacts of utility infrastructure on the community.

CFU Goal 4: The City is committed to waste reduction, recycling, energy efficiency, and the use of renewable energy sources to meet current and future needs.

- CFU 4.1: Support recycling of municipal and household waste as part of the City's commitment to sustainability.
- CFU 4.2: Maintain and operate the City's hydroelectric generating facility as a source for renewable energy and revenue for the City; explore other renewable energy opportunities.

- CFU 4.3: Support energy efficiency by encouraging the use of energy efficient building designs and land use.

CFU Goal 5: The sound fiscal management of government services and facilities promotes a transparent and collaborative relationship between government and residents.

- CFU 5.1: Plan for rehabilitation of the City's utility infrastructure to ensure safe, reliable, and efficient service.
- CFU 5.2: Encourage and pursue, whenever feasible, opportunities to share facilities and costs with different public or private agencies/entities.
- CFU 5.3: Anticipate demand for services to ensure that the City can maintain an appropriate level of service within its financial resources while serving new growth.

Policy Connections

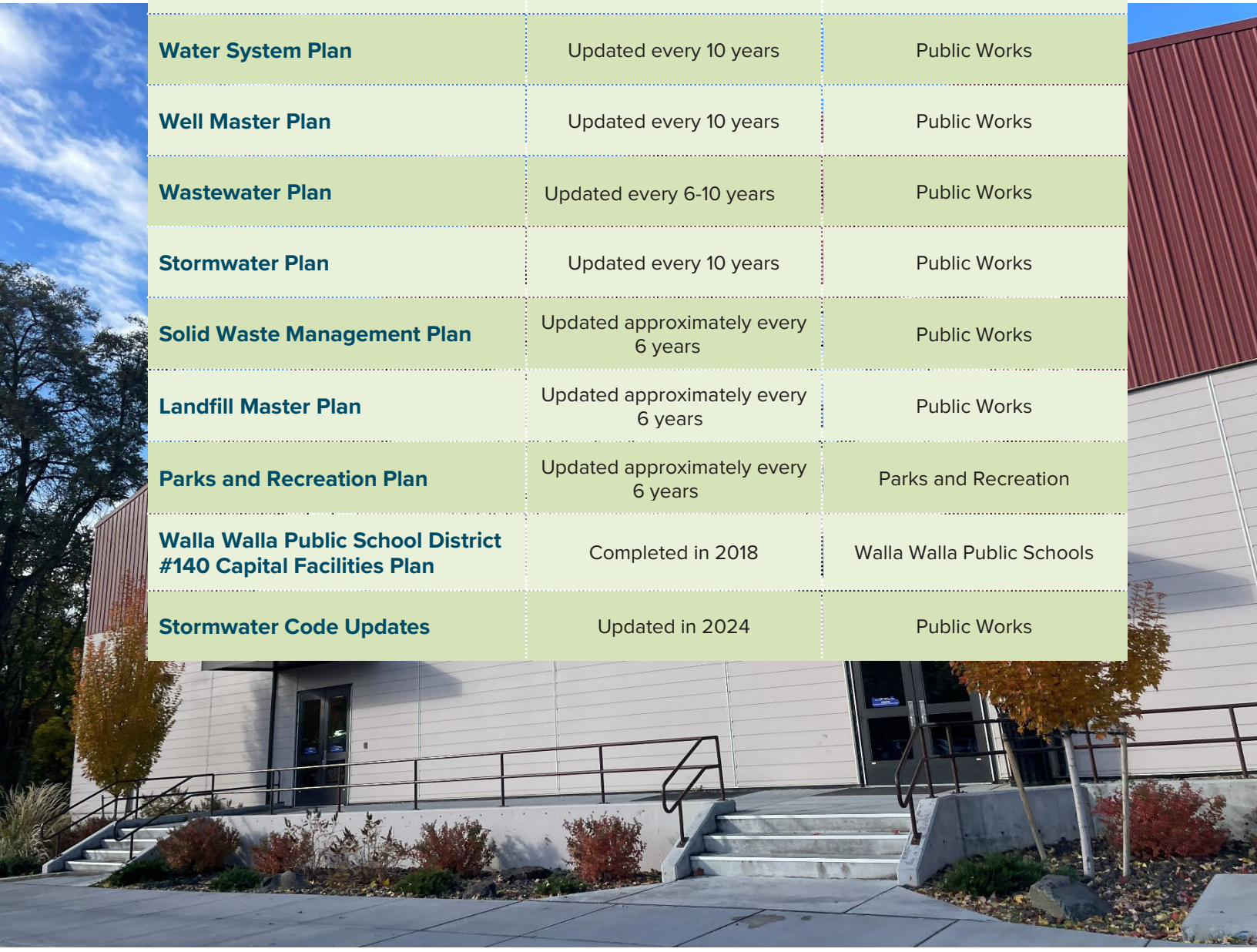
- Capital facilities and utilities must be planned to accommodate future growth, with adequate financing available. **The Land Use Element** includes policies and information about projected growth.
- **The Environment and Natural Resources Element** addresses conservation of natural resources.
- **The Community Character Element** includes policies to preserve community character.

Translating Policy into Action

The Capital Facilities and Utilities Element is implemented by the City through capital investments, day-to-day operations, adjustments to City code, and partnering with other jurisdictions and private providers.

Table 34. Capital Facilities Documents Update Schedule

Document	Update Schedule	Responsibility
Capital Facilities Plan	Updated annually	Finance/Public Works
Water System Plan	Updated every 10 years	Public Works
Well Master Plan	Updated every 10 years	Public Works
Wastewater Plan	Updated every 6-10 years	Public Works
Stormwater Plan	Updated every 10 years	Public Works
Solid Waste Management Plan	Updated approximately every 6 years	Public Works
Landfill Master Plan	Updated approximately every 6 years	Public Works
Parks and Recreation Plan	Updated approximately every 6 years	Parks and Recreation
Walla Walla Public School District #140 Capital Facilities Plan	Completed in 2018	Walla Walla Public Schools
Stormwater Code Updates	Updated in 2024	Public Works





Climate Resilience Element

The City of Walla Walla needs to prepare for the increasing impacts of climate change to protect its people, environment, and infrastructure. As the city expands, it plays a vital role in strengthening resilience to climate hazards, such as extreme heat, drought, wildfire, and flooding. This Climate Resilience Element evaluates current and future climate risks, highlights key vulnerabilities, and sets goals and policies to help Walla Walla adapt and thrive in a changing climate.

Introduction

As part of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan update, the City of Walla Walla is introducing a new Climate Resilience Element focused on advancing community resilience. This addition responds to amendments made by House Bill 1181 to RCW 36.70.70A, part of Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA), which now requires cities and counties to include climate change-related goals and policies in their long-range planning efforts. [14]

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns, primarily driven by human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels for electricity and transportation, or other activities that release heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere (commonly referred to as greenhouse gas emissions). [15] These changes are already impacting the City of Walla Walla through more frequent and intense extreme heat, droughts, flooding, and wildfire smoke. In this context, resilience means the ability of individuals, communities, and ecosystems to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to climate-related hazards, such as the changes the city is already experiencing, while continuing to thrive.

This Climate Resilience Element is designed to meet three core requirements:

1. **Address natural hazards** by planning for risks caused or worsened by climate change, including extreme heat, wildfire and smoke, drought, and flooding.
2. **Identify, protect, and enhance natural areas** by safeguarding and restoring natural spaces to build climate resilience and support healthy ecosystems.
3. **Strengthen community resilience** to climate impacts with a focus on social, economic, and built-environment factors that help communities adapt and advance environmental justice.

Planning for climate hazards is essential to ensure the city remains a safe, healthy, and vibrant place to live, work, and play for all. This Element aims to protect everyone in Walla Walla, and

[14] Washington State Department of Ecology, 2025, Climate Planning Guidance, https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/climate-planning/climate-planning-guidance/
[15] City of Walla Walla, 2025, City of Walla Walla Climate Impacts Summary, https://www.wallawallawa.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/10960/638784138265630000

especially frontline and overburdened communities. Frontline communities refer to those that will be disproportionately impacted by climate change; these are the populations that face historic and current inequities, often experience the earliest and most acute impacts of climate change, and have limited resources or capacity to adapt. Overburdened communities are geographic areas where vulnerable populations experience multiple, compounding environmental harms and health risks. In addition to supporting frontline and overburdened communities, this Element will help reduce long-term costs and lead to additional benefits such as cleaner air and water, improved public health, and economic resilience for all.

The development of this Element has been a collaborative effort involving City staff, the Climate Policy Advisory Team (CPAT), and a variety of community engagement efforts. The City's CPAT team includes community members, City leaders, and City staff, all of whom contributed valuable insights to inform the development of the goals and policies outlined in this Element. The City gathered public input through in-person Comprehensive Plan open houses, a community survey, shared information while tabling events, such as the Return to the River Salmon Festiva and Walla Walla Watershed Strategy (2050 Plan) Open House event, and shared information through flyers and the City's website, communications platform, and social media accounts.

The policies within the Climate Resilience Element are closely related to other chapters in the Comprehensive Plan as they guide land use, infrastructure, emergency preparedness, and natural resource management. Continued collaboration and cross-departmental coordination will be key to achieving the overarching goal of creating a resilient City of Walla Walla, one that is equitable, sustainable, and prepared for future challenges.



Today and Tomorrow

The following sections provide an overview of current climate change impacts and their effects on local sectors. This assessment seeks to establish a foundational awareness to inform the City's Climate Resilience Element.

Climate Hazards and Impacts

Walla Walla is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, and these effects are expected to intensify in the coming decades. Four climate hazards, events, or trends related to climate that can cause damage or disruption to people, infrastructure, ecosystems, and the local economy—pose risks to the City of Walla Walla. These hazards include extreme heat, wildfire and smoke, drought, and extreme precipitation and flooding (Figure 42). Understanding these hazards is vital for building resilience and guiding future planning decisions.

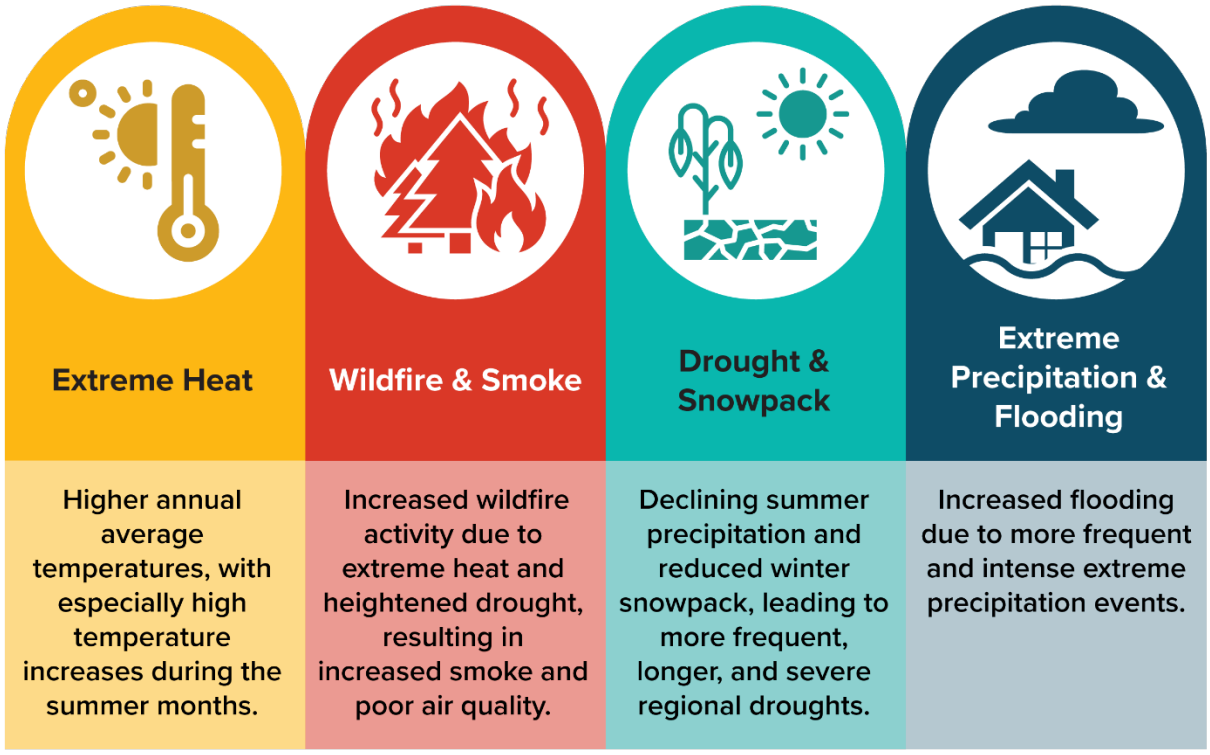


Figure 42. Climate Impacts in Walla Walla

Extreme Heat

Across Washington state, average temperatures have warmed throughout the last century and are expected to warm at a faster rate throughout the next century. In Walla Walla, average annual temperatures have increased by approximately 2.05°F since 1900 (Figure 43). [16] Between 1981 and 2010, there were an average of 17.6 days per year above 95°F in Walla Walla County; however, projections indicate that this is expected to increase to 35.3 days by 2059 and to 42 days by 2099 under a more conservative scenario. [17] Rising temperatures are expected to intensify regional climate impacts, including more frequent and severe drought conditions, increased wildfire risk, and greater exposure to wildfire smoke.

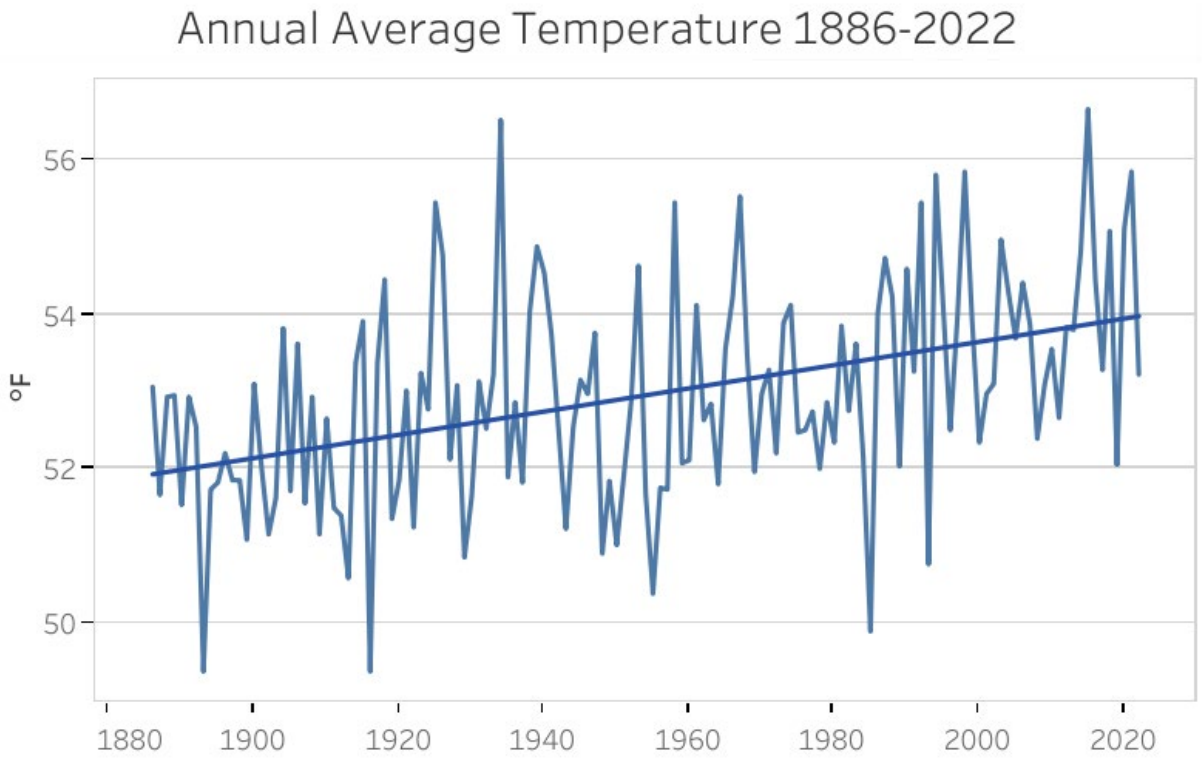


Figure 43. Historical Annual Average Temperatures, City of Walla Walla

[16] Office of the Washington State Climatologist, 2023, PNW Temperature, Precipitation, and SWE Trend Analysis Tool, https://climate.washington.edu/climate-data/trendanalysisapp
[17] Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021, Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan, https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2112011.html

Drought

The city is expected to face more frequent and severe droughts as summer precipitation declines across the region. By the end of mid-century (2050-2079), summer rainfall in Walla Walla County is projected to decrease by approximately 16-35%, and by an additional 10-34% by the end of the century. [18] These projected changes create an increasing wildfire risk, could reduce water availability, and are especially concerning given the City's reliance on the Mill Creek Municipal Watershed, which supplies 90% of its water.

Table 35. Precipitation Drought in Walla Walla County

	2050-2079	2070-2099
Precipitation Drought *(Salathé, E.P. et al., 2010) Accessed via Climate Mapping for a Resilient Washington.**	Walla Walla County	Walla Walla County
Likelihood of a year with summer precipitation below 75% of historical normal	22% (16% to 35%)	27% (10% to 34%)

**Likelihood that summer (June-August) precipitation in any given year is below 75% of the average precipitation, the historical normal for the period 1980-2009.*

Drought conditions will be exacerbated by rising temperatures, which will shift precipitation from snow to rain in winter months, dramatically reducing snowpack—a key source of stored water for the city in the drier summer months. The Walla Walla basin is projected to experience one of the largest snowpack declines in the Pacific Northwest. [19] Furthermore, streamflow in the Walla Walla River is expected to decrease by up to 66% by the 2040s and up to 89% by the 2080s, threatening water supplies for agriculture, ecosystems, and communities throughout the region.[6] Considering that Mill Creek is a tributary of the Walla Walla River and is located within the Walla Walla basin, the City's primary water supply is also expected to face similar impacts from drought.

[18] Salathé, E.P. et al., 2010, Regional climate model projections for the State of Washington, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-010-9849-y
[19] Washington Department of Ecology, 2023, Addressing Walla Walla's Water Woes, Ecology Blog

Wildfire and Smoke

Walla Walla's mild climate, high exposure to the sun, and low precipitation make the region highly susceptible to wildfire. Native vegetation and farmland often dry out early in the season and remain flammable until rain and cooler weather become more common in the fall and winter. As temperatures rise and droughts become more frequent and severe, wildfire activity in central and eastern Washington is expected to increase significantly. The average annual number of high fire danger days in Walla Walla County is also expected to rise, increasing by approximately 10 days by mid-century (Table 36), relative to the historical average of 54 days between 1971 and 2000.[20] These conditions pose risks to critical infrastructure and water supply sources, such as the Mill Creek Watershed, which is particularly vulnerable to wildfire due to the surrounding vegetation and its proximity to undeveloped lands. Public health will also be at risk due to increased exposure to wildfire smoke. Smoke events are especially harmful to older adults, children, pregnant individuals, and those with respiratory or cardiovascular conditions.

Table 36. Wildfire Danger in Walla Walla County

	2010-2039	2040-2069
Wildfire Danger *(T. Sheehan, et al., 2015) Accessed via Climate Mapping for a Resilient Washington.**	Walla Walla County	Walla Walla County
Change in annual high-fire-danger days	6 days (-2 to 10 days)	10 days (three to 15 days)

** Table shows the change in annual high fire danger days compared to the 1971-2000 average of 54 days. The values represent the model's median for each indicator, while the range (in parentheses) indicates the 10th and 90th percentiles of values.*



Aerial view of the Paradise Fire from the week of August 24, 2026. Photo by Jeff Schardt

[20] T. Sheehan, et al., 2015, Projected major fire and vegetation changes in the Pacific Northwest of the conterminous United States under selected CMIP5 climate futures, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolmodel.2015.08.023

Extreme Precipitation and Flooding

The Northwest is expected to experience more frequent and intense extreme precipitation events, with a growing share of winter precipitation falling as rain rather than snow and more severe heavy rainfall events. [21] Washington's heaviest rainstorms could be 22% more intense by the 2080s, particularly in the fall, while summer precipitation is projected to decrease by 6-8% on average, and with some estimates showing up to a 30%. [22] In Walla Walla County, average total annual precipitation is expected to increase by 13% by 2079 and by an additional 14% by the end of the century (Table 37). [23] These changes heighten the risk of flash flooding, erosion, and infrastructure damage.

Table 37. Total Annual Precipitation Projections

	2050-2079	2070-2099
Total Annual Precipitation *(Salathé, E.P. et al., 2010) Accessed via Climate Mapping for a Resilient Washington.*	Walla Walla County	Walla Walla County
Percent change in average total annual precipitation for future 30-year periods compared to the 1980-2009 average.	12.9% (9.7% to 20.9%)	14.4% (10.0% to 28.2%)

Most models show increases in winter, spring, and fall precipitation, while summer precipitation continues to decline. These seasonal changes will affect water storage, agriculture, and emergency preparedness, as more winter rain and less snowpack reduce natural water reserves and increase runoff-related hazards.



[21] Chang, et al., 2023, Fifth National Climate Assessment, Chapter 27, https://toolkit.climate.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/NCA5_2023_FullReport.pdf
[22] Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021, Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan, https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2112011.html
[23] Salathé, E.P. et al., 2010, Regional climate model projections for the State of Washington, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-010-9849-y

Climate Vulnerability

The climate hazards outlined above—extreme heat, drought, wildfire and smoke, and extreme precipitation and flooding—are already affecting the City of Walla Walla and are expected to intensify in the coming decades. Vulnerability to these hazards is shaped by three factors: exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity (Figure 44). In short, vulnerability reflects the City's level of preparedness to manage risks associated with climate impacts.

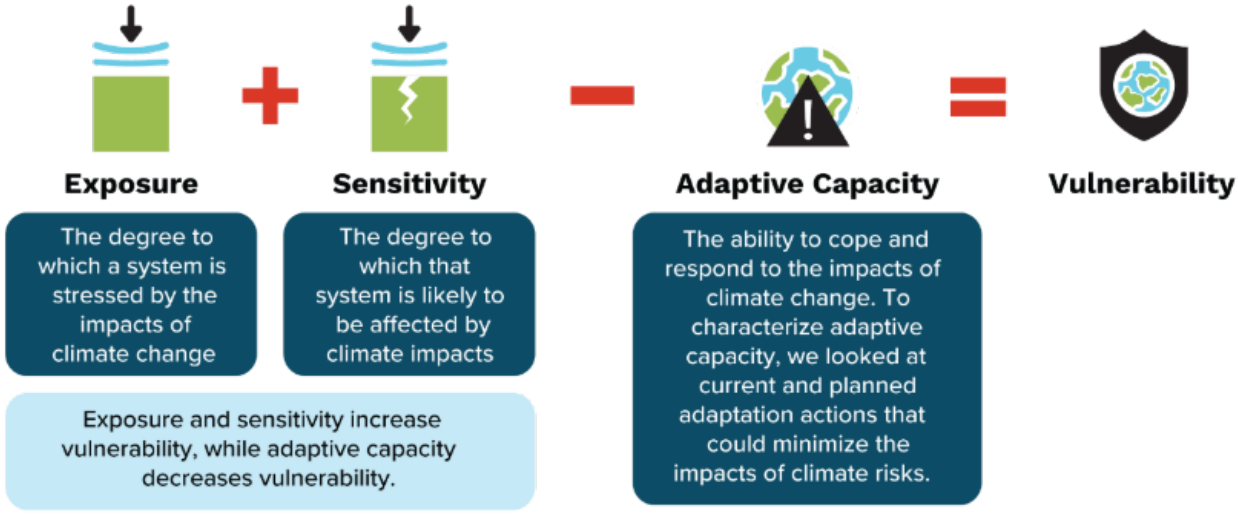


Figure 44. Climate Vulnerability Framework

To support climate resilience planning, the City assessed how these hazards impact three key sectors that are most relevant to Walla Walla's long-term sustainability and planning priorities [24]:

- **Community Health and Well-Being**. Frontline and overburdened populations—including the elderly, disabled, unhoused, low-income households, and those living with chronic health conditions—face heightened risks from extreme heat, wildfire smoke, and flooding. These events can also strain emergency services and public health systems, especially during prolonged or overlapping climate events.
- **Natural Environment and Water Resources**. Drought, wildfire, invasive species, and declining snowpack increasingly threaten ecosystems, parks, open spaces, and water supplies. The Mill Creek Watershed, which supplies most of the city's drinking water, is particularly vulnerable to wildfire and drought-related impacts.
- **Built Infrastructure**. The City of Walla Walla's transportation, housing, and water infrastructure face moderate to high risks from extreme heat, flooding, and wildfire smoke. High temperatures can damage roads, while more intense precipitation events may overwhelm stormwater systems, increasing the risk of localized flooding. Older homes and multi-family housing, especially those occupied by low-income or elderly residents, are more vulnerable to heat and smoke exposure.

[24] City of Walla Walla, 2025, Walla Walla Climate Element Climate Vulnerability Assessment

These sectors were selected through collaboration with City staff and the CPAT to align with local planning priorities and with Commerce guidance on assessing infrastructure and assets impacted by climate hazards. While some overlap exists (e.g., water appears in both natural and built systems), these sub-sectors represent the most relevant connections within each sector. Additionally, this structure helps city departments and stakeholders quickly access relevant information and understand how prepared they are for a variety of climate impacts.



While the City has taken proactive steps to improve Walla Walla's resilience and decrease its vulnerability, such as establishing cooling centers, expanding green infrastructure, and supporting home retrofit programs, gaps remain in several key areas. Emergency response systems may be strained during prolonged or overlapping climate events, particularly those involving extreme heat or wildfire smoke. Infrastructure systems, including stormwater and transportation networks, are not yet fully equipped to handle the intensity and frequency of projected climate hazards. Additionally, more support is needed for vulnerable and overburdened populations who face disproportionate risks and may lack the resources to adapt. Addressing these gaps by translating policy into action will be critical to ensuring that all residents can thrive in a changing climate.

Together, these findings highlight where the City of Walla Walla is already prepared and where it should improve its preparation and infrastructure to respond to climate impacts. These insights inform the goals and policies in this Climate Resilience Element and will help guide future planning efforts.

Challenges and Opportunities

As the City of Walla Walla continues to grow, the City will need to accommodate new development while preparing for the impacts of climate change and associated hazards. Rising temperatures, more frequent extreme weather events, and changing precipitation patterns will place increasing pressure on infrastructure, the natural environment, and the community's health and well-being, with a heightened impact falling on overburdened populations. These climate-related stressors necessitate a coordinated, long-term approach to planning, as they intersect with existing challenges, including housing affordability, aging infrastructure, and equitable access to resources for all residents. Despite these challenges, the City has a unique opportunity to build a more resilient and sustainable community for everyone in Walla Walla, with an additional focus on addressing risks to frontline and overburdened communities. The City's strong agricultural heritage, engaged community, and commitment to environmental stewardship provide a solid foundation for climate action, and the Climate Resilience Element will be used to continue shaping future planning efforts. By integrating climate resilience across planning and development, the City of Walla Walla can protect its natural assets, support community health, and ensure that future growth enhances the well-being of all residents.

Walla Walla's Plan

The above sections provide background for the City's goals and policies, which are described below. As the city and its population grows, incorporating climate resilience into land use, infrastructure, housing, and natural resource management will lessen risks for everyone in Walla Walla, safeguard frontline and overburdened populations, and support long-term sustainability. The goals and policies in this Climate Resilience Element are meant to guide Walla Walla toward a more adaptable and equitable future—one where the City addresses climate challenges while also enhancing quality of life, strengthening local ecosystems, and boosting community resilience.

Maps

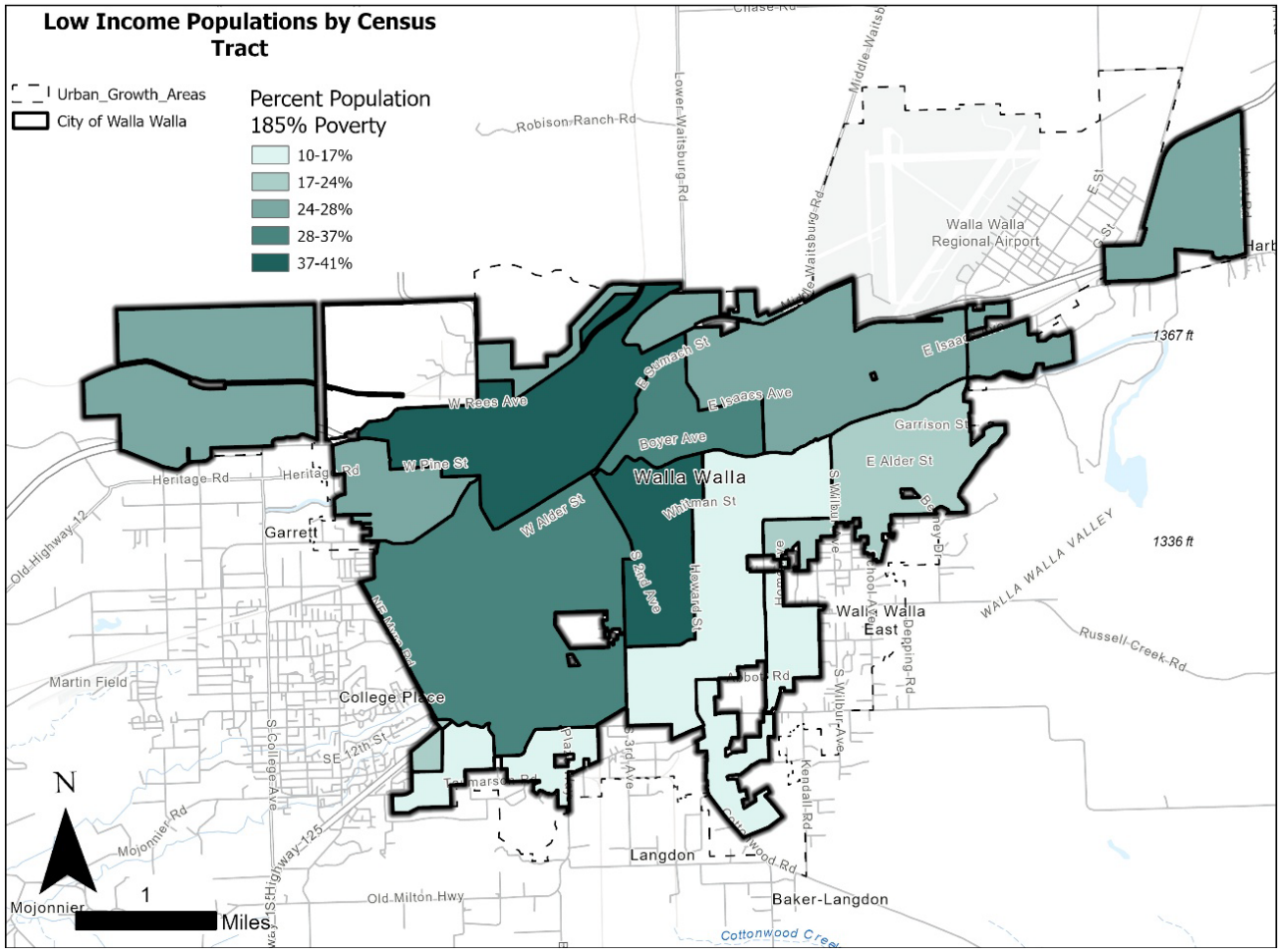


Figure 45. Percent of Low-Income Population by Census Block Group

Note: The low-income population is defined as household income less than 185% poverty level.
Source: Map by Cascadia Consulting Group, data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2023

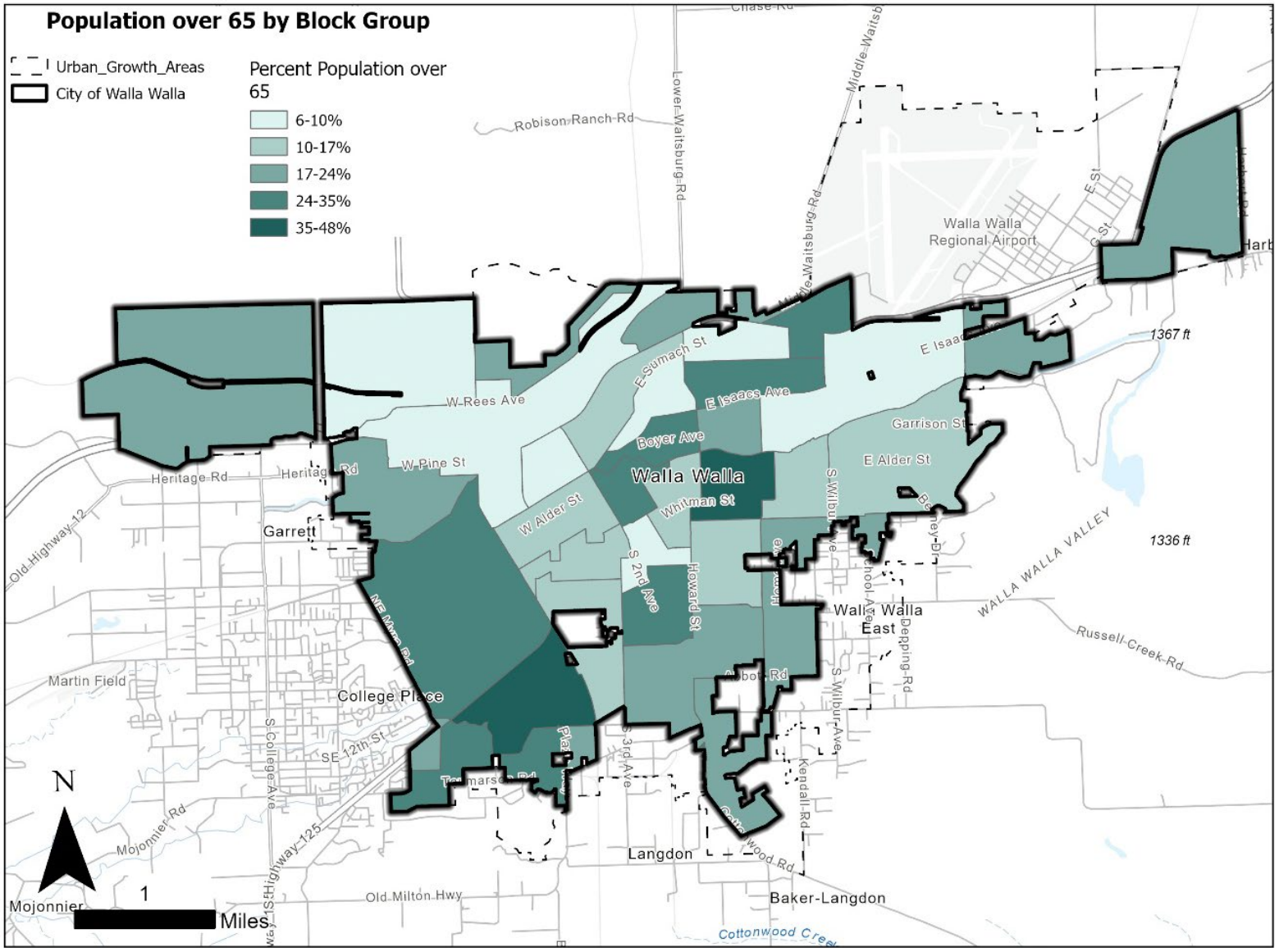


Figure 46. Percent of Population Over 65 Years by Census Block Group

Source: Map by Cascadia Consulting Group; U.S. Census Bureau, 2023

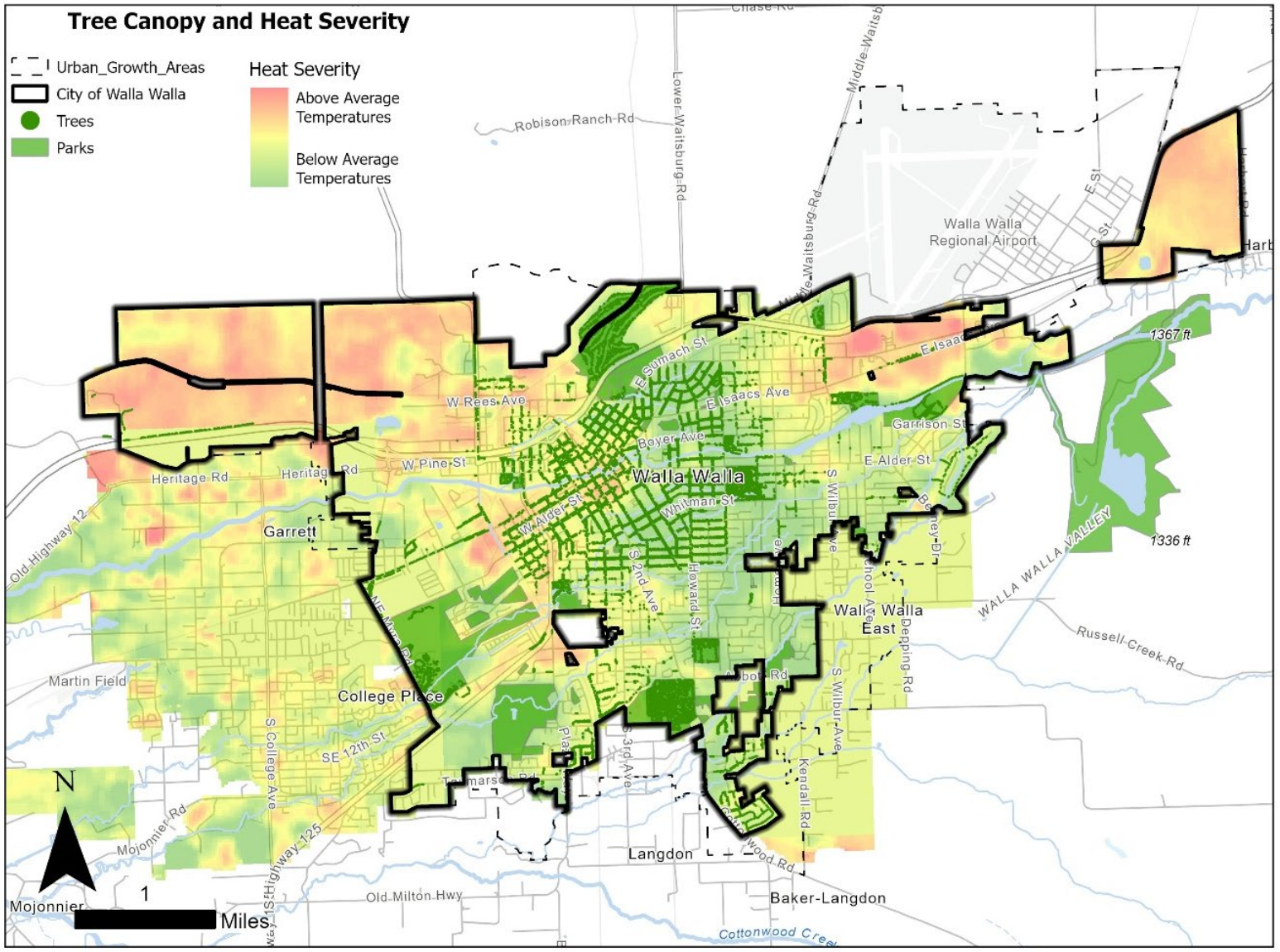


Figure 47. Heat Severity, Tree Canopy, and Green Spaces in Walla Walla

Source: Map by Cascadia; Trust for Public Land, 2025; City of Walla Walla, 2025

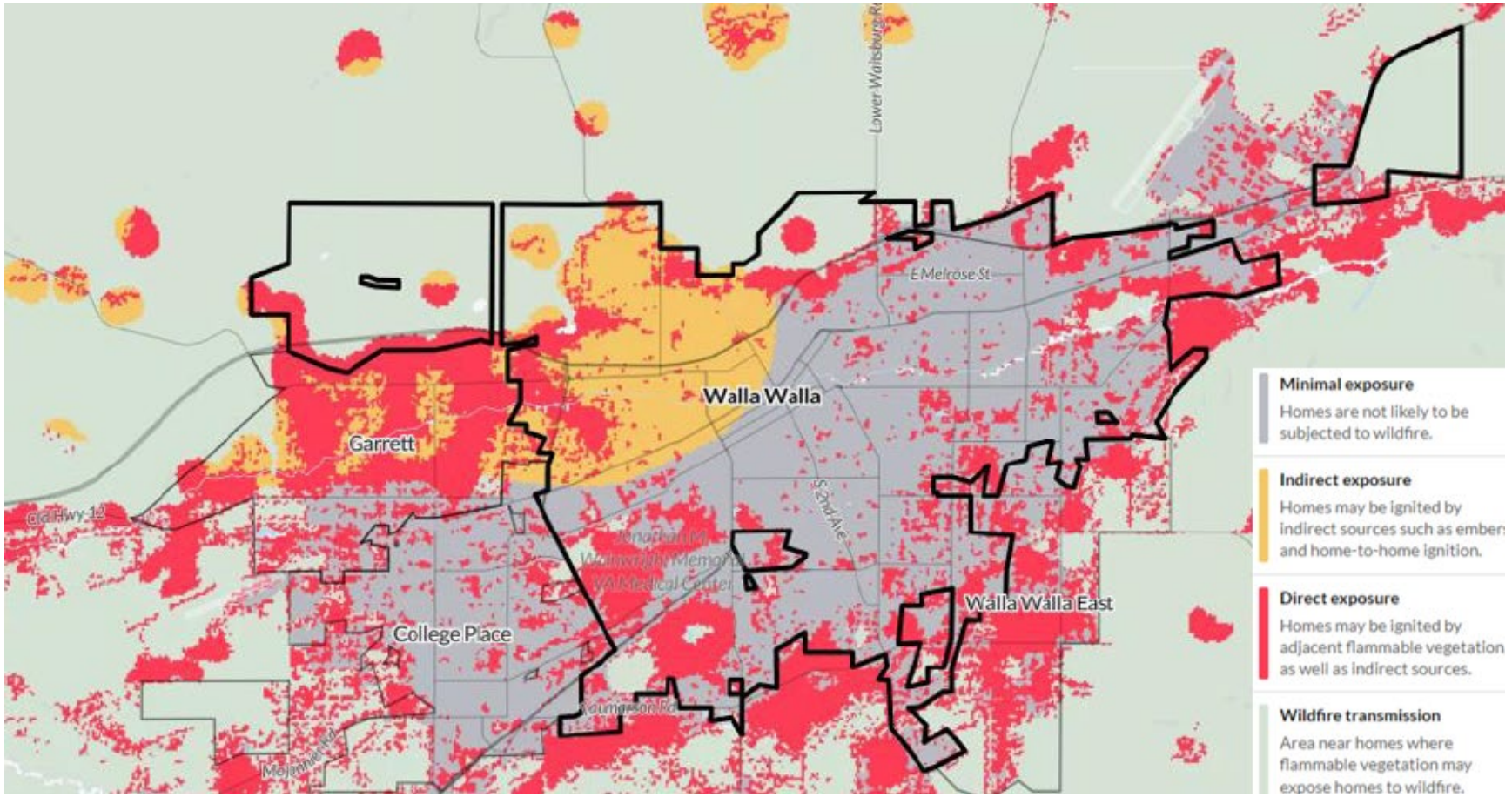


Figure 48. Wildfire Risk Reduction Zones

Source: Walla Walla County – Emergency Management, 2024



Figure 49. Aboriginal Title Lands Map

Source: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, n.d.

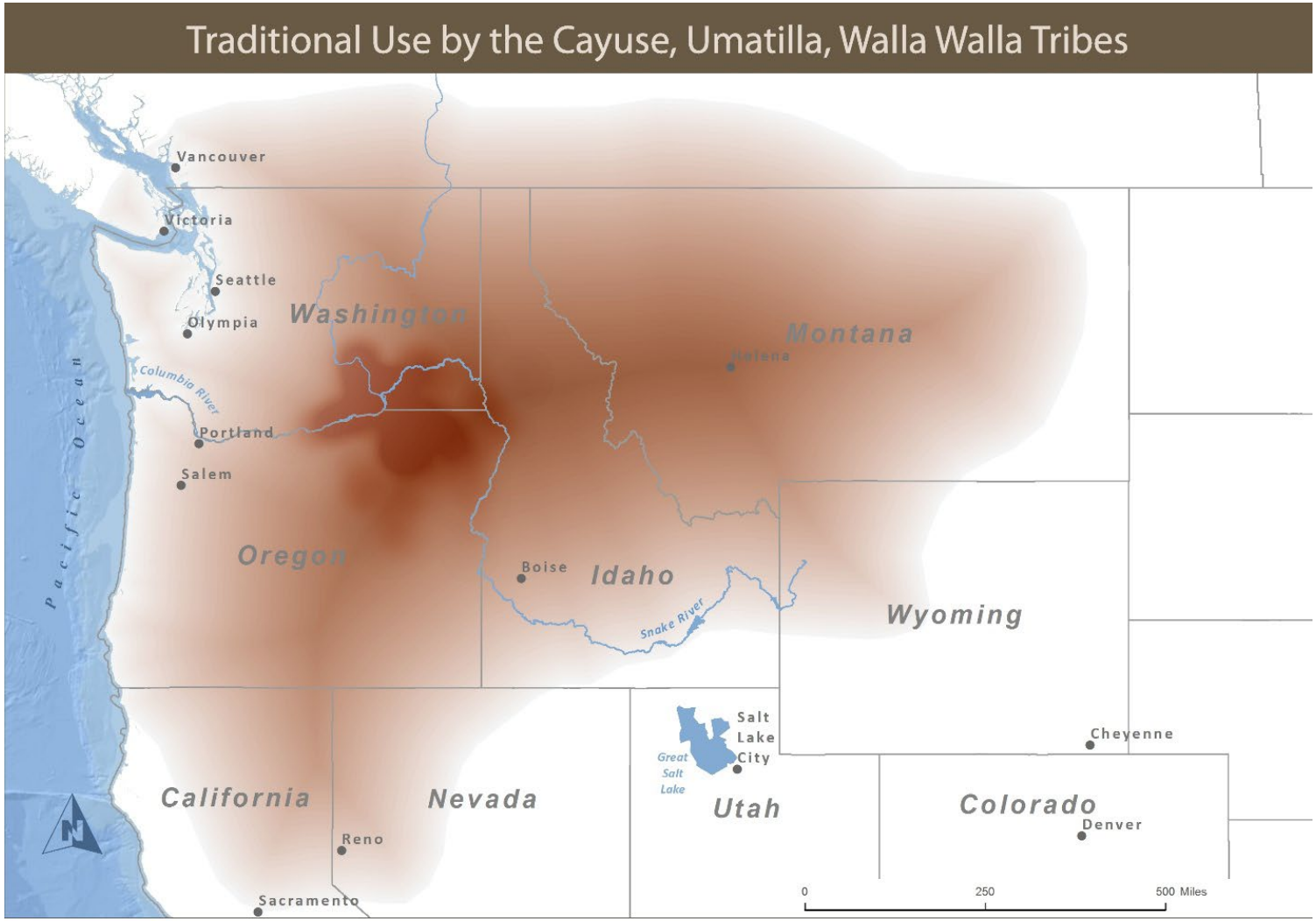


Figure 50. Traditional Use by the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes Map

Source: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, n.d.

Goals and Policies

CR Goal 1: Climate resilience and adaptation are considered in the City's planning and resource allocation process.

- CR 1.1: Assess the resources needed to implement the Climate Resilience Element (CRE), including partnerships, staffing, and funding. Strengthen ongoing collaboration with public and private partners in the region to advance hazard mitigation, land use planning, and natural resource protection efforts.
- CR 1.2: Cultivate and maintain City staff expertise and skills in climate change and environmental justice to support the equitable implementation of Climate Resilience Element policies.
- CR 1.3: Strengthen the City's capacity to track and report on climate resilience policy implementation with the use of tools such as progress reports, dashboards or other techniques to monitor and communicate progress over time.
- CR 1.4: Address climate change impacts (such as increased flooding, reduced winter streamflow, extreme heat risks, heightened wildfire threats, and broader ecosystem vulnerabilities), in future planning, design, and management of critical infrastructure, services, and natural resources.
- CR 1.5: Participate in the County annual review of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to strengthen wildfire preparedness in ways that:
    a) Improve emergency response within the City.
    b) Create fire-resilient landscapes and fire-adapted communities.
    c) Protect the local economy.
    d) Provide strategies that support recovery from wildfires and smoke impacts.
- CR 1.6: Strengthen the long-term health and resilience of the Mill Creek Watershed by preparing for climate-related risks—such as wildfire—and identifying ways to protect and enhance the municipal water supply, such as those included in the Watershed Resiliency Plan.
- CR 1.7: Support the implementation of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Climate Action Plan (CAP, 2022) through practices like knowledge sharing, collaboration, and partnerships.
- CR 1.8: Engage and inform community members, especially those most vulnerable to extreme heat, flooding, and other related climate impacts, through targeted community education, early-warning systems, and inclusive communications to support the implementation of the Climate Resilience Element.

CR Goal 2: Walla Walla seeks to identify, protect, and enhance community resilience to priority climate impacts, focusing on overburdened communities, to ensure that the most vulnerable residents do not bear the disproportionate impacts.

- CR 2.1: Identify overburdened populations within the community and assess their specific vulnerabilities to climate change to inform resilience and adaptation strategies that reduce disproportionate impacts and support the health and well-being of those most at risk.
- CR 2.2: Coordinate with community organizations to strengthen the overall community well-being by maintaining and, when possible, seeking funding to expand shelter programs which can serve as resilience hubs for vulnerable neighborhoods during climate and other emergencies.
- CR 2.3: Take steps to ensure that any climate program benefits, educational outreach, or investments are equitably distributed and that climate impacts are minimized for all residents. Consider strategies such as:

    a) Targeted outreach and education to inform residents and workers in high-risk areas, such as current and future flood zones about climate hazards and risks, preparedness strategies, and available resources, ensuring that vulnerable communities are equipped with the knowledge to respond effectively. Outreach and education would be available in English and Spanish.

    b) Community adaptation programs to reduce climate-related health and safety risks, such as establishing a program to distribute cooling units, install heat pumps, or reduce exposure to wildfire smoke by providing protective equipment, air filtration devices, and incentivizing infrastructure upgrades.

- CR 2.4: Support improvements to existing buildings commercial, public, and residential housing stock with incentives that improve energy efficiency, reduce utility costs, and ensure the availability of safe, affordable, and climate-resilient housing especially for vulnerable renters in low-income rental and group housing communities.
- CR 2.5: Educate employers and employees on protocols regarding extreme heat and poor air quality and consider outreach efforts to businesses and outdoor workers to promote safety, ensure compliance, and reduce exposure to climate-exacerbated hazards.

CR Goal 3: Walla Walla seeks to strengthen the resilience of the built infrastructure by integrating climate adaptation strategies, prioritizing sustainable infrastructure, and reducing vulnerability to climate-related hazards.

- CR 3.1: Enhance the safety and reliability of utilities to withstand climate impacts by collaborating with utility providers to strengthen infrastructure and support continuous service.

- CR 3.2: Support the resilience of street transportation systems against climate hazards by identifying and updating segments of infrastructure at risk—when feasible and/or funded—establish alternative routes for critical corridors to prevent community isolation.
- CR 3.3: Prioritize the use of resilient design strategies and materials in transportation infrastructure upgrades and projects that will allow the system to be more tolerant to repeat floods, flash floods, and extreme heat.
- CR 3.4: Prioritize the development of infrastructure projects that create safe, accessible parks and other public spaces year-round by incorporating shaded walkways, flood-resistant features, and heat-reducing design elements.
- CR 3.5: Encourage new development and retrofits to pursue green building standards and explore incentives that prioritize low-impact development, sustainable design, climate-conscious materials, and environmentally friendly landscaping, especially for climate-impacted multifamily and low-income housing communities.
- CR 3.6: Continue efforts to enhance water use efficiency and upgrade water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure to better adapt to future climate conditions.

CR Goal 4: Walla Walla strives to increase the resilience of natural areas to support healthy, climate-resilient ecosystems.

- CR 4.1: Prioritize the protection and restoration of critical habitats such as floodplains, wetlands, and riparian ecosystems and other critical areas to reduce the severity of climate impacts, support long-term ecosystem health, and improve climate adaptability.
- CR 4.2: Continue to support fish and habitat recovery efforts to improve the climate resilience of streams and watersheds.
- CR 4.3: Coordinate climate resilience efforts in future updates of other city plans, including the Shoreline Master Program and critical areas regulations, through conservation area designations, buffers, and the development of open space corridors.
- CR 4.4: Prioritize the use of advanced erosion control and sustainable land management practices for effective flood management as feasible.
- CR 4.5: Promote local and regional conservation, open space, and land management planning efforts that explicitly consider and address climate change risks.

Policy Connections

- **The Community Character Element** addresses the importance of protecting and restoring natural areas through policies on stream corridors, increasing access to community green spaces and parks, and creating a tree planting program.
- **The Land Use Element** guides growth toward existing infrastructure, protects natural resources, and promotes sustainability through policies that promote coordinated regional efforts, green standards, the conservation of open space, flood protection, and community adaptability to hazards.
- **The Housing Element** addresses climate resilience through reducing energy use and emissions, strengthening community livability and equity, and ensuring homes are retrofitted or built to withstand environmental and social stresses.
- **The Economic Development Element** fosters adaptable business models that can evolve in response to changing community needs by strengthening local skills and seeking to diversify employment opportunities.
- **The Historic Preservation Element** supports the Climate Resilience Element through policies that address waste reduction, resource efficiency, and preservation of existing community assets.
- **The Parks and Recreation Element** focuses on maintaining, expanding, and connecting green spaces, trails, and recreation areas, while also ensuring the long-term sustainability and funding for these community resources.
- **The Environmental and Natural Resources Element** includes policies that directly address climate change impacts and strategies the city can implement to address those impacts.
- **The Transportation Element** fosters a connected, multimodal system with reduced reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, improved access to transit and active transportation, supports public safety, and aims to preserve and maintain infrastructure to withstand long-term stresses.
- **The Capital Facilities and Utilities Element** includes policies that enhance emergency response capabilities, reduce the vulnerability of utility infrastructure, and promote sustainable waste management practices.

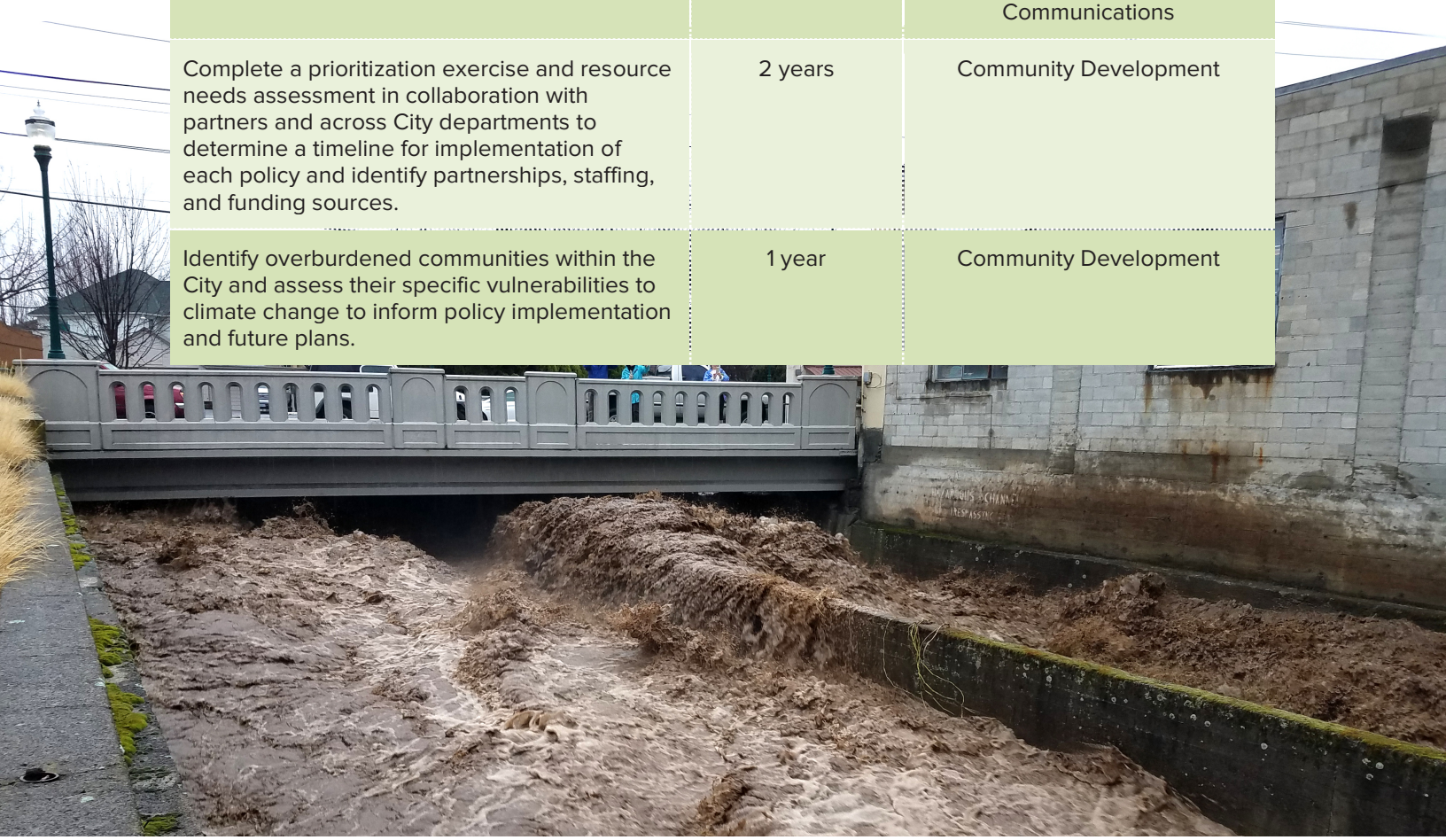


Translating Policy into Action

This Element is implemented through City plans and programs, projects, and review of development applications.

Table 38. Climate Resilience Implementation Action and Responsibility

Implementation Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Offer incentives that improve energy efficiency for commercial and residential buildings.	5 years	Community Development
Educate employers and employees on protocols for extreme heat and poor air quality.	2 years	Communications
Support the update of the Watershed Resiliency Plan.	1 year	Community Development and Public Works
Prioritize community education to support the implementation of the element.	Ongoing	Community Development and Communications
Complete a prioritization exercise and resource needs assessment in collaboration with partners and across City departments to determine a timeline for implementation of each policy and identify partnerships, staffing, and funding sources.	2 years	Community Development
Identify overburdened communities within the City and assess their specific vulnerabilities to climate change to inform policy implementation and future plans.	1 year	Community Development



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Appendix I. Housing Needs Assessment

Date January 12, 2026

To City of Walla Walla

From Jennifer Shuch and Andrew Oliver, Leland Consulting Group

CC Gen Dial, SCJ Alliance

Introduction

This Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) has been prepared to support the updated Housing Element of the City of Walla Walla's 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update. It has been developed under the guidance of the recently updated Walla Walla Countywide Planning Policies, and in compliance with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), under RCW 36.70A.130. Requirements for Housing Elements under the GMA were substantially amended in 2021 by House Bill 1220, requiring detailed analysis of future housing needs by income level, as well as new considerations for racially disparate impacts, exclusion, and displacement in housing. This report analyzes potential gaps in housing supply, type, and affordability, and identifies current and future housing needs to serve all income groups of the community over the 20-year planning horizon.

In addition, this HNA builds off the City's previous housing needs assessment completed for the 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update, as well as the regional needs assessment completed for the 2021 Walla Walla Regional Housing Action Plan (HAP). The Regional HAP, developed together with representatives from public agencies throughout Walla Walla County, identified that middle income families and local workers have the most pressing housing needs throughout the region. In order to find attainable housing, many such households must travel long distances between their homes and their jobs, and/or must pay more than 30% of their household income (rent or mortgage) to attain a home. The types of housing that would benefit these households most and meet the identified need in the region include apartments, duplexes, townhomes, cottages, manufactured homes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), as the more common single-family detached dwelling is unaffordable to the average Walla Walla resident or worker.

The analysis shown in this report can be used to assess the City of Walla Walla's progress in addressing identified housing needs and gaps from both the 2018 Comprehensive Plan and the HAP, as well as those identified through state mandated planning targets, and ultimately will help to identify new and updated policies to address current and future housing needs.

Data Sources

This HNA utilizes data from the U.S. Census Bureau, particularly the 2020 Decennial Census, as well as the most recently available 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates, and data from the 2016-2020 HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS). Additional data was sourced from the Washington State Office of Financial Management. All data sources are cited throughout the document.

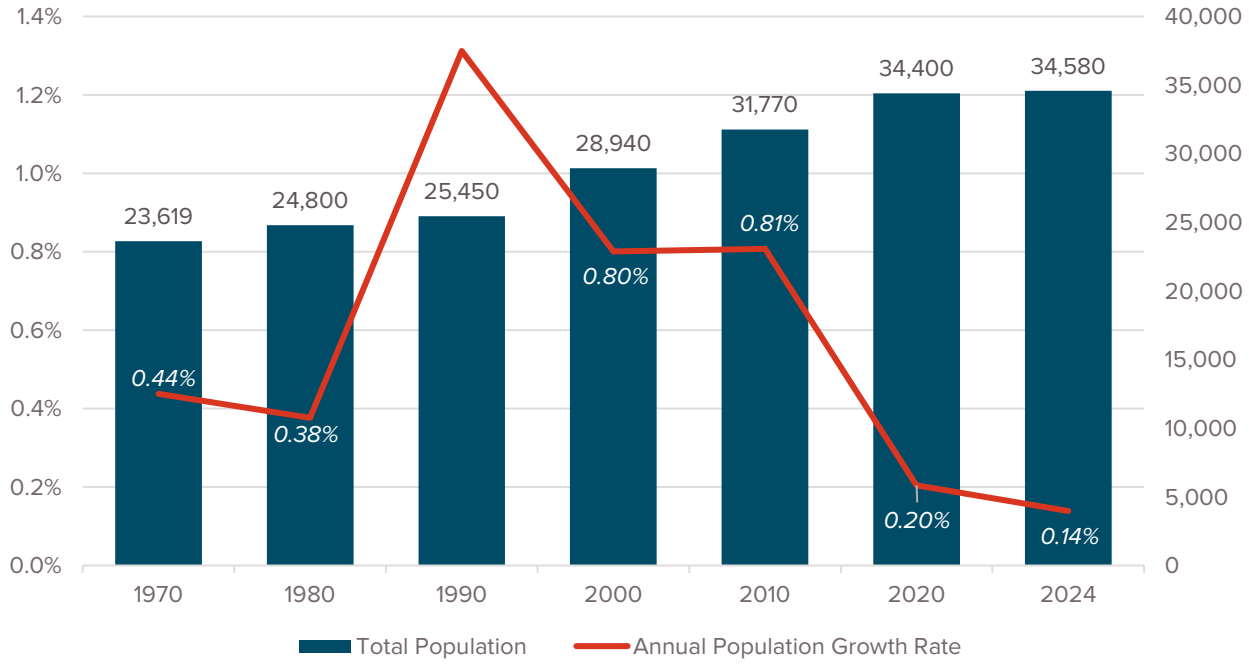
Community Profile

This section summarizes key data on Walla Walla's population, demographics, and household characteristics to understand current and future housing needs in the city.

Population Characteristics

Population Growth

Walla Walla's population is growing, but at a slower rate than in past decades. Recent and projected population growth are important indicators for predicting future housing demand. According to the Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM), as of 2024 there were an estimated 34,580 residents in Walla Walla. Since the 2020 Census, the city's population has grown by about 0.14 percent. The decade of the fastest population growth was the 1990s, with a 1.31 percent annual growth rate, slowing down since the 2000s.

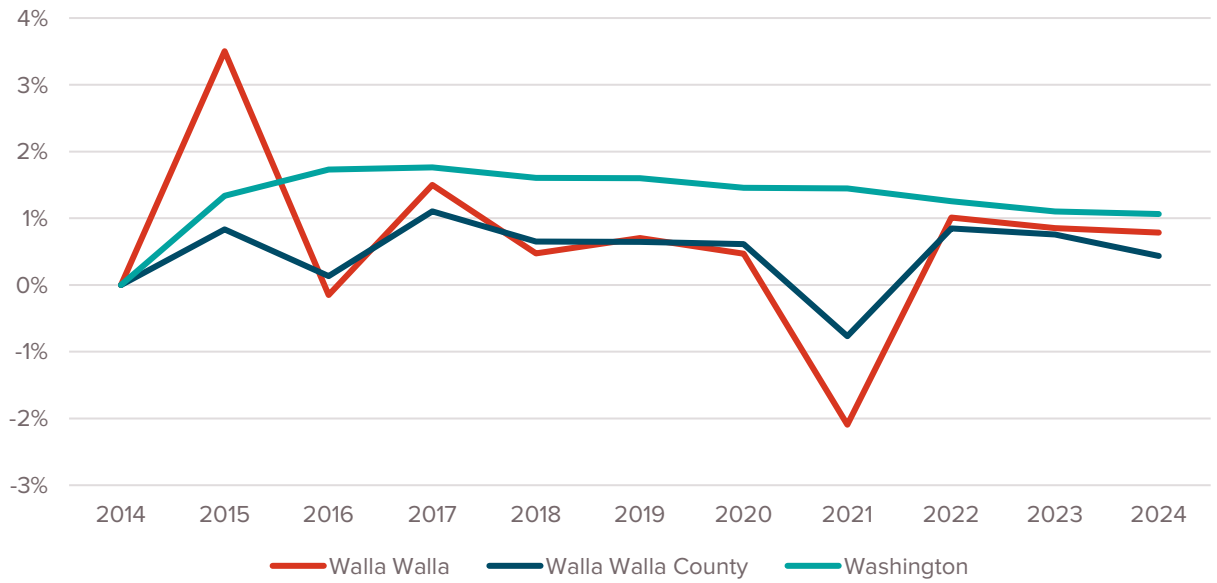


Appendix I Figure 1. Historic Population Growth in Walla Walla, 1970-2024

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census, Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) Historic Population Data and April 1 Population Estimates.

Figure 2 shows that the Walla Walla population has generally grown at a slower rate than Washington State's total population over the past decade but has mostly kept pace with Walla Walla County. The city's growth rate has been as high as 3.5 percent in 2015, and as low as negative two percent in 2021, indicating a drop in the regional population during the COVID-19 pandemic that is largely explained by the loss of those living in group quarters.

"Group quarters" consist of military barracks, retirement and nursing homes, jails or prisons and student dormitories. With Walla Walla's prevalence of higher education institutions like Whitman College and Walla Walla Community College, and the location of the Washington State Penitentiary, it is estimated roughly 4,000 Walla Walla residents resided in group quarters between 2015 and 2020, a significant portion of which did not hold their residence in Walla Walla during 2021.



Appendix I Figure 2. Walla Walla Population Change with Regional Comparison, 2014-2024

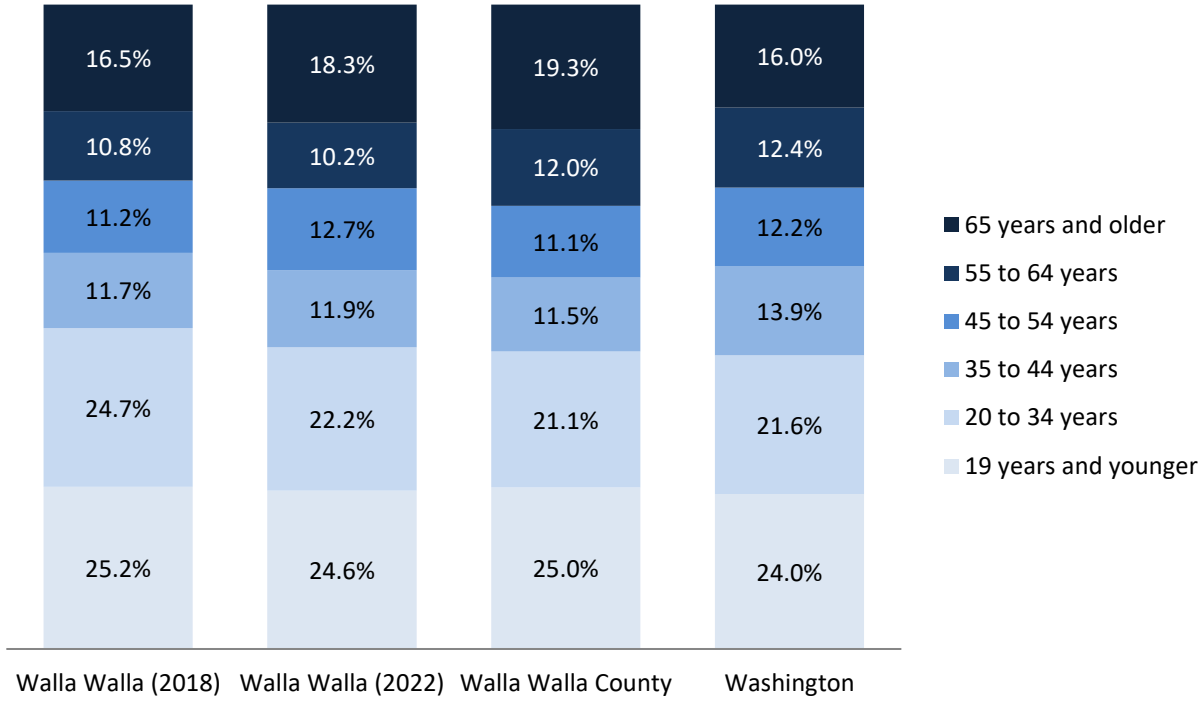
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census, Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) Historic Population Data and April 1 Population Estimates.

Population Projections

Based on Walla Walla County's adopted population projections, the City of Walla Walla has adopted a planning target of 39,884 residents in the city and 2,894 in the UGA by 2046. The city's population will account for 54.6 percent of the total county population. To accommodate this growth, the city has been allocated a target of 2,348 new housing units by 2046.

Population Age Distribution

Walla Walla's population is aging. The city's median age is 37.2 which aligns with the state and is slightly younger than the county's median age of 38. Since 2018, Walla Walla's population has witnessed a slight decline in the share of children and prime working-age adults, and a rise in the presence of seniors and retirees. The share of residents younger than 35 years old shrank from 49.9 to 46.8 percent of the population, while the 65 and older age bracket grew from 16.5 to 18.3 percent of the population. This could indicate that Walla Walla is in need of more starter homes for families to live and grow in town, which could include small lot, single-family detached units, as well as townhomes or multiplexes. These housing types may also contribute to a growing need for smaller housing units like condominiums, townhomes, and apartments amongst the city's aging population as they look to downsize. The Walla Walla Regional HAP determined a projected senior housing demand of 379 additional dwelling units by 2040.

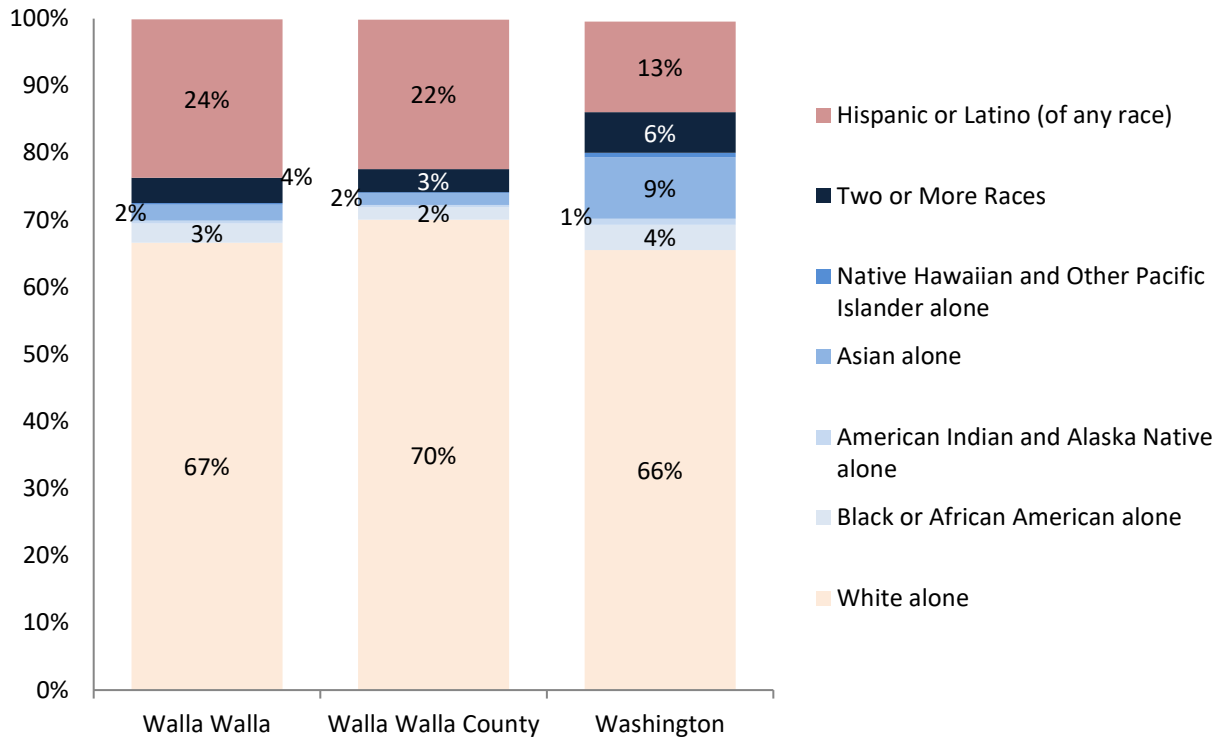


Appendix I Figure 3. Age Distribution in Walla Walla with Regional Comparison, 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2018, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

Population Diversity

In 2022, Walla Walla's racial and ethnic composition nearly mirrored the county's – both have a significantly larger proportion of Hispanic or Latino residents than the state, and both have become more diverse in recent years. Overall, all three geographies were about three-quarters White. However, the percentage of city and county residents who identified as Hispanic or Latino (24 and 22 percent, respectively) was almost double the share across the rest of the state (13 percent). The City of Walla Walla also had a lower share of Asian residents (2 percent), compared to statewide (nine percent). Notably, Walla Walla's share of Hispanic population has increased by 10 percentage points compared to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan housing study. The share of Black population also saw a 2.5 percentage point increase in that same period. Appendix IV. Racially Disparate Impacts Analysis explains more of the specific housing needs across race and ethnicity in Walla Walla.



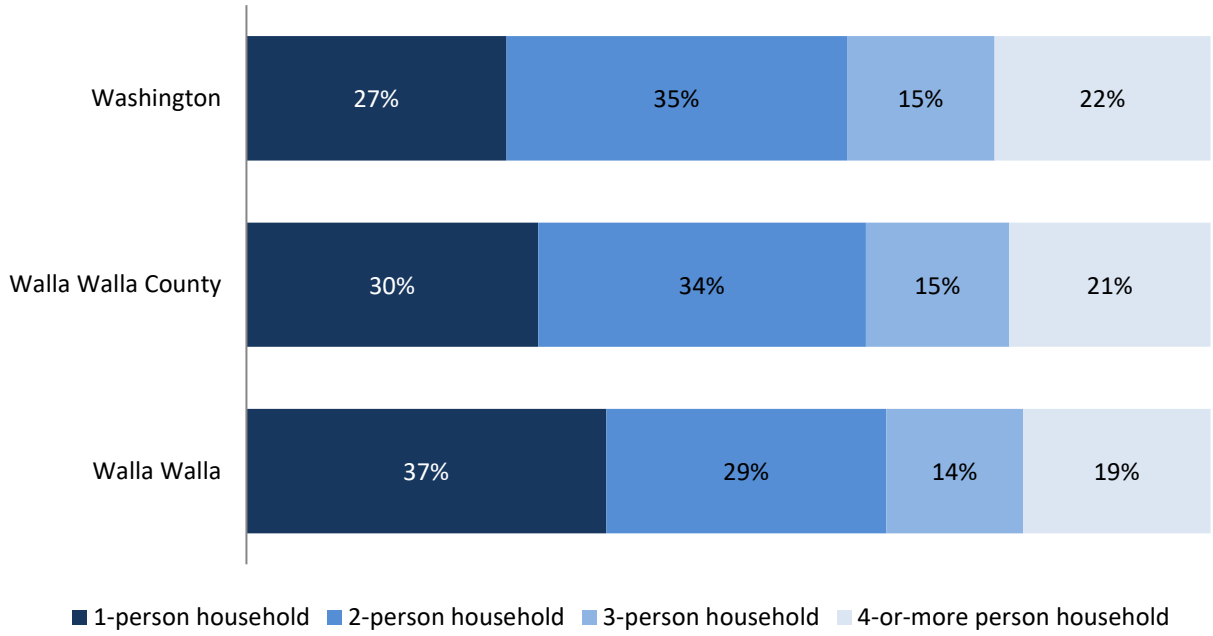
Appendix I Figure 4. Race and Ethnicity in Walla Walla with Regional Comparison, 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05

Household Characteristics

Household Count and Size

The ACS estimates there are 12,865 households in Walla Walla, with an average household size of 2.36. This is slightly smaller than Walla Walla County's 2022 average household size of 2.5 and the statewide average of 2.53. A third of households have three or more people, in line with the county. Meanwhile, Walla Walla has a larger share of one-person households (37 percent) than the county (30 percent) and state (27 percent). Figure 5 visualizes the distribution of households in the city and the region. According to the Washington Office of Financial Management, the 2024 Postcensal estimated that the total number of housing units in Walla Walla is 14,189.



Appendix I Figure 5. Household Size in Walla Walla with Regional Comparison, 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501

Household Types

Walla Walla has a lower share of family households than the county and the state, as well as a larger share of households living alone or households 65 years and over than the state. This may indicate a shortage of starter homes in the city to support young families, as well as indicate a potential need for smaller housing units or senior-accessible housing units. Table 1 below shows the makeup of Walla Walla households. Overall, 56 percent of households are family households, defined as two or more related family members living together in any combination. That percentage is lower than Walla Walla County (63 percent) and Washington State (64 percent). Of Walla Walla's family households, there is a lower share of married couples, yet a higher share of other family identities compared to the county and state. 45 percent of Walla Walla households have children, which is slightly higher than the county and state. The share of one-person households has decreased by 1.5 percentage points since 2018, and 2 and 3-person households have increased very slightly, accounting for the slight increase in average household size.

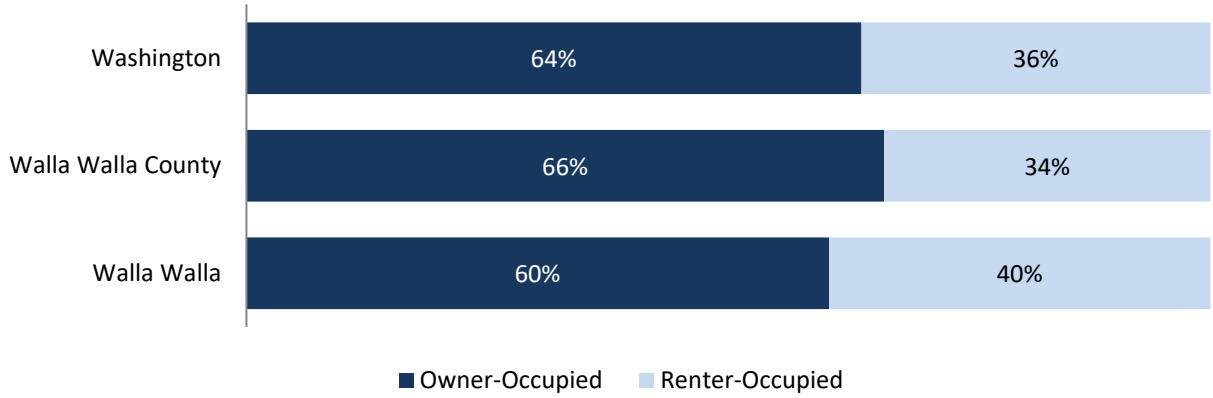
Appendix I Table 1. Household Types in Walla Walla with Regional Comparison, 2022

	Walla Walla Total	Walla Walla Share	Walla Walla County Total	Walla Walla County Share	Washington Total	Washington Share
Total Households	**12,865**		**22,978**		**2,979,272**	
Family households	**7,155**	**56%**	**14,526**	**63%**	**1,910,770**	**64%**
Married-couple family	5,231	73%	11,402	78%	1,482,230	78%
Other family	1,924	27%	3,124	22%	428,540	22%
With own children of householder under 18 years	3,218	45%	5,999	41%	814,890	43%
Nonfamily households	**5,710**	**44%**	**8,452**	**37%**	**1,068,502**	**36%**
Householder living alone	4,801	84%	6,950	82%	803,383	75%
Householder 65 years and over	2,207	39%	3,278	39%	313,547	29%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501

Household Tenure

In Walla Walla, most housing units are owner-occupied, a similar percentage to that of Walla Walla County and Washington State. As shown below in Figure 6, renters represented 40 percent of households as of 2022, a slight decrease from 2018.

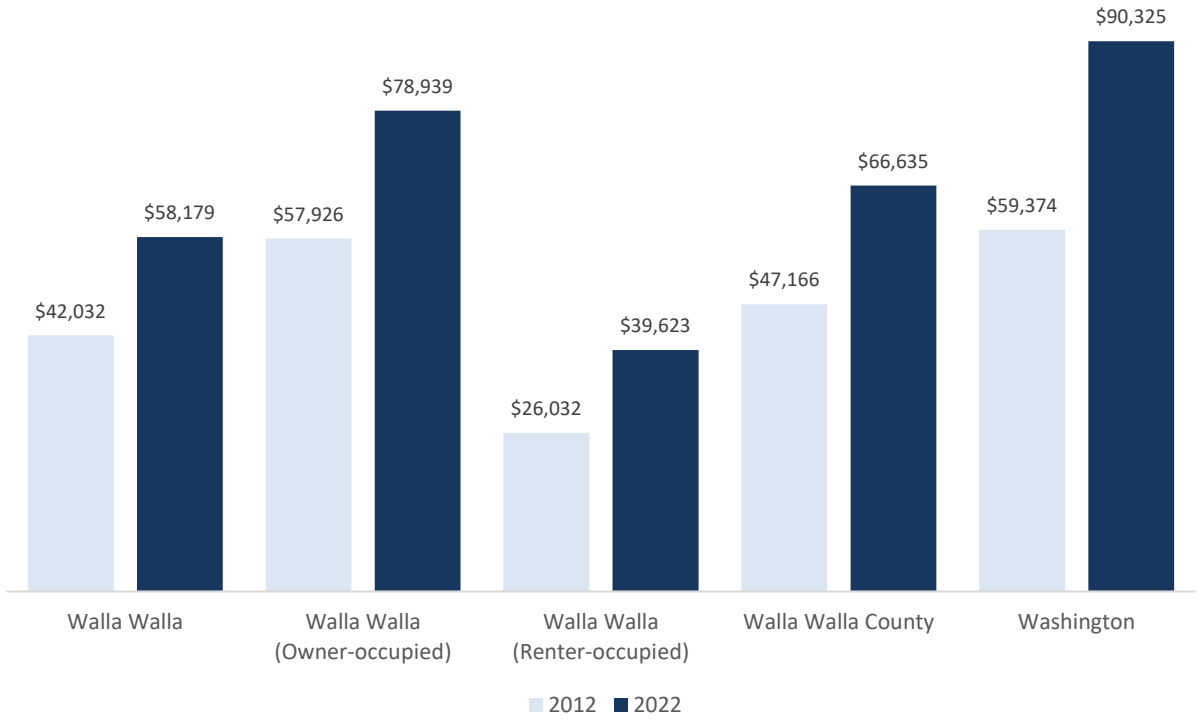


Appendix I Figure 6. Household by Tenure in Walla Walla (with Regional Comparison), 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501

Household Income and Cost Burden

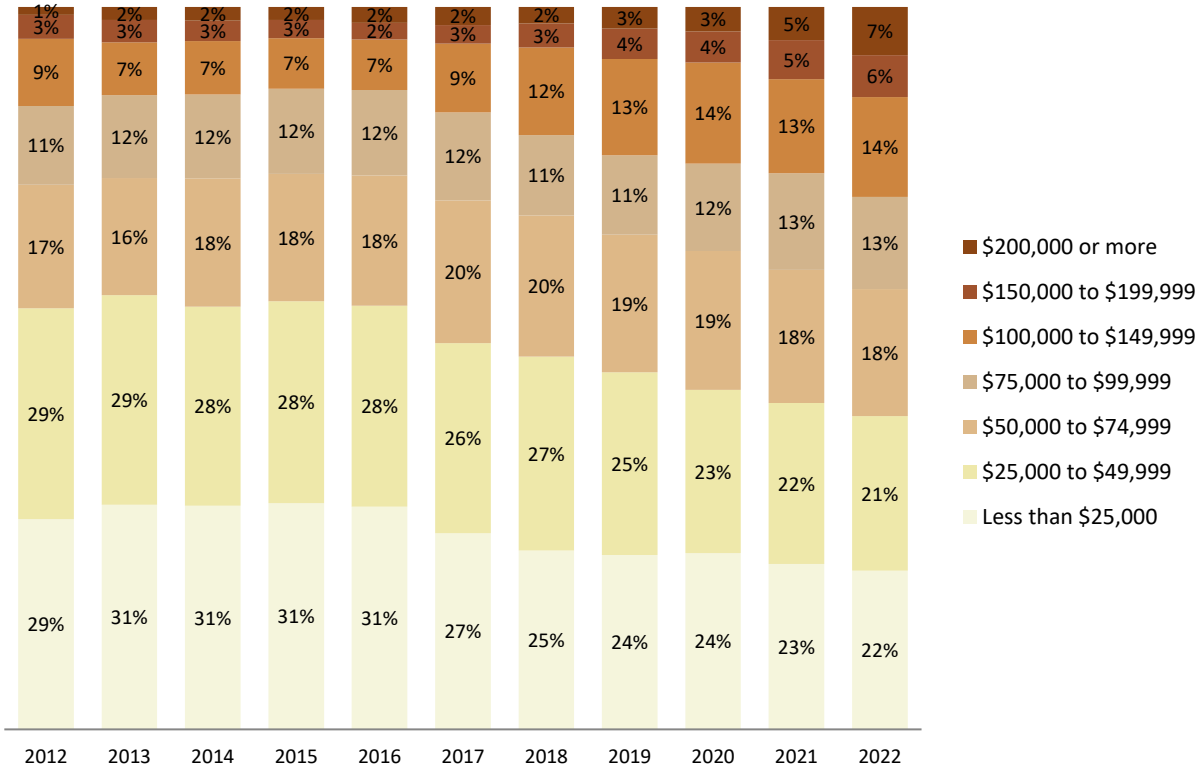
Walla Walla's median household incomes are generally lower than Walla Walla County and Washington State averages. Since 2012, income in Walla Walla has increased by about 38 percent, from $42,032 to $58,179 (inflation-adjusted). This is a slower increase than both Walla Walla County (41 percent) and Washington (52 percent) over the same period. Households who own their homes in Walla Walla make more than twice as much as renter households, as shown below in Figure 7. **Although renter households are often smaller on average than ownership households, the income discrepancy between homeowners and renters indicates the potential for higher displacement risk among renter households.**



Appendix I Figure 7. Median Household Income in Walla Walla with Regional Comparison, 2012 vs. 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 5-Year ACS, Table S2503.

Appendix I Figure 8 shows the change in income levels over the past 10 years. In 2012, 75 percent of Walla Walla's households had income below $75,000; that share dropped to 61 percent of households in 2022. This decline is partially caused by inflation and the overall rise in median income; however, as shown below, **the percentage of households earning more than $150,000 has more than tripled from 4 percent to 13 percent since 2012, indicating a trend of higher income households moving to Walla Walla.**



Appendix I Figure 8. Household Income in Walla Walla by Income Brackets, 2012-2022

Source: U.S Census Bureau 5-Year ACS, Table S2503.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determines a countywide area median income (AMI) for each county. In 2024, the Walla Walla County AMI was $90,200 for a 4-person household. The HUD AMI is generally higher than the Census-reported median household income (see Appendix I Figure 7 as an example) since AMI is based on the Census-reported median family income, which excludes non-family households (one-person households and multi-person households of unrelated individuals). HUD defines households as "Extremely low income" if they earn 30 percent AMI or less, "very low income" if they earn 30-50 percent AMI, and "low Income" if they earn 50-80 percent AMI.

Table 2 shows these three levels of AMI income limits in Walla Walla County. These figures are used to determine the maximum rent that households at each income level would pay in subsidized housing at the respective income level, based on household size. This metric is used to determine eligibility for subsidized affordable housing.

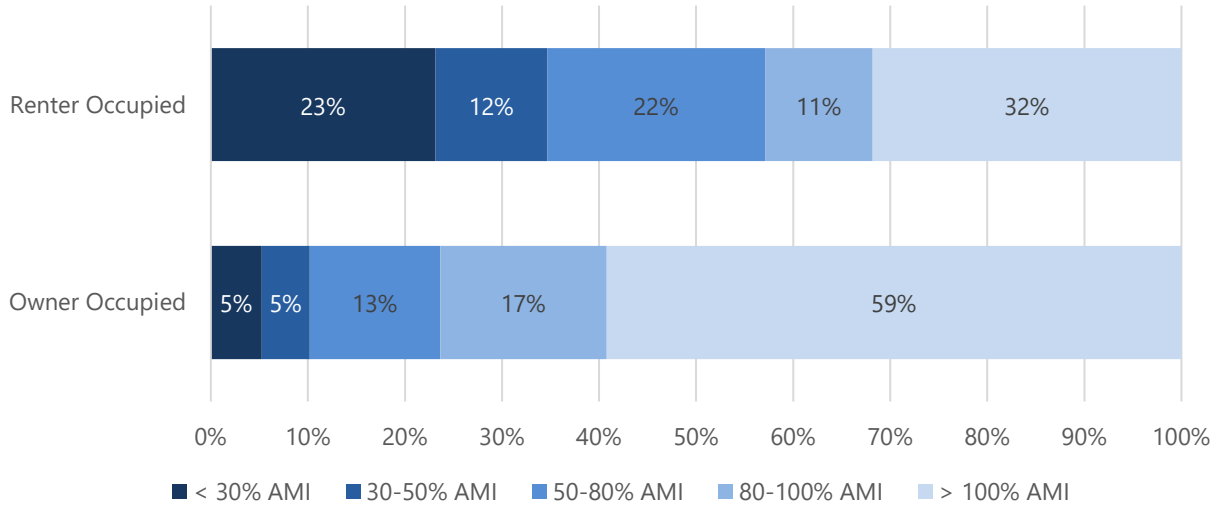
Appendix I Table 2. HUD Income Limits for Walla Walla County, 2024

Persons in Family:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Extremely Low Income (30% AMI)	$18,950	$21,650	$25,820	$31,200	$36,580	$41,960	$47,340	$52,720
Very Low Income (50% AMI)	$31,600	$36,100	$40,600	$45,100	$48,750	$52,350	$55,950	$59,550
Low Income (80% AMI)	$50,550	$57,750	$64,950	$72,150	$77,950	$83,700	$89,500	$95,250

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

While fewer Walla Walla households are considered low-income (households earning less than 80 percent AMI) than 10 years ago, there remains many more low-income renter households than owner households.

Figure 9 shows a breakdown of Walla Walla households by tenure and income, as a percentage of AMI. Compared to estimates shown in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, the share of low-income households (those making less than 80 percent AMI) has decreased from 49 percent of households to 35 percent of households. However, nearly 57 percent (2,388) of renter households are earning less than 80 percent AMI and could be eligible for subsidized affordable housing compared to 24 percent (1,853) of owner households. In 2018, the latest estimates showed 68 percent of renters and 33 percent of owners earned less than 80 percent AMI. This represents a roughly 10 percentage point decrease in the share of households earning less than 80 percent AMI.

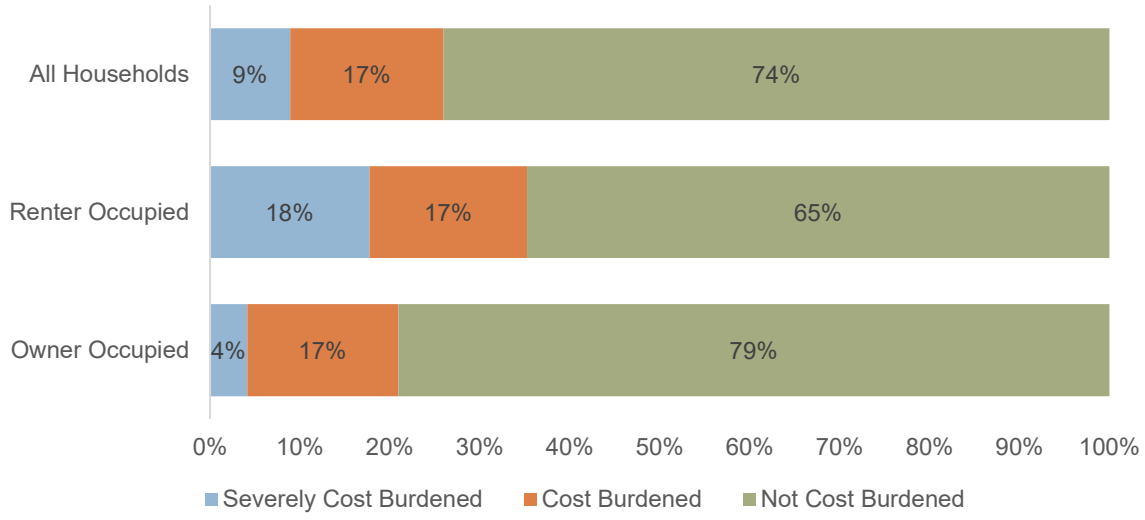


Appendix I Figure 9. Household Income as a Percentage of AMI by Tenure in Walla Walla, 2020

Source: 2016-2020 HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS).

While the estimated number of cost burdened households has decreased since 2018, Walla Walla renters continue to bear heavier "cost burden" than homeowners, which reflects a need for more affordable rental housing in the city. HUD considers a household to be "cost-burdened" if it spends more than 30 percent of its income on housing, including rent or mortgage and utilities. A household is considered "severely cost-burdened" if it spends more than 50 percent of income on housing.

Figure 10 shows Walla Walla households by cost burden and tenure. Overall, 26 percent of households are cost-burdened, and nine percent of all households are severely cost-burdened. Renters face higher levels of cost burden than owner households, with 35 percent of renter households meeting the cost burden criteria (i.e., spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing) compared to 21 percent of homeowners. This data represents an improvement over 2017, when 49 percent of renters were cost-burdened and 27 percent of owners were cost-burdened. Overall, the share of all households experiencing cost burden declined by 10 percentage points (from 36 percent to 26 percent).

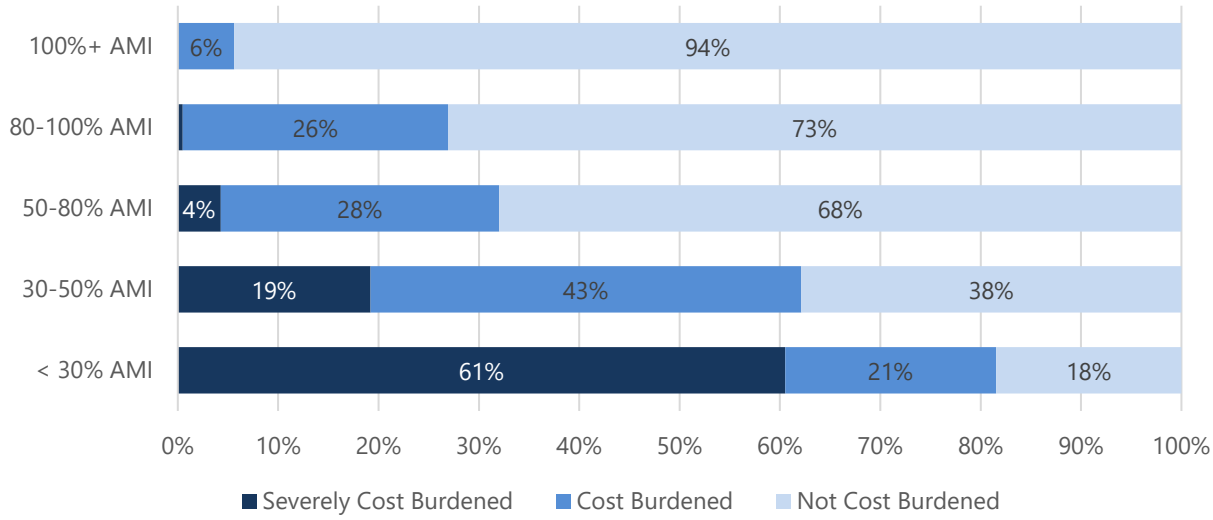


Appendix I Figure 10. Cost Burdened Households by Tenure in Walla Walla, 2020

Source: 2016-2020 HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS).

Many of Walla Walla's lowest-income households are severely cost burdened, showing the need for more affordable housing most likely in the form of subsidized rental units.

Figure 11 shows that 1,144 (82 percent) of Walla Walla's extremely low-income households (earning 30 percent AMI or below) are cost-burdened, with 74 percent of cost-burdened households in this income bracket spending more than half their income on rent. Among households earning less than 50 percent AMI, 74 percent are cost burdened, and 47 percent of low-income households earning 50 to 80 percent AMI are cost burdened.



Appendix I Figure 11. Cost Burden and Household Income in Walla Walla (All Occupied Units), 2020

Source: 2016-2020 HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS).

Measures of Economic Hardship – ALICE Framework

The Walla Walla Regional HAP utilized a measure of households experiencing economic hardship called ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). Developed by United Way, the framework recognizes shortcomings in measuring economic hardship by utilizing federal poverty statistics and provides a new measure of economically distressed households that reflects more localized costs of living.

ALICE data are calculated for each county across the United States, and considers total cost of household essentials, including housing, childcare, food, transportation, technology, and health care, plus taxes and a 10 percent contingency. More information can be found at Methodology | UnitedForALICE.

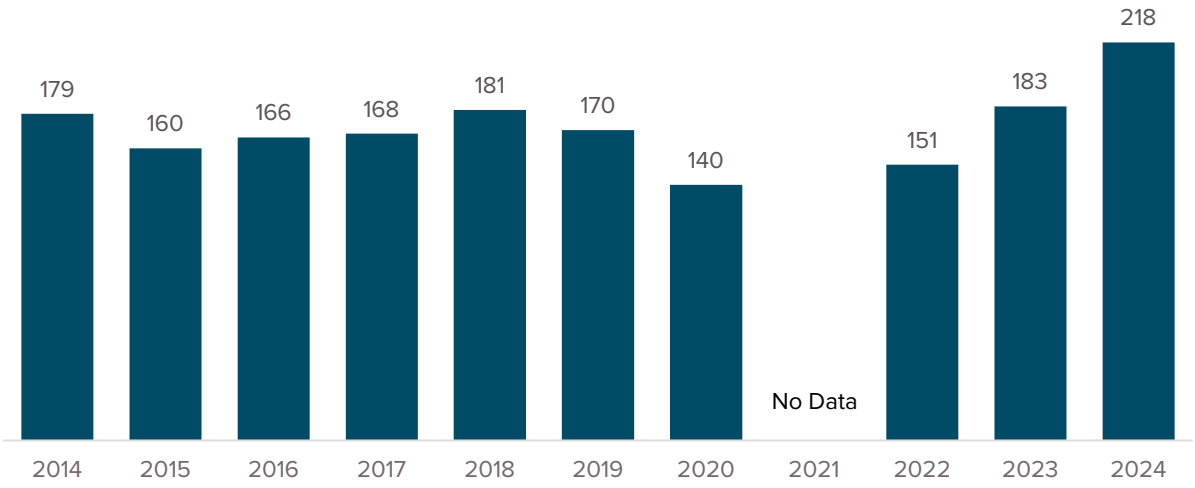
As of 2022, it was estimated that 45 percent of all households in Walla Walla County were either in poverty (13 percent) or in the ALICE category (32 percent), an increase from 42 percent in 2018, as cited in the Regional HAP. In the City of Walla Walla, an estimated 52 percent of households in 2022 were either living below the federal poverty level (17 percent) or in the ALICE category (35 percent), an increase from 49 percent in 2018.

The ALICE data shows an increase in poverty despite HUD showing that the number of cost-burdened households in Walla Walla has been decreasing. This is likely because ALICE includes costs beyond housing, including childcare, food, transportation, and health care. Nationwide, the

costs of these necessities have been increasing significantly since 2020. Although housing prices are stabilizing, households are likely still struggling to afford everyday essentials.

Homeless and Unhoused Population

As of 2024, the annual Point-in-Time Count found that there were 218 homeless residents in Walla Walla County. This is an increase when compared to 2023, when there were an estimated 183 homeless residents in the county. As shown below in Figure 12, after remaining relatively consistent, the number of estimated homeless individuals in the county reached its highest point in the past decade in 2024. Walla Walla County did not conduct a count of residents experiencing unsheltered homelessness in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless, there were 221 homeless residents countywide that year.



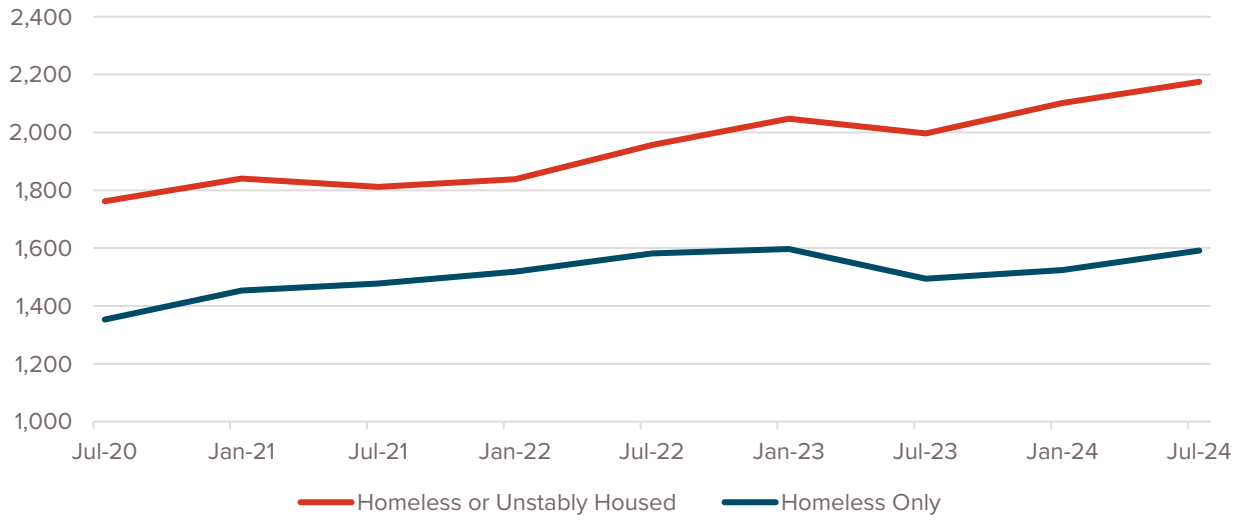
Appendix I Figure 12. Walla Walla County Point-In-Time Homeless Census, 2014-2024

Source: Walla Walla County Annual Point-in-Time Count

The Department of Commerce also reports data on persons who are homeless or unstably housed within its Snapshot of Homelessness in Washington State report. The dataset is derived from several data sources, including Medicaid records, which tracks homelessness when people access medical services, data from numbers of people accessing economic services such as Basic Food and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and data from local homelessness service providers collected by the Department of Commerce. The Snapshot reports two categories of "Homeless or Unstably Housed" and "Homeless Only," which helps to depict both those that are literally homeless, as well as those with intermittent struggles with sustainable housing. The Snapshot definition of these terms is below:

"Homeless or Unstably Housed" refers to all clients or households experiencing any homelessness or housing instability (e.g., they are literally homeless/unsheltered, receiving housing services that indicate housing instability, residing in transitional housing, or couch surfing). "Homeless Only" is a subset of the "Homeless or Unstably Housed" population and includes unsheltered clients/households who lack a fixed nighttime residence, are living outside or in a shelter not fit for human habitation or are living in emergency shelter.

Figure 13 shows a consistent trend over the past five years, like the point-in-time data above, with a gradual increase in persons and households experiencing homelessness or housing instability within the county.



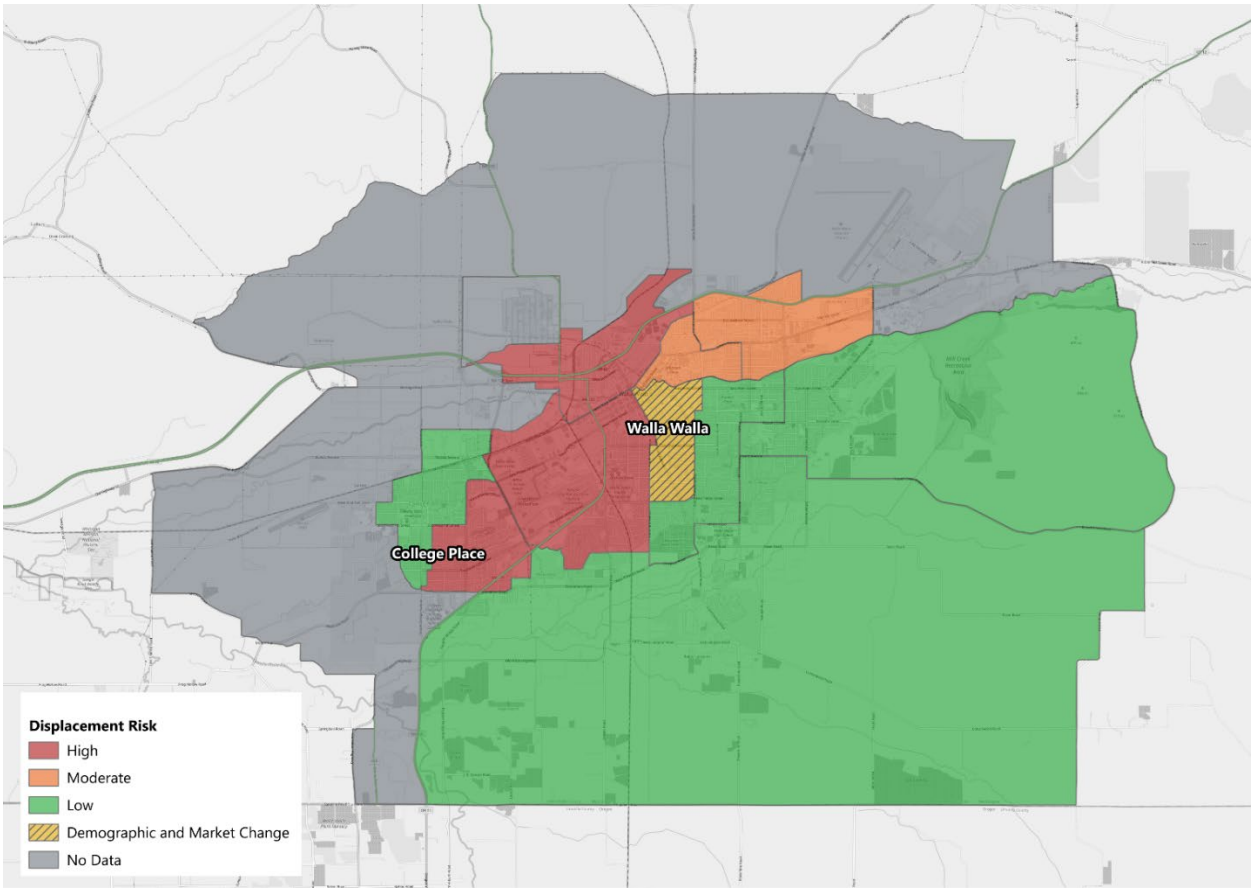
Appendix I Figure 13. Snapshot of Homelessness Counts in Walla Walla County, July 2020-July 2024

Source: Washington Department of Commerce Snapshot of Homelessness in Washington State (2024).

Walla Walla has the highest concentration of displacement risk in the county, with some households already be experiencing displacement. According to the Washington Department of

Commerce's draft Displacement Risk Map, most of the Walla Walla census tracts on the west side of the city, including downtown Walla Walla, face a high risk of displacement. Census tracts on the northeast side of the city face a moderate risk of displacement. These designations represent recently increasing average rents, along with a higher-than average proportion of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), renter, and lower-income households. The neighborhood southeast of downtown is designated as having already experienced "Demographic and Market Change", a measure indicating existing trends across three categories of analysis: a decrease in BIPOC populations and increase in incomes, an increase in rents between 2010 and 2020, and a prevalence of BIPOC, renter, and lower-income households.

As noted by the Department of Commerce, "These findings alone do not confirm displacement or risk of displacement, but act as a starting point for additional analysis and community engagement to determine the scope of displacement or displacement risk, the communities most impacted by displacement or displacement risk and the root causes of that displacement pressure." Walla Walla should continue observing market and social conditions citywide and working with local community-based organizations to identify neighborhoods where residents may be at risk of displacement.



Appendix I Figure 14. Displacement Risk Map for Walla Walla

Source: Washington Department of Commerce Draft Displacement Risk Map.

Workforce Profile

This section describes Walla Walla's workforce and job sectors, jobs-to-housing ratio, and employment trends and projections, which can help inform the city's future housing needs.

Local Workforce Characteristics

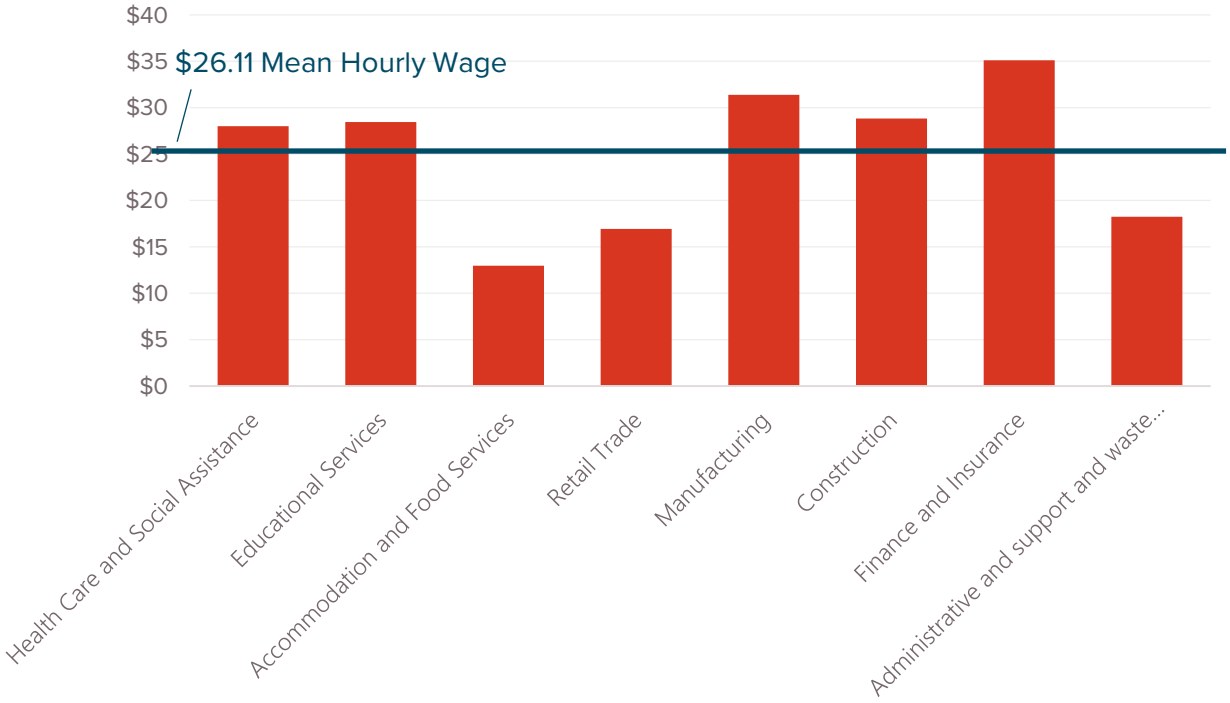
According to the latest U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data, there were 15,754 jobs in Walla Walla in 2022. Figure 14 shows change in employment by job sector since 2012. The top sector in the city is health care and social assistance, which grew by almost 11 percent over the past decade, a total of 386 jobs. Between 2012 and 2022, the educational services sector saw the highest employment gains, adding 797 jobs, while accommodation and food services and public administration added 430 and 379 jobs, respectively. The largest declines in employment occurred in the other services, retail trade, and finance and insurance sectors. The other services sector includes a wide range of jobs, including equipment and machine repair, religious activities, advocacy, dry cleaning, personal care, and pet care services, as well as losses in retail trade and finance and insurance. While health care, education, and public administration jobs tend to provide relatively high wages, accommodation and food services jobs tend to be some of the lowest paid in the local workforce. Growth across these sectors indicates a need for housing affordable to residents at a variety of income levels, including subsidized housing for lower-wage workers.

	2012	2022	Change	% Change
Educational Services	1,105	1,902	797	72%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,385	1,815	430	31%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,664	4,050	386	11%
Public Administration	1,547	1,926	379	24%
Construction	352	551	199	57%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	197	355	158	80%
Administration & Support, Waste Manage	279	397	118	42%
Wholesale Trade	278	393	115	41%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	76	153	77	101%
Manufacturing	839	881	42	5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Serv	339	371	32	9%
Utilities	68	86	18	26%
Transportation and Warehousing	133	148	15	11%
Management of Companies and Enterpris	27	41	14	52%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extrac	1	4	3	300%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	181	180	(1)	-1%
Information	263	247	(16)	-6%
Retail Trade	1,620	1,470	(150)	-9%
Finance and Insurance	640	460	(180)	-28%
Other Services (excluding Public Administr	950	324	(626)	-66%
	13,944	**15,754**	**1,810**	

Appendix I Figure 15. Jobs by Sector in Walla Walla, in 2012 vs. 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) via Census OnTheMap.

The mean hourly wage in Walla Walla County in 2023 was $26.11 (roughly $54,312 in gross annual income). Figure 15 below shows the mean hourly wage for jobs in the top employment sectors in Walla Walla County. The city's top employment sector, health care and social assistance, pays $28.00, which is higher than the county's average; Finance and insurance—the highest-paying sector behind utilities—pays $35.12, though the number of jobs in this sector has declined by 28 percent in the past 10 years.

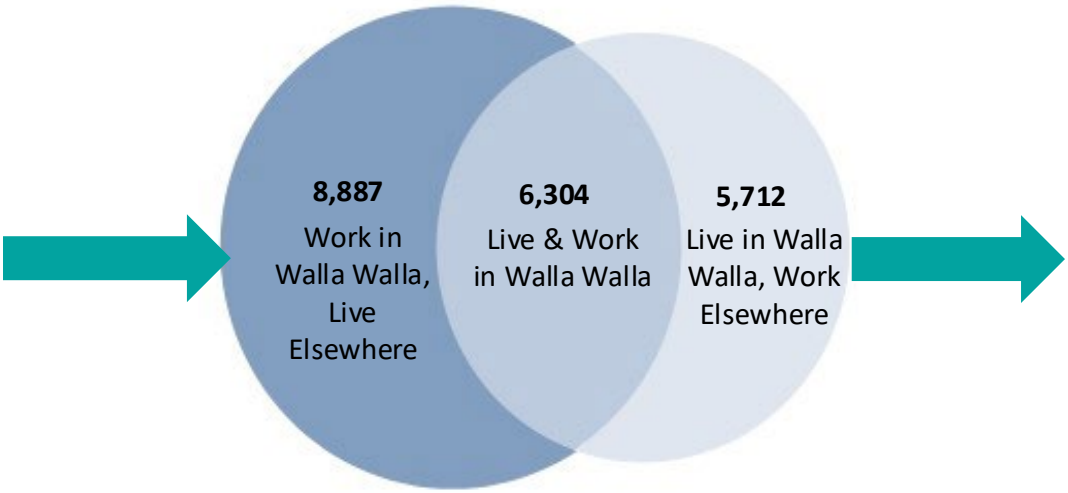


Appendix I Figure 16. Mean Hourly Wage for Jobs in Top Employment Sectors in Wall Walla County, 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor & Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages. Note: This table excludes rows with suppressed employment and wages, e.g. "Professional, scientific, and technical services".

Commute Patterns

Figure 16 visualizes commuter inflow and outflow in Walla Walla. The city has about 3,000 more commuters coming in daily for work than it has residents commuting out of the city for work. In Walla Walla, 60 percent of workers in the city also live in the city. Top destinations for commuting include College Place, WA (5 percent), Kennewick (3 percent), and Spokane (3 percent). Smaller shares also work in Pasco, Richmond, and Seattle. College Place is less than a 10-minute drive from Walla Walla. Some of the residents reported as commuting out of the city may be remote employees working from home in Walla Walla but employed in cities that are farther away, like Seattle. For in-commuting, about 15 percent of workers in Walla Walla live in College Place, 6 percent live in Milton-Freewater, OR, and 4 percent live in Kennewick. Smaller shares live elsewhere throughout the county.



Appendix I Figure 17. Commute Patterns in Walla Walla, 2021

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) via Census OnTheMap

Table 3 shows the regional comparison of the work-home destinations. As described above, the top destination for both Walla Walla's out-commuters and in-commuters after Walla Walla is College Place. Commuting inflow/outflow data is roughly similar at the county level, except in-commuting to Walla Walla County is more distributed to other geographies. Notably, the share of people employed in Walla Walla County who commute from the City of Walla Walla is 30 percent, while the share of people employed in the City of Walla Walla who commute from Walla Walla City is 60 percent. Note that "all other locations" includes unincorporated areas.

Appendix I Table 3. Location of worker residence versus employment, 2021

	Walla Walla Count	Walla Walla Share	Walla Walla County Count	Walla Walla County Share
Places Where Workers are Employed (All Jobs)				
Total	**12,016**		**21,793**	
Walla Walla city, WA	6,304	52%	10,125	46%
College Place city, WA	608	5%	1,342	6%
Kennewick city, WA	356	3%	757	3%
Spokane city, WA	324	3%	576	3%
Pasco city, WA	264	2%	748	3%
Richland city, WA	214	2%	374	2%
Spokane Valley city, WA	171	1%	300	1%
Seattle city, WA	132	1%	241	1%
Milton-Freewater city, OR	126	1%	245	1%
Yakima city, WA	91	1%	-	-
Dayton city, WA	-	-	182	1%
All Other Locations	3,426	29%	6,903	32%
Places Where Workers Live (All Jobs)				
Total	**10,569**		**25,609**	
Walla Walla city, WA	6,304	60%	7,958	31%
College Place city, WA	1,579	15%	2,266	9%

	Walla Walla Count	Walla Walla Share	Walla Walla County Count	Walla Walla County Share
Milton-Freewater city, OR	597	6%	858	3%
Walla Walla East CDP, WA	423	4%	546	2%
Kennewick city, WA	394	4%	1,487	6%
Pasco city, WA	379	4%	2,152	8%
Garrett CDP, WA	311	3%	477	2%
Richland city, WA	259	2%	597	2%
Waitsburg city, WA	165	2%	265	1%
Dayton city, WA	158	1%	-	-
Burbank CDP, WA	-	-	329	1%
All Other Locations	4,622	44%	8,674	34%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) via Census OnTheMap

Jobs to Housing Ratio

According to the latest Census data, Walla Walla's employment (12,754) to housing (14,014) ratio is 0.91. A job-to-housing ratio at or near 1.0 suggests that residents have potential employment opportunities without having to commute excessively long distances, which is beneficial for reducing vehicle miles traveled. In addition, employers have a reasonable population base upon which to recruit workers.

Housing Supply

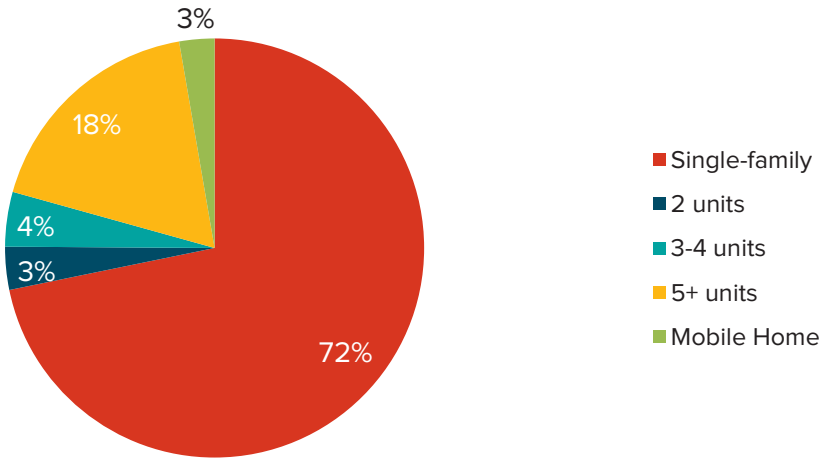
This section inventories Walla Walla's current housing stock and production trends, as well as local housing market data, including rental and sales prices, and housing affordability indicators and trends.

As stated above, the Regional HAP identified a need for the development of more "middle income" housing types, including apartments, duplexes, townhomes, cottages, manufactured homes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) due to the ability to deliver these housing types at lower price points than more traditional single-family detached and mid-rise housing types. Specifically, the HAP identified demand for an additional 3,710 new dwelling units by 2040 in the Walla Walla UGA, with 1,142 standard lot single-family detached, 889 small lot, cottages or manufactured homes, 556 townhouses/plexes, 816 multifamily units (five or more units per structure), and 297 mobile homes/ADUs.

The analysis shown in this section can be used to identify whether progress has been made in meeting these needs.

General Housing Inventory

Walla Walla has a less diverse housing mix than the state. Walla Walla's housing stock is heavily dominated by single-family homes, with fewer multifamily units. Walla Walla had 14,014 housing units in 2022 according to the ACS. Figure 17 below shows that nearly three-quarters of housing units in the city are in single-unit buildings. About 14 percent of the housing stock is in "Middle Housing" types of between two and nine units. Another 12 percent of units are in multifamily apartments, with most units in buildings of 20 or more units. About 3 percent of Walla Walla's housing stock is in mobile homes. Washington has a higher proportion of multifamily apartment units (18 percent) and a slightly lower proportion of single-family units (71 percent) than Walla Walla. In Walla Walla County, 80 percent of housing is in single-family units, and 8 percent is in multifamily buildings with at least five units.

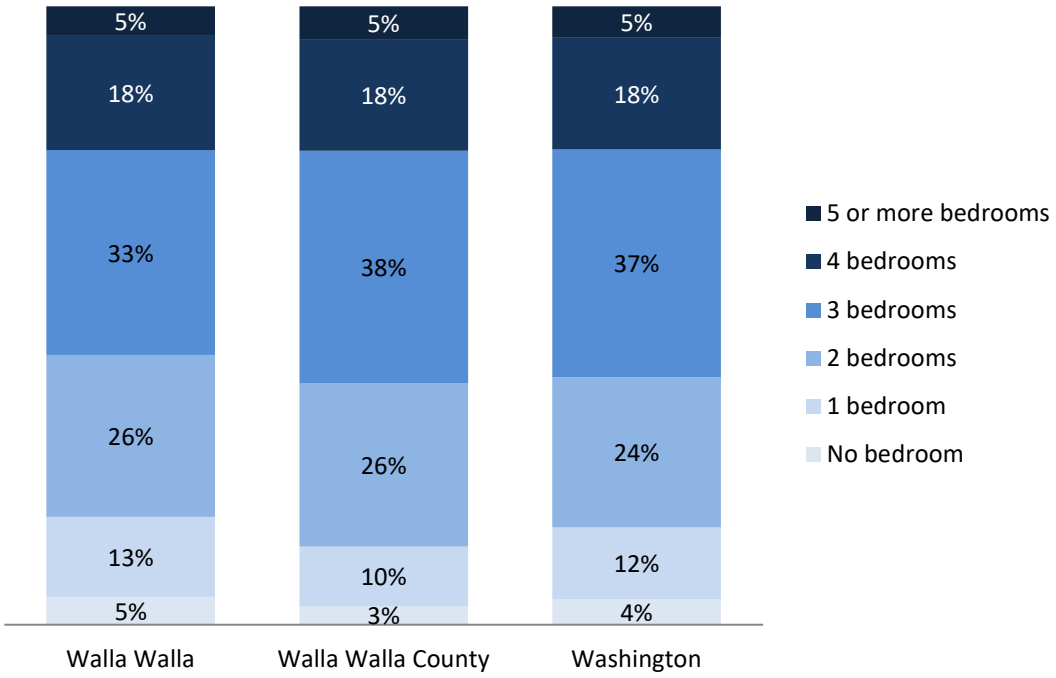


Appendix I Figure 18. Housing Unit Types in Walla Walla, 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04.

Housing Unit Size

The largest segment of Walla Walla's housing stock is three-bedroom units (33 percent), as shown in Figure 18. Over half of the city's housing units have three or more bedrooms, a lower share than the county and state. Instead, Walla Walla has a slightly higher share of one-bedroom and studio units compared to the county and state, largely due to the high share of college-aged residents in Walla Walla. This correlates with the smaller household sizes and larger shares of one-person households discussed above under Households Characteristics.

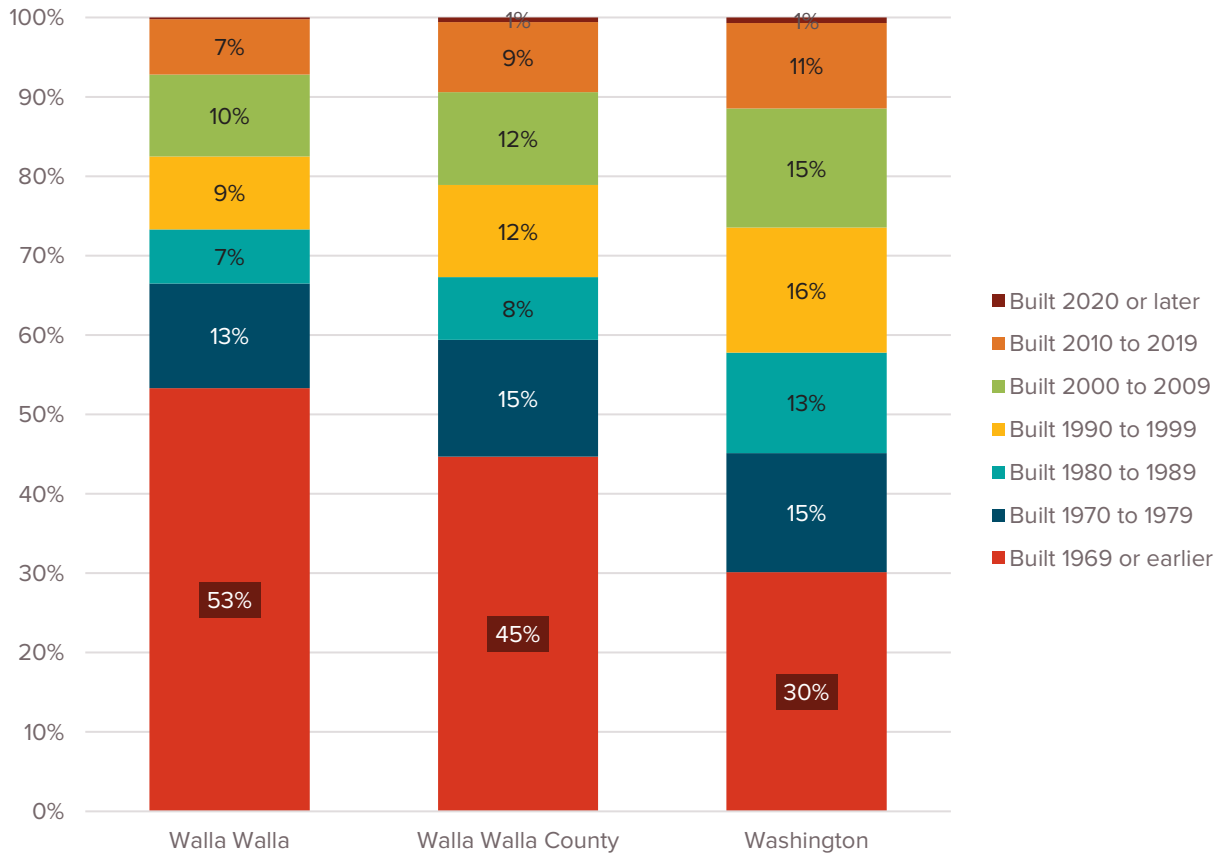


Appendix I Figure 19. Housing Unit by Bedroom Count in Walla Walla with Regional Comparison, 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

Housing Age

Figure 19 shows the age of existing housing structures by decade built. Walla Walla's housing stock is considerably older than in the county and state, with more than 53 percent of homes built prior to 1970. This suggests that considerable investment will be needed in coming decades to both maintain and reinvest in existing housing stock, as well as build new housing. This data also shows that Walla Walla has seen considerably less investment in new housing since 2010 when compared to the county and state, with less than 1 percent of the overall housing supply built since 2020.

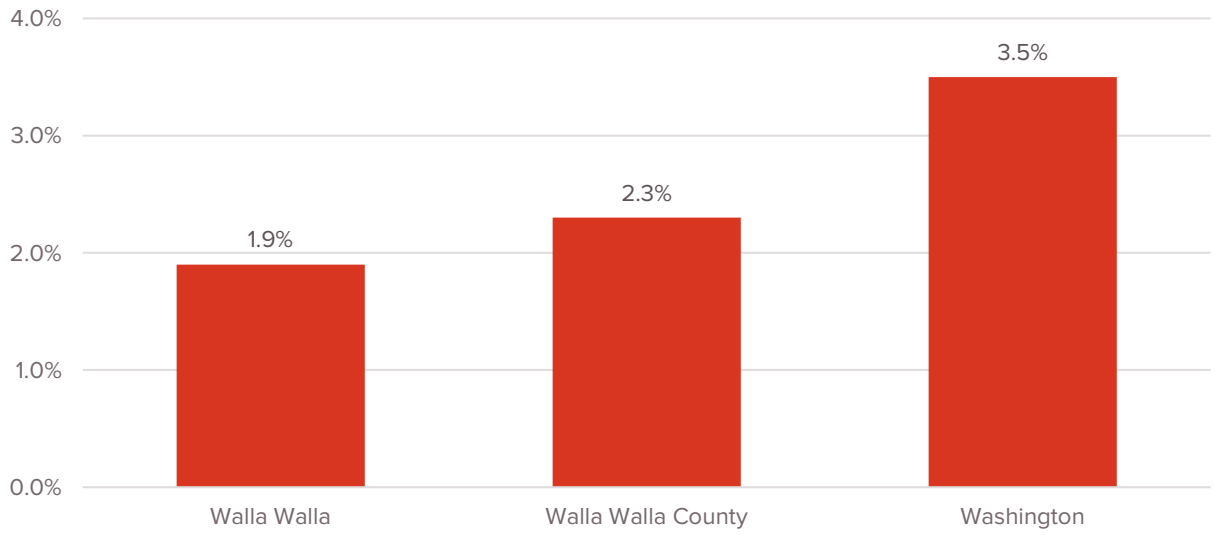


Appendix I Figure 20. Age of Existing Housing Units in Walla Walla, 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

Overcrowding

Overcrowding is defined by HUD as housing with occupants greater than one per room. While rates of overcrowding are lower in Walla Walla than in the county or state, Figure 18 shows that nearly 2 percent of households in Walla Walla live in overcrowded housing.



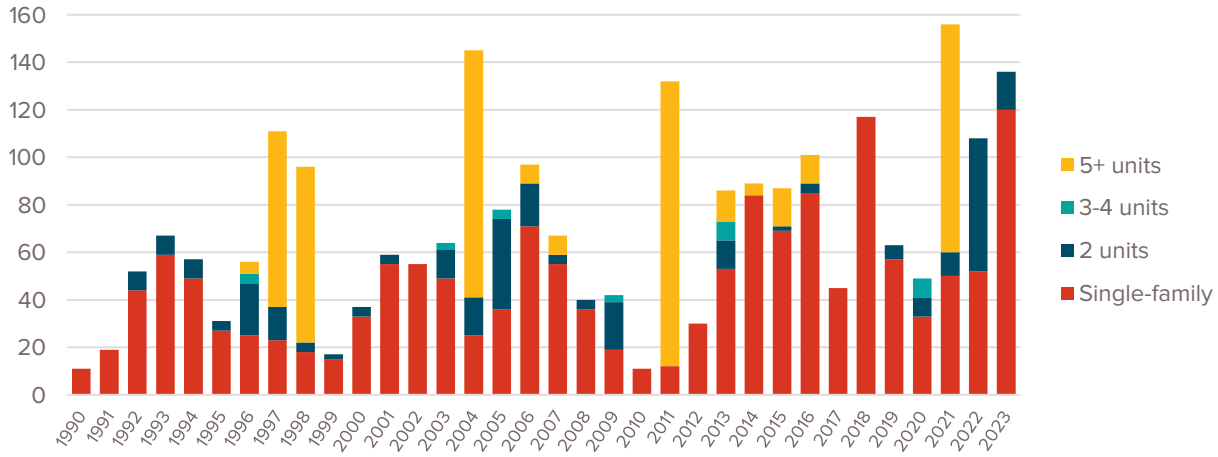
Appendix I Figure 21. Rates of Overcrowding in Walla Walla with Regional Comparison, 2022

Source: U.S. Census 2022 5-Year ACS, Table DP04

Housing Production

Figure 21 below shows housing units permitted since 1990. Since 2018, when the last Comprehensive Plan was published, a total of 629 units has been permitted, with 429 being single-family dwellings, compared to 104 in two- to four-unit structures, and 96 units in structures containing five or more units, all of which were permitted in 2021.

As noted above, the Regional HAP identified a need from 2020 to 2040 within the Walla Walla UGA for 556 townhouse or multiplex units, which correlate with the permits for two- to four-unit structures, as well as 816 multifamily units in structures of five or more units. **According to permit data, 18 percent of the needed middle housing and 12 percent of the needed multifamily has been produced since 2020, indicating significant progress is being made towards meeting the targets identified in the HAP, though a significant amount of new construction will need to continue in the coming years in order to keep up with expected demand.**



Appendix I Figure 22. Housing Unit Permits in Walla Walla, 1990-2023

Source: US Census Building Permits Survey

Subsidized Housing Inventory

The Walla Walla Housing Authority (WWHA) develops, owns, and operates affordable housing as well as providing rental assistance in Walla Walla. **The WWHA owns and manages 613 units and provides rental assistance to an additional 1,174 units.** The completion of Meadow Grove added 50 new one- and two-bedroom units to the city's affordable housing supply. Of the 613 units owned and managed by the WWHA, 128 are targeted at agricultural workers. There is also a nine-unit, 34-bed transitional program for homeless veterans. The target income to qualify for WWHA's programs is 60 percent AMI or below, and there are approximately 1,900 households on the waitlist. **The WWHA's programs have grown significantly since the early 1990s, when they owned 84 units and provided rental assistance to an additional 20.** They expect the number of subsidized units in Walla Walla to continue to grow.

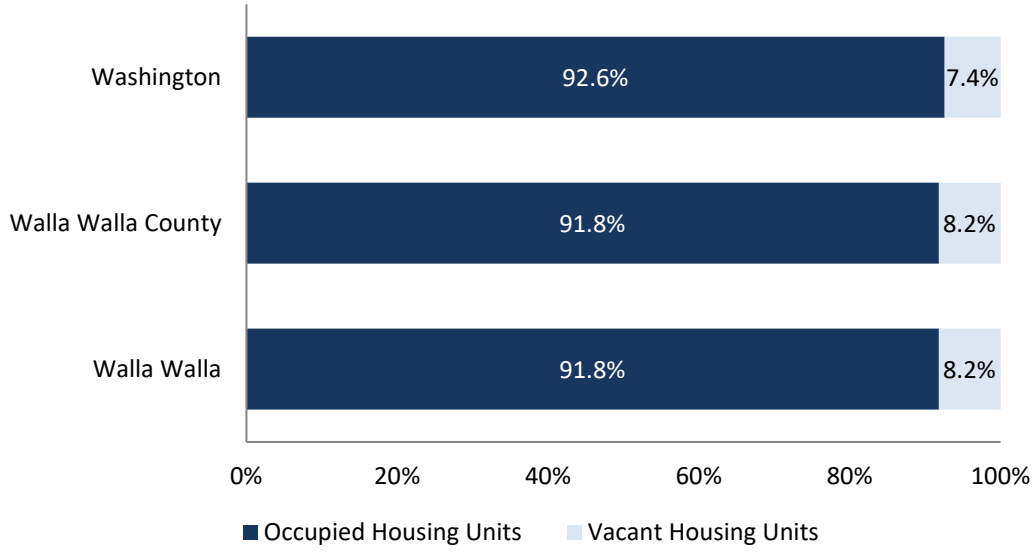


Appendix I Figure 23. Evergreen Commons Affordable Housing in Walla Walla
Source: Walla Walla Housing Authority

Housing Market Conditions

Occupancy

Walla Walla's occupancy rate is in line with the county's and slightly lower than the state's. Figure 23 below shows that in 2022, 91.8 percent of overall units in Walla Walla were occupied, according to the most recent ACS five-year estimates. This rate is the same as the county rate and a touch lower than the state rate. In 2022, 1,149 units were vacant in Walla Walla.



Appendix I Figure 24. Residential Occupancy Rates in Walla Walla with Regional Comparison, 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 5-Year ACS, Table DP04

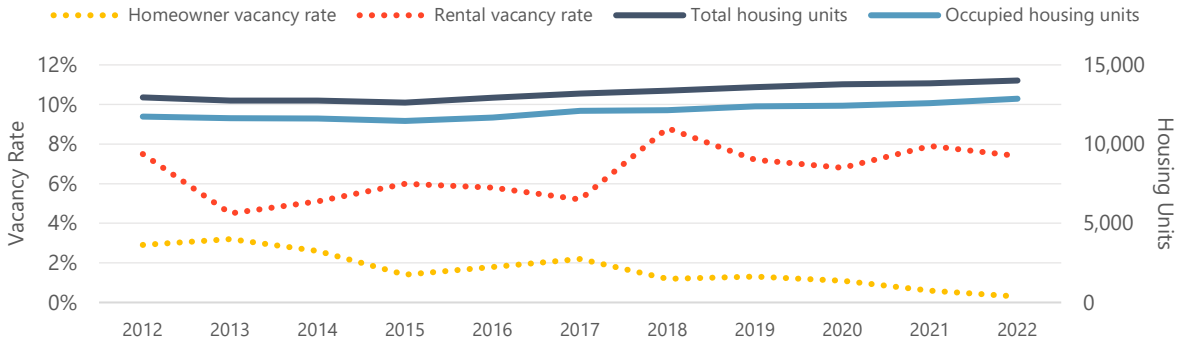
Table 4 shows the breakdown of vacant units by type. In 2022, 35 percent of vacant units were for rent (2.9 percent of all housing units in the city), and 11 percent of vacant units were dedicated for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use (less than 1 percent of all housing units). Washington has a higher share of seasonal use housing than the city and county. As of 2022, the rental vacancy rate is 7.4 percent in the city of Walla Walla and 7.6 percent in Walla Walla County. The homeowner vacancy rate is much lower – 0.3 percent in the city and 0.5 percent in the county. Since the previous Comprehensive Plan, the vacancy rate for rental units has increased by 7.5 percent, likely due to new multifamily construction coming online and going through a lease-up process.

Appendix I Table 4. Vacant Unit Types in Walla Walla with Regional Comparison, 2022

	Walla Walla Units	Walla Walla Share	Walla Walla County Units	Walla Walla County Share	Washington Units	Washington Share
Total Vacant Units	1,149	8.1%	2,054	8.2%	236,971	7.4%
For rent	406	2.9%	638	2.5%	45,935	1.4%
Rented, not occupied	11	0.1%	11	0.04%	12,427	0.4%
For sale only	25	0.2%	71	0.3%	14,761	0.5%
Sold, not occupied	53	0.4%	53	0.2%	11,041	0.3%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	124	0.9%	284	1.1%	84,274	2.6%
For migrant workers	0	0.0%	42	0.2%	1,370	0.04%
Other vacant	530	3.8%	955	3.8%	67,163	2.1%

+-Source: U.S. Census Bureau 5-Year ACS, Table B25004

Walla Walla's rental vacancy rate indicates a relatively healthy market, with rental vacancies increasing as new housing units have been delivered. However, Walla Walla has a tight ownership housing market, reflected in the increased costs of ownership housing, and indicates a need for a wider range of ownership products. Figure 25 shows Census-reported total and occupied unit counts and vacancy rates in Walla Walla over the past decade for both ownership and rental units. Although ownership vacancy rates have declined, rental vacancy rates have gradually increased since 2012, from a low of 4.5 percent in 2013 to 7.4 percent in 2022. This trend indicates that production is likely keeping up with, or exceeding, demand for rentals/apartments in the city. High vacancy rates can make it easier for residents and workers to find housing but provide less incentive for new development. The current vacancy rates for rental housing are above what is considered a "healthy" vacancy rate, which is between 5 percent and 6 percent.



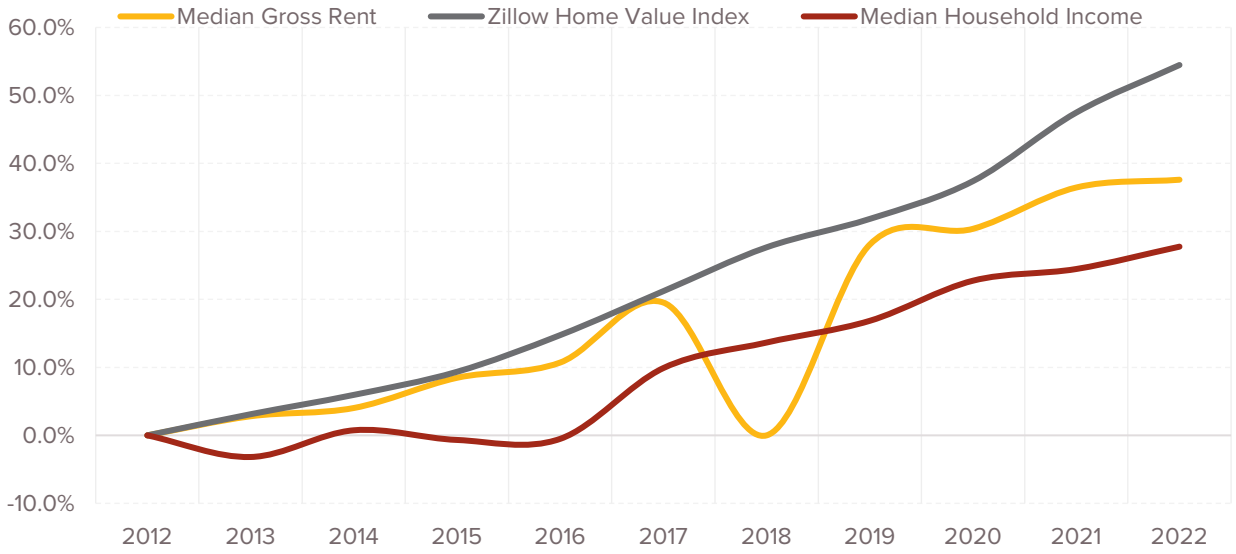
Appendix I Figure 25. Housing Vacancy Rates in Walla Walla, 2012-2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

The relationship between Walla Walla's high vacancy rate and high displacement risk may suggest a combination of high prices, real estate speculation, physical housing stock problems, or other problems preventing the absorption of housing. Despite the city's higher vacancy rate for rental housing, the displacement risk (Map 1) shows that Walla Walla has a high displacement risk in most areas. This may indicate pressure on the ownership market in which higher-income households may be replacing historically lower-income households within the market. Areas with high displacement risk are often places with lower vacancy rates, as demand outpaces supply and lower-income residents are edged out of markets with less supply.

Home Prices

Home prices and median rents have outpaced increases in household incomes since 2012, with home values showing the largest increases. Figure 25 shows the percent change in rents, home values, and household incomes in Walla Walla from 2012-2022. Over this period, median household income increased by 27.8 percent and rents by 37.6 percent. Home values increased at a higher rate of 54.5 percent. Although rents fluctuated in the period between 2016 and 2020, they kept pace with income increases and home values. However, since 2017 home prices have risen at a higher annual rate than both income and rents. Median rents in Walla Walla, according to the 2022 ACS 5-year estimates data, are about $1,109 per month. This is 6 percent higher than Walla Walla County ($1,044), but 30 percent less than the statewide median of $1,592. According to the Zillow Home Value Index, the average home value in Walla Walla was $400,668 as of December 2024, up 1.2 percent over the 2023 average.

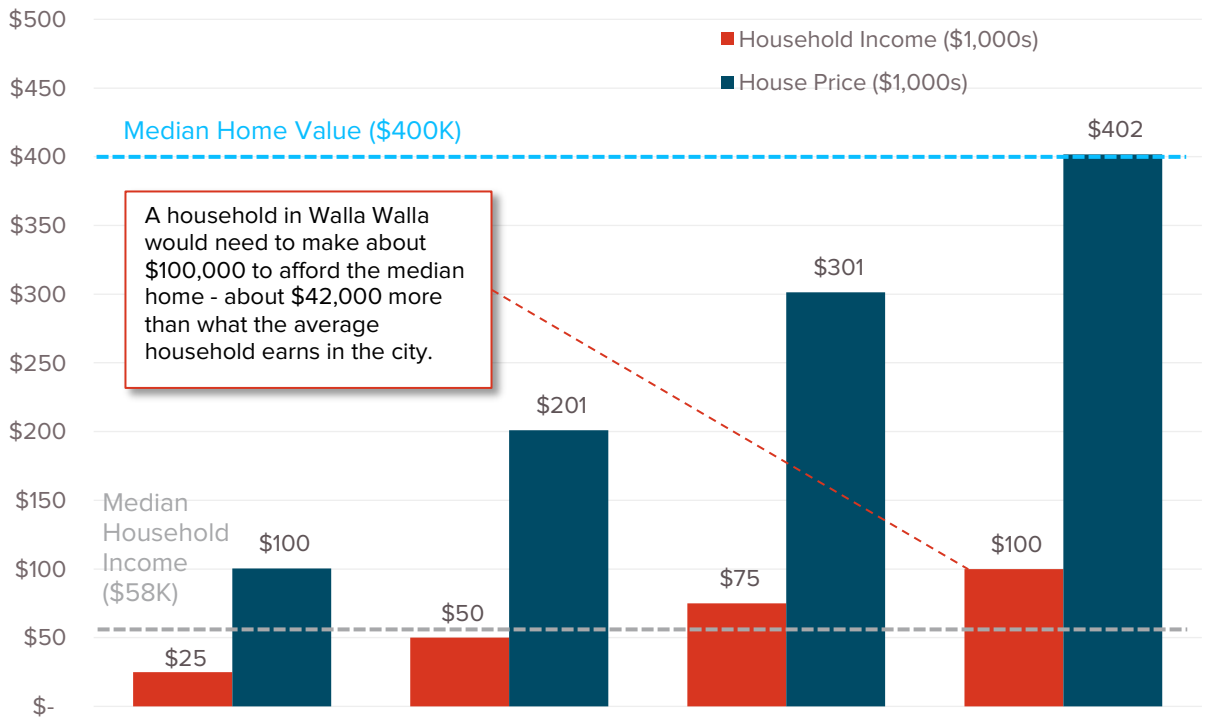


Appendix I Figure 26. Change in Rents, Home Prices, and Income in Walla Walla, 2012-2022

Sources: 2012-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S2503; Zillow Home Value Index

Given incomes and prices, home ownership continues to trend further out of reach for Walla Walla households. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the home price that households at various income levels in Walla Walla could afford. The horizontal dashed lines show the median sales price and median household income in Walla Walla. To have been able to purchase a home at the average home price of $400,668 in 2024, a household would need to make about $100,000 per year, which is about 66 percent higher than the median household income. The median household earning $58,179 could afford to purchase a home costing $233,755, assuming current interest rates, a 20 percent down payment, and a 30-year mortgage. Therefore, there is a gap of about $165,000 between what the average household in Walla Walla could afford and the average prices of homes in the city.

The affordability of ownership housing has been a persistent issue in Walla Walla. According to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, 48 percent of Walla Walla households earned enough income to afford a median price home in the city at the time—adding the caveat that the share of households with funds to cover the down payment would be likely far lower.

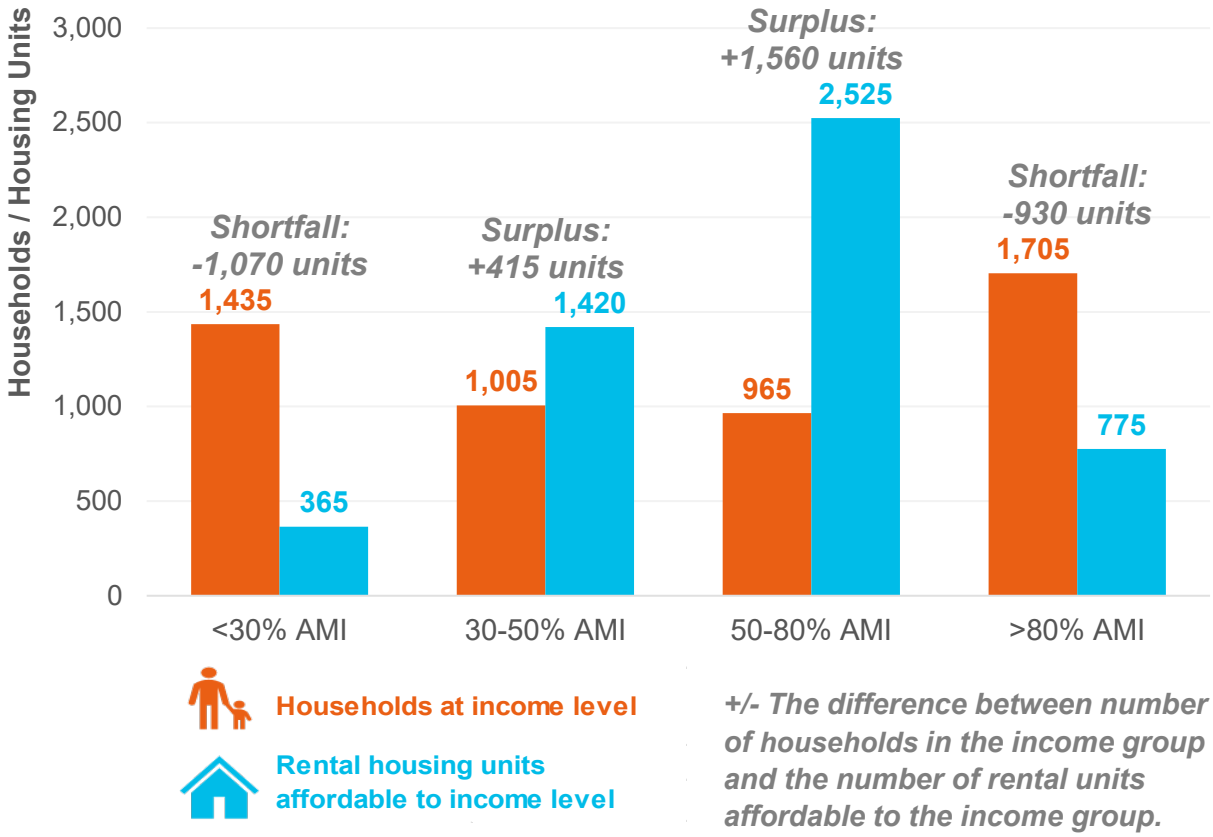


Appendix I Figure 27. Housing Affordability at Various Income Levels in Walla Walla, 2022

Sources: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S2503; Zillow Home Value Index; Freddie Mac; Leland Consulting Group

Gap Analysis

Figure 27 below compares renter households and rental units by income bracket. It shows that overall, the City has just 25 more rental units than renter households. Although there are more rental units affordable to households making between 30 and 80 percent AMI than there are households in that income band, this does not mean that these households are not cost-burdened. The shortages at the high and low end of the market indicate that lower-income households are having to compete with higher-income households for the same units.



Appendix I Figure 28. Renter Households by Income Compared to Rental Units by Affordability in Walla Walla

Source: HUD CHAS Data, 2015-2019.

Land Capacity Analysis

Amendments to the GMA in 2021 resulting from HB1220 now require Washington cities to show sufficient land capacity to accommodate projected needs at all income levels. SCJ Alliance completed an initial land capacity analysis parcel classification for the City of Walla Walla, finding **575.61 acres** of vacant and redevelopable land in the city. Residential/commercial mix and density assumptions were developed by zone based on recent trends and densities of recent, permitted, and proposed development in the City of Walla Walla. In total, the city has capacity for **2,370 new units over the 2020-2046 planning period.**

A review of projects built or permitted since the 2020 baseline as well as proposed/pipeline development shows **2,198 pending housing units** in the City of Walla Walla, which also count towards meeting the city's growth targets. Of these, 1,945 are proposed projects, including both subdivisions and multifamily projects, and the remaining 742 were permitted since 2020 or are currently under construction.

The housing unit land capacity and pending units were **categorized by what income band they can serve,** expressed as a percentage of Countywide Area Median Income (AMI), following Department of Commerce guidance and supplemented by an analysis of housing costs for single-family, duplexes, condos, and rents by unit size in the City of Walla Walla. Recent trends in ADU production as well as capacity for ADUs in lower-density residential zones were also analyzed to forecast **potential new ADU development** over the planning horizon.

This analysis shows that the City of Walla Walla has sufficient capacity to meet its housing needs at all income levels under current zoning, as detailed in the table and chart below. Full results are available in Appendix II. Land Capacity Analysis: Housing by Income Band Employment Methodology and Results.

Appendix I Table 5. The City of Walla Walla Housing Capacity by Income Band, 2020-2046

Income Band	Housing Needs	Aggregated Housing Needs	Pending Units	Remaining Needs	Total Capacity	Surplus/ Deficit
0-30 PSH	428	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	**+127**
0-30 Non PSH	714	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	**+127**
30-50	517	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	**+127**
50-80	157	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	**+127**
80-100	93	209	384	-175	570	**+745**
100-120	116	209	384	-175	570	**+745**
120+	323	323	1,175	-852	948	**+1,800**
Total	**2,348**	**2,348**	**2,198**	**150**	**2,588**	**+2,672**

Key Conclusions & Next Steps

Recent actions taken by the City of Walla Walla include changes to the local zoning code to support the development of middle housing (up to fourplexes) on single lots within residential zones, relaxed road access standards for private lanes serving up to nine dwelling units, permitting multifamily units by right in the Highway Commercial zone, removing owner occupancy requirements for accessory dwelling units, changes to the minimum density in the Multifamily Residential zone, parking changes to align with new state requirements, administrative lot splits, and allowances for up to four units and two ADUs per lot. The City also developed a program for providing water and sewer utility rate discounts to low-income citizens, as well as utilizing Community Development Block Grants to provide funding to property owners for home repair projects.

These actions, as documented in the Walla Walla Regional HAP, were taken to directly address identified housing needs for Walla Walla residents and households. Based on this HNA, Walla Walla has made progress and/or still requires actions in meeting the following housing needs:

- Walla Walla has seen moderate production of both middle housing types (2-4 units in the form of townhomes, duplexes, and other multiplexes) and multifamily housing (5+ unit structures) in recent years, indicating recent actions taken by the City are having an impact. Nevertheless, these housing types remain in demand as more affordable forms of both rental and ownership housing, particularly to bolster the needs of the local workforce.
    - Walla Walla has seen the share of cost-burdened households decrease in recent years, though renter households continue to have a significantly higher likelihood of cost-burden than homeowners. Additionally, households identified as living in poverty, or ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), have increased in recent years. This identifies the need for additional affordable housing, particularly in the form of subsidized rental housing, for households making less than 80% of area median income.
- Senior housing, particularly rental housing, will continue to be a need, as Walla Walla's population continues to age. Walla Walla should seek opportunities to support senior housing in the form of smaller units like townhomes, apartments, and ADUs.
- Walla Walla continues to have a smaller share of family households than the county and state. While this may be partially due to the large number of students living in the city, it also likely indicates the lack of affordable homes that serve families. As home prices have continued to increase and outpace wages, the City must remain focused on creating opportunities for both affordable homeownership and rental housing in the form of small-lot detached housing, townhomes, condominiums, and larger apartments.
- Much of Walla Walla's housing stock continues to age, indicating a continuing need for programs to support maintenance to keep the city's housing stock in good condition.

While many of the policies, programs and actions identified in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, and Regional HAP, have been undertaken by the City of Walla Walla, additional actions that may be taken include the following:

- Expand other fiscal incentives for those who create desired housing types such as waived fees.
- Allowing bonus density increases or other regulatory incentives for any deed-restricted affordable housing development.
    - Promote the development potentially with options that would allow a choice of developing affordable housing on-site, off-site, or through a fee-in-lieu system.
- More zoning for housing which could include new or expanded zoning for multi-family and residential, or new or expanded zoning.
    - Code compliance programs or minimum property management standards that ensure that aging residential neighborhoods remain in good condition.
- Housing assistance programs, such as Community Development Block Grans (CDBG) that help homeowners with low incomes maintain properties, provide weatherization, or remodel housing to accommodate disabilities.
- Enhance and promote programs that supply down payment assistance and application support for a matching grant program for first-time homebuyers.
    - Support the implementation of deed restriction acquisition projects with Connecting Housing to Infrastructure Program (CHIP) funding to incentivize developers to deed restrict their market rate property for resale at a below market rate. This type of program is typically administered by community land trusts (CLT) or similar types of organizations. When a buyer purchases a property at a below market rate price, a deed restriction is created that typically allows for the owner to benefit from some amount of value increase while also ensuring that the property does not revert to market rate at the next sale.
    - Create a rental registration program to track available units in the City and rental costs, to improve access to rental information.

Expedite permitting for simple building permit applications

- Develop pre-approved housing plans for accessory dwelling units, to expedite permitting and reduce building permit costs.
- Development of a Community First Choice charge waiver/ reduction program.
- Review current vacant City-owned land for surplus and possible development of low and very low-income housing development.
- Traffic Impact Fees – proportionate impact based on housing type.
- Continue to support the work of the Ad Hoc Housing Committee.



Appendix II. Land Capacity Analysis: Housing by Income Band Employment Methodology and Results

January 15, 2026

Background

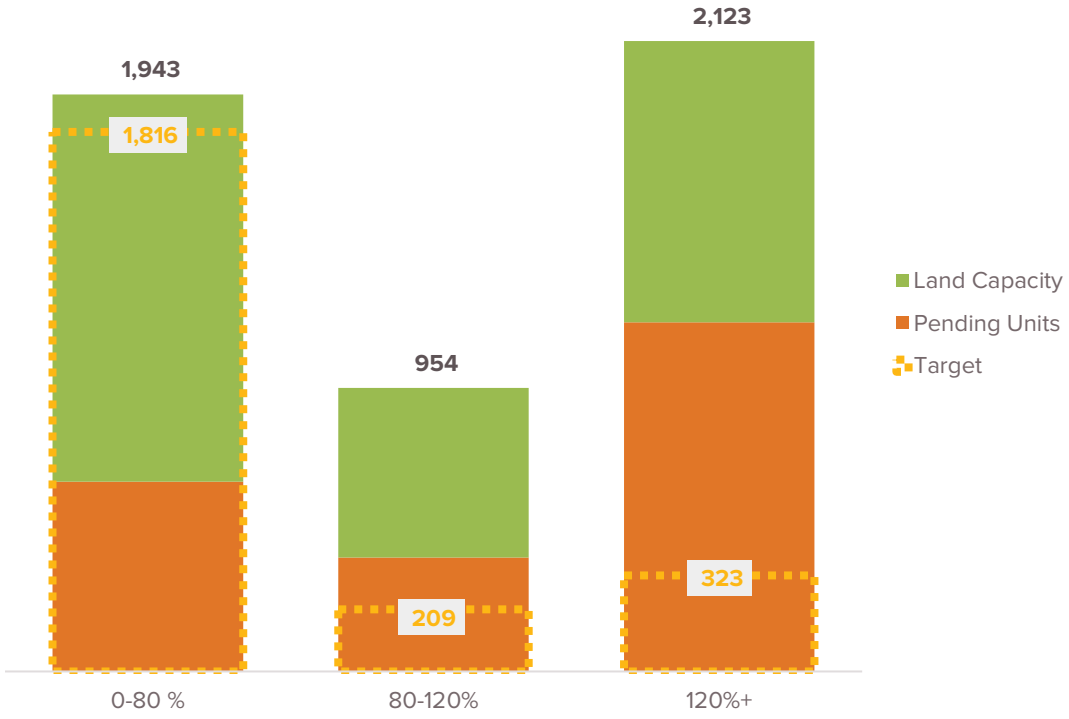
As part of the City of Walla Walla's 2046 Comprehensive Plan update, Leland Consulting Group (Leland) was retained as part of a consultant team led by SCJ Alliance to complete an analysis of land capacity for the City of Walla Walla by income band as required by RCW 36.70A.070(2)(c) This memo outlines the methodology and results of this analysis, using the process outlined in the Washington Department of Commerce's August 2023 guidebook "Guidance for Updating Your Housing Element."

Executive Summary

- Amendments to the GMA in 2021 resulting from HB1220 now require Washington cities to show sufficient land capacity to accommodate projected needs at all income levels.
- SCJ Alliance completed an initial land capacity analysis parcel classification for the City of Walla Walla, finding **575.61 acres** of vacant and redevelopable land in the city.
- Residential/commercial mix and density assumptions were developed by zone based on recent trends and densities of recent, permitted, and proposed development in the City of Walla Walla. In total, the city has capacity for **2,370 new units over the 2020-2046 planning period.**
- A review of projects built or permitted since the 2020 baseline as well as proposed/pipeline development shows **2,198 pending housing units** in the City of Walla Walla, which also count towards meeting the city's growth targets. Of these, 1,945 are proposed projects, including both subdivisions and multifamily projects, and the remaining 742 were permitted since 2020 or are currently under construction.
- The housing unit land capacity and pending units were **categorized by what income band they can serve,** expressed as a percentage of Countywide Area Median Income (AMI), following Department of Commerce guidance and supplemented by an analysis of housing costs for single-family, duplexes, condos, and rents by unit size in the City of Walla Walla.
- Recent trends in ADU production as well as capacity for ADUs in lower-density residential zones were also analyzed to forecast **potential new ADU development** over the planning horizon.
- This analysis shows that the City of Walla Walla has sufficient capacity to meet its housing needs at all income levels under current zoning, as detailed in the table and following chart:

Appendix II Table 1. The City of Walla Walla Housing Capacity by Income Band, 2020-2046

Income Band	Housing Needs	Aggregated Housing Needs	Pending Units	Remaining Needs	Total Capacity	Surplus/ Deficit
0-30 PSH	428	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	+127
0-30 Non PSH	714	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	+127
30-50	517	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	+127
50-80	157	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	+127
80-100	93	209	384	-175	570	+745
100-120	116	209	384	-175	570	+745
120+	323	323	1,175	-852	948	+1,800
Total	2,348	2,348	2,198	150	2,588	+2,672



Appendix II Figure 1. The City of Walla Walla Aggregated Income Band Land Capacity Analysis Results, 2020-2045

Land Capacity Analysis by Income Band

Housing Targets by Income Band

Amendments to the Growth Management Act under House Bill 1220 passed in 2021 require jurisdictions to analyze their estimated housing capacity by household income level. Using future county-level housing targets from Commerce, Walla Walla County determined the units to be accommodated by the City of Walla Walla versus unincorporated areas, categorized by what income band the housing units can serve, expressed as a percentage of the HUD Area Median Income (AMI). For reference, the 2025 AMI for Walla Walla County is $97,900 for a household size of four persons per family. The AMI is determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and is generally higher than the Census-reported Median Household income for a given city, since it is a countywide metric and based on family income, which excludes some households. The HUD AMI is used to determine eligibility and income limits for subsidized affordable housing units. The City of Walla Walla must demonstrate sufficient land capacity for the number of units allocated for households at all income bands.

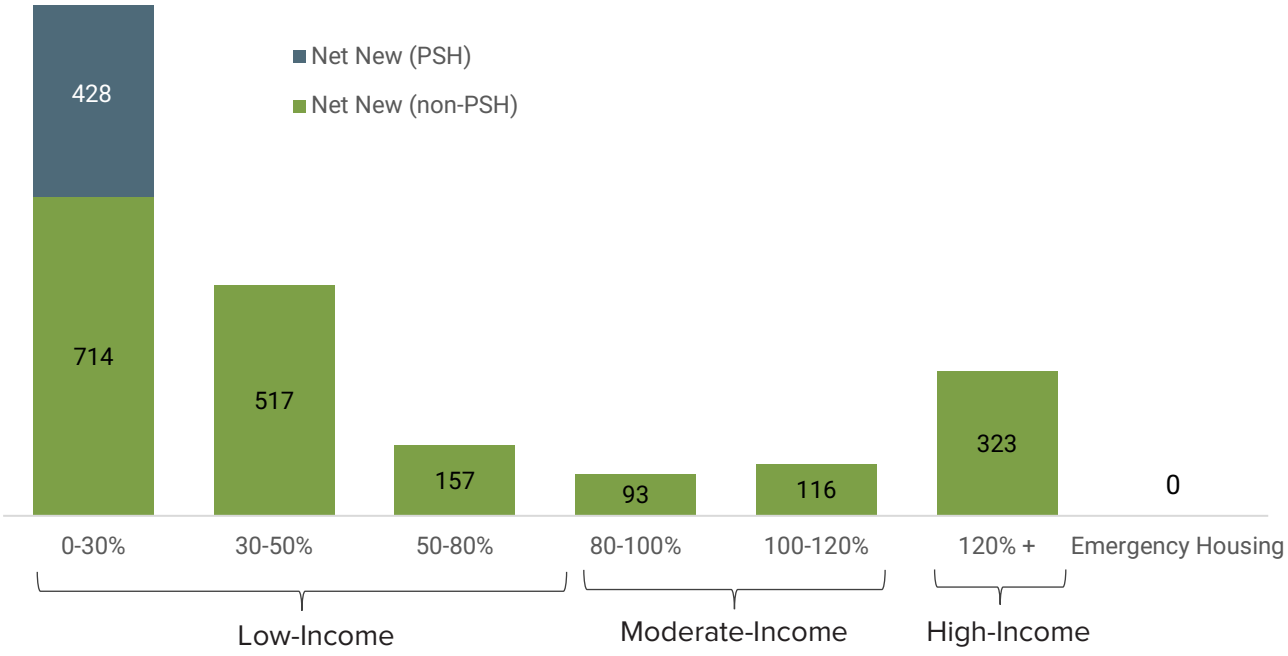
In conjunction with the Cities, Walla Walla County selected a 2046 population target of 73,112, between the OFM medium and high range. This represents a net increase of 10,528 residents over the 2020-2046 period. The County allocated population and housing targets to each city. The City of Walla Walla's allocation is for 5,824 new residents and 2,348 new housing units for the 2020-2046 planning period. The breakdown of these housing units by income band as a percentage of AMI, including 0-30% AMI permanent supportive housing (PSH), defined in the Department of Commerce guidebook as "subsidized, leased housing for people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness and living with a disabling condition," is shown below in Appendix II Figure 2.

Additionally, each jurisdiction receives a housing target for emergency housing, defined as "temporary accommodations for households who are experiencing homelessness or are at imminent risk of becoming homeless." Walla Walla County has set the City of Walla Walla's target for Emergency Housing at zero, since the County already has sufficient capacity for projected Emergency Housing needs. See p. 53 for more details.

Income Categories

This analysis uses three main income categories:

Low-Income *(Households earning under 80% AMI)*
Moderate-Income *(Households earning 80-120% AMI)*
High-Income *(Households earning more than 120% AMI)*

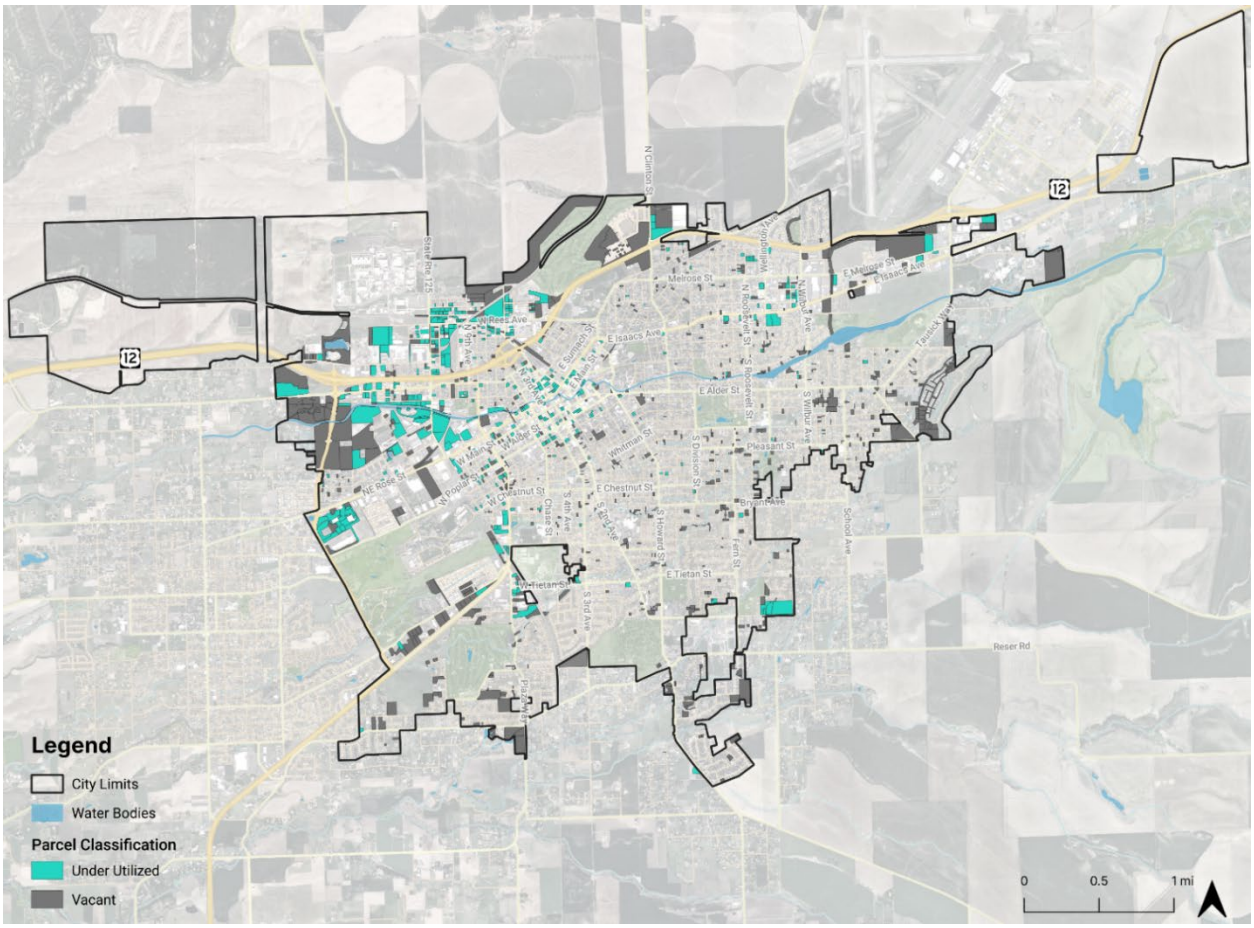


Appendix II Figure 2. The City of Walla Walla Housing Unit Targets by Income Band, 2020-2046

Source: Walla Walla County

Potentially Developable Acreage

SCJ Alliance conducted an overall Land Capacity Analysis for the City of Walla Walla for the 2020-2046 planning horizon which produced the total vacant and redevelopable acreage by zone used in this income band analysis. This analysis classified parcels as vacant or under-utilized, excluded parcels that were fully developed or unsuitable for development as well as parcel acreage encumbered by critical areas. The parcel classifications used in this analysis are shown in the map below in Appendix II Figure 3.



Appendix II Figure 3. The City of Walla Walla Land Capacity Analysis Parcel Classifications

Source: SCJ Alliance

After parcel classification and removal of critical areas, further deductions were applied to account for infrastructure gaps and a market factor representing a portion of land that will remain unavailable during the planning period due to the market and individual property owner choice. The net vacant, under-utilized, and partially utilized acreage by zone are shown below in Appendix II Table 2.

Appendix II Table 2. Total Developable Acreage in the City of Walla Walla by Zone

Zone	Description	Net Developable Vacant Acres	Net Developable Underutilized Acres	Total Net Developable Acres
CC	Central Commercial	1.7	7.7	9.4
CH	Highway Commercial	95.2	36.7	131.9
IH	Heavy Industrial	40.4	52.9	93.2
IL	Light Industrial / Commercial	29.1	24.1	53.2
PR	Public Reserve	33.4	2.5	35.9
RN	Neighborhood Residential	193.4	15.1	208.6
RM	Multi-Family Residential	12.9	1.1	14.1
UPC	Urban Planned Community	26.3	2.9	29.2

Source: SCJ Alliance

Residential/Commercial Split

The next step in the analysis was to develop assumptions around how much of each zone acreage would develop as commercial or residential uses. Residential zones are assumed to develop with fully residential uses. In commercial and mixed-use zones, real estate data from CoStar, a national data provider, as well as City parcel and permit data were analyzed to determine the share of development in each zone over the past decade which was commercial or residential (by parcel acreage). In the past 10 years, approximately 25% of the acreage developed in the CH zone has been multifamily. In CC, CoStar reports that the only commercial development since 2015 was the Lodge Apartments. However, County Assessor data shows that some restaurants were also built in that zone over the past decade. Since it is a mixed-use zone with a variety of allowed uses and a commercial focus, and most existing development in the zone is non-residential, the same 25% assumption was used as in CH. The table below in Appendix II Table 3 shows the Residential/Commercial split used in this analysis.

Appendix II Table 3. Residential/Commercial Split for the City of Walla Walla LCA

Zone	Description	Assumed % Residential for LCA	Assumed % Commercial for LCA
CC	Central Commercial	25%	75%
CH	Highway Commercial	25%	75%
IH	Heavy Industrial	0%	0%
IL	Light Industrial / Commercial	0%	0%
PR	Public Reserve	5%	95%
RN	Neighborhood Residential	100%	0%
RM	Multi-Family Residential	100%	0%

Housing Density Assumptions

Finally, density assumptions for each zone were developed to convert the resulting residential and commercial acreage into potential housing unit capacity. These assumptions were based on both allowed zoning in the City of Walla Walla's code as well as recent trends and examples of recent development in the city:

- In the CC zone, density was based on the recent Lodge Apartments.
- In the CH zone, density was based on an average of three projects built since 2007: Wellington Arms, Desoto, and Affinity.
- In the RN zone, density was based on achieved density of about 5 units per acre seen over the past decade, plus an additional assumption that 10 percent of housing in the zone could be duplexes, following an analysis of recent middle housing trends in the city discussed further below and shown in Appendix II Figure 5. This resulted in an average density of 5.5 units per acre (i.e. assuming that 10 percent of lots would develop at 10 units per acre).
- Public Reserve allows some single-family housing, so a similar density to RN was used, but without the middle housing assumptions.
- In the RM zone, an average of existing and recently completed apartments (Cottage at Sunset Lodge, Kenwood) was used.

The resulting assumed densities for housing on vacant and underutilized parcels in each zone are shown below:

Appendix II Table 4. Housing Density Assumptions for the City of Walla Walla LCA

Zone	Description	Assumed Density for LCA (du/ac)	Notes
CC	Central Commercial	75.0	Based on The Lodge Apartments
CH	Highway Commercial	30.0	Based on an average of Wellington Arms, Desoto, Affinity (all built since 2007)
PR	Public Reserve	5.0	
RN	Neighborhood Residential	5.5	Based on achieved density of new single-family development over the past 5 years (5 du/ac) + 10% duplex assumption as detailed above.
RM	Multi-Family Residential	20.0	Based on recent apartments (Cottage at Sunset Lodge, Kenwood)

Housing Unit Capacity on Vacant and Underutilized Parcels

The table below shows the housing unit capacity by zone on vacant and underutilized parcels, derived from the total acreage of these parcels as detailed previously, adjusted by the residential/commercial split, then multiplied by the assumed densities shown above, and finally adjusted to account for existing units that would be lost to redevelopment. On vacant and underutilized parcels, the City of Walla Walla has land capacity for 2,370 new units over the 2020-2046 planning period. Note that this LCA also takes into account projects built since 2020 and planned future developments, including a number of large proposed projects in the UPC zone. These "pending" units are discussed further below. The pending units are then combined with the land capacity on vacant and underutilized parcels shown in Appendix II Table 5to derive the City of Walla Walla's total capacity for this LCA shown in Appendix II Table 11.

Appendix II Table 5. Housing Unit Capacity on Vacant and Underutilized parcels in the City of Walla Walla by Zone

Zone	Description	Net Unit Capacity
CC	Central Commercial	**176**
CH	Highway Commercial	**989**
IH	Heavy Industrial	**0**
IL	Light Industrial / Commercial	**0**
PR	Public Reserve	**9**
RN	Neighborhood Residential	**1,147**
RM	Multi-Family Residential	**282**

Housing Unit Capacity by Income Band

The next step in this analysis is to break down the land capacity for future units into income bands that those units could serve. Following Department of Commerce guidance, this is accomplished by grouping zones into zone categories based on the housing types that are allowed and then grouping those categories by the lowest potential income level that could be served by the housing types in that zone category. The table below in Appendix II Figure 4 shows the Department of Commerce's guidance on the relationship of housing types to income levels and land capacity. These "moderate-cost" income band classifications are recommended for communities outside the Puget Sound region.

Note that the Commerce table shown below in Appendix II Figure 4 includes columns for both assumed income bands that can be served by market-rate development and assumed income bands that can be served by subsidized development (i.e. income-restricted low-income housing funded through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit or Multifamily Tax Exemption, etc.). Following Commerce guidance, zones are categorized based on the lowest *potential* income that can be served, including by subsidized development, in the zone. This does not imply that the entire zone will be built out with subsidized or deeply subsidized units, but it does indicate that the zone *allows* those types of units to be built without undue regulatory barriers, as required by HB1220. Commerce guidance and HB1220 also indicate that jurisdictions should document available sources of subsidy that may be used over the planning horizon in order for the capacity for lower income units, particularly under 50 percent AMI, to be realized. This is found in the "Adequate Provisions" analysis in **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Zone category	Typical housing types allowed	Lowest potential income level served		Assumed affordability level for capacity analysis
		Market rate	With subsidies and/or incentives	
Low Density	Detached single family homes	Higher income (>120% AMI)	Not typically feasible at scale*	Higher income (>120% AMI)
Moderate Density	Townhomes, duplex, triplex, quadplex	Moderate income (>80-120% AMI)	Not typically feasible at scale*	Moderate income (>80-120% AMI)
Low-Rise Multifamily	Walk-up apartments, condominiums (2-3-floors)	Low income (>50-80% AMI)	Extremely low and Very low income (0-50% AMI)	Low income (0-80% AMI) and PSH
Mid-Rise Multifamily	Apartments, condominiums	Low income (>50-80% AMI)	Extremely low and Very low income (0-50% AMI)	Low income (0-80% AMI) and PSH
ADUs (all zones)	Accessory Dwelling Units on developed residential lots	Low income (>50-80% AMI)	N/A	Low income (>50-80% AMI) – Group with Low-Rise and/or Mid-Rise Multifamily

Appendix II Figure 4. Department of Commerce Guidance on Income Band Classification (Moderate-Cost Communities)

Source: Washington Department of Commerce "Guidance for Updating Your Housing Element" (2023)

To corroborate the income band classifications shown above for *market rate* units, CoStar data on rents and Redfin data on home sales was analyzed and compared to Walla Walla County's AMI. Appendix II Table 6 shows sales prices for single-family and middle housing in the City of Walla Walla, for all sales regardless of age of housing unit as well as for sales of recently built

units. Newly built single-family homes are serving households earning 120 percent AMI and higher, and newly built duplexes are serving households earning between 100-120 percent AMI, confirming the Commerce assumptions above for those housing types. Note that median sales prices indicate that some single-family homes are serving moderate-income households earning less than 120 percent AMI, and some condos and townhomes are affordable to households earning slightly below 80 percent AMI, but since the LCA is focused mostly on new housing production, the income band assumptions based on homes built since 2020 were used.

Appendix II Table 6. Market Sales Prices of Single-Family and Middle Housing in the City of Walla Walla

	Sale Price	Affordable to AMI %
Single-Family		
Median 2025 YTD Sales Price (All Single-Family Homes)	$437,668	111%
Average Price of 204 Homes Built and Sold Since 2020	$504,846	128%
Middle Housing		
Median 2025 YTD Sale Price (All Condos/Townhomes)	$297,375	76%
Average Price of 3 Duplexes Built and Sold Since 2020	$410,000	104%

Source: Redfin, Leland Consulting Group, HUD
Note: Assumes 20% down payment, 6.5% interest rate, 30-year mortgage, 0.9% property tax rate, and $5/$1,000 insurance rate.

Appendix II Table 7 shows market rents for all multifamily apartments in the City of Walla Walla and for recently developed apartments, by unit size. It then shows the corresponding percentage of AMI that households of various sizes would need to afford the rent, based on HUD income limits by household size. Overall, most renters earning 80 percent AMI would be able to afford an apartment in the city at an appropriate size for their household. Some smaller households at 80 percent AMI or below may struggle to afford to rent an apartment in recently built projects. This data only captures rents in multifamily buildings reported by CoStar. For comparison, data from the Washington Center for Real Estate Research reports an average rent citywide of **$1,277,** which also includes rentals of single-family units. These rents would be affordable to **all household sizes at 80 percent AMI or below.**

Overall, this data suggests that the majority of renters in the City of Walla Walla, particularly in households of two people or more, can afford a unit without being cost-burdened if their incomes are at 80 percent of the AMI. However, because some recent construction is renting for higher rates, particularly for smaller units, the LCA assumes that 75 percent of market-rate capacity in multifamily zones can serve households earning 80 percent AMI and below, and 25 percent may serve households in the 80-120 percent AMI bracket.

Appendix II Table 7. Market Multifamily Rents in the City of Walla Walla, September 2025

	Average Monthly Rent	% of AMI Needed for 1-Person Household	% of AMI Needed for 2-Person Household	% of AMI Needed for 3-Person Household
HUD Income Limit		$68,600	$78,400	$88,200
Average Rent per Studio Unit (all)	$1,031	60%	53%	47%
Average Rent per Studio Unit (Built Since 2020)	$1,494	87%	76%	68%
Average Rent per 1-Bedroom Unit (all)	$1,217	71%	62%	55%
Average Rent per 1-Bedroom Unit (Built Since 2020)	$1,522	89%	78%	69%
Average Rent per 2-Bedroom Unit (all)	$1,570	92%	80%	71%
Average Rent per 2-Bedroom Unit (Built Since 2020)	$1,685	98%	86%	76%
Average Rent per 3-Bedroom Unit (all)	$1,648	96%	84%	75%
Average Rent per 3-Bedroom Unit (Built Since 2020)	$1,953	114%	100%	89%

Source: CoStar, HUD Income Limits, Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Leland Consulting Group
Note: Assumes households can spend 30 percent of their income on rent/housing costs without being cost-burdened.

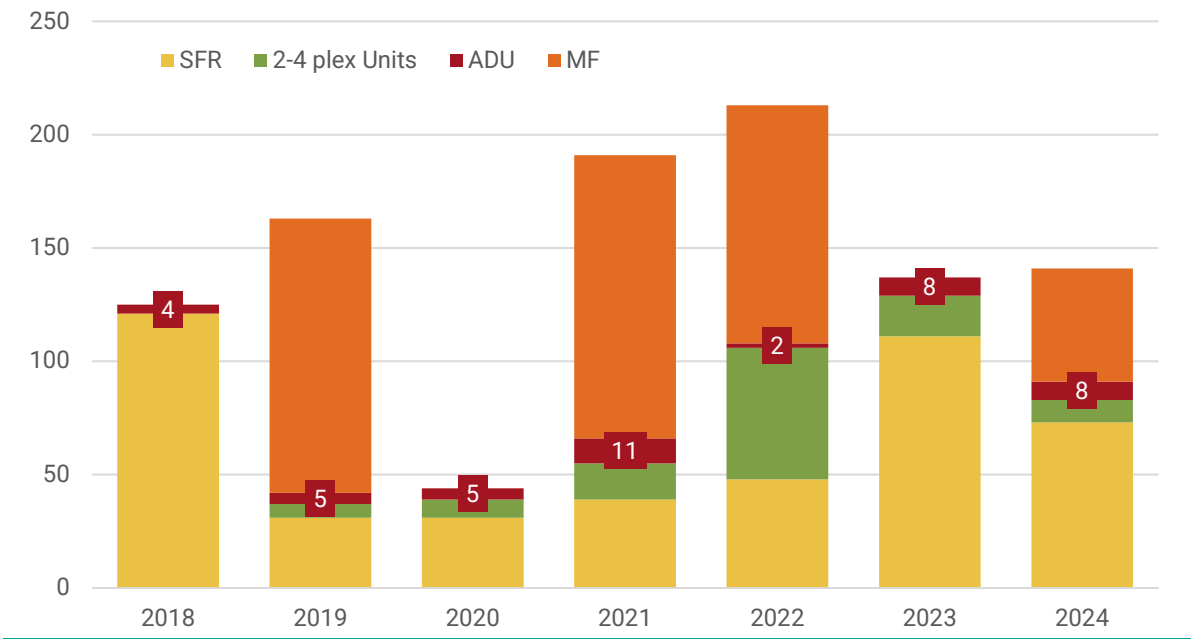
Based on this cost analysis and the types of housing allowed in each of the City of Walla Walla's zoning districts, the table below shows the income-band classifications for each zone in the city. Note that the CC, CH, and RM zones are split between the 0-80 percent AMI and 80-120 percent AMI brackets, as described above, and the RN is mostly assumed to serve 120 percent AMI and higher, but 10 percent of the capacity in this zone is allocated to the 80-120 percent AMI category since it is assigned to duplex capacity as described above on p.46, and duplexes are assumed to serve moderate-income households as detailed above in Appendix II Table 6.

Appendix II Table 8. Capacity and Affordability Levels by Zone for the City of Walla Walla LCA

Zone	Zone Description	Net Unit Capacity	Assumed Affordability Level for Capacity Analysis	Notes
CC	Central Commercial	132	0-80%	75% of zone capacity to 0-80% based on apartment rent data
CC	Central Commercial	44	80-120%	25% of zone capacity to 80-120% based on apartment rent data
CH	Highway Commercial	742	0-80%	75% of zone capacity to 0-80% based on apartment rent data
CH	Highway Commercial	247	80-120%	25% of zone capacity to 80-120% based on apartment rent data
IH	Heavy Industrial	0		
IL	Light Industrial / Commercial	0		
PR	Public Reserve	9	120% +	
RN	Neighborhood Residential	939	120% +	90% of zone capacity to 120+% for assumed single-family capacity
RN	Neighborhood Residential	209	80-120%	10% of zone capacity to 80-120% for assumed duplex capacity
RM	Multi-Family Residential	211	0-80%	75% of zone capacity to 0-80% based on apartment rent data
	Multi-Family Residential	70	80-120%	25% of zone capacity to 80-120% based on apartment rent data
UPC		0	120% +	
	TOTAL	**2,370**		

ADU Capacity

Recent state legislation requires the City of Walla Walla to allow two ADUs, attached or detached, on every low-density residential lot. To calculate ADU capacity for the purposes of this LCA, following Commerce guidance, the total number of parcels zoned for low-density residential was used as a base count of potential parcels where an ADU could be developed. The RN zone is the City of Walla Walla's low-density residential zone, which contains a total of 9,909 parcels. Taking a conservative estimate that 2 percent of parcels in the zone might see an ADU developed over the planning horizon, and that 10 percent of that 2 percent might see two ADUs as a result of recent legislation, results in an ADU capacity of 218 units over the planning period. This would equate to about 11 ADUs produced per year, which is in line with recent trends shown below in Appendix II Figure 5. In 2021, 11 ADUs were built, and the average over the past five years is 6.8 ADUs per year. Additionally, Commerce guidance suggests that ADUs should not count towards more than 10 percent of total housing capacity. In this case, 218 ADUs would represent 8 percent of the City of Walla Walla's total capacity, not exceeding the 10 percent threshold.



Appendix II Figure 5. Housing Units Built in the City of Walla Walla, 2018-2024

Source: City of Walla Walla

Total Land and ADU Capacity by Income Band

Finally, the capacity by zone is totaled based on the zone category and affordability level corresponding to the housing types allowed. At this point, ADU capacity is also added, and assigned to the 0-80 percent income band per Commerce guidance. The table below shows total land capacity in the City of Walla Walla by income band on vacant and underutilized parcels. In the next step, units built since 2020 or in the development pipeline will be classified by income band and added to the totals.

Appendix II Table 9. Total Additional Unit Capacity by Income Band in the City of Walla Walla, 2020-2046

Zone Category	Assumed Affordability Level for Capacity Analysis	Housing Types Allowed	Additional Unit Capacity
Low Density	120% +	Detached single-family homes	948
Moderate Density	80-120%	Townhomes, duplex, triplex, quadplex	512
Low-Rise	0-80%	Walk-up apartments, condominiums (2-3 stories)	911
Mid-Rise	0-80%	Apartments, condominiums	0
ADUs	0-80%	Accessory Dwelling Units	198
		TOTAL	**2,588**

Pending Units

The City of Walla Walla's housing targets are based on a 2020 baseline. Therefore, development since 2020 should be counted toward the city's housing targets, per Commerce guidance. Additionally, parcels with proposed or planned development were excluded from consideration in the parcel classification process conducted by SCJ. Per Commerce guidance, the planned and proposed development should also count towards the city's targets. Together, planned and proposed development and units built or permitted since 2020 are called "Pending" units for the purposes of this LCA. The table below shows pending units in the City of Walla Walla.

These units are classified by income band using the same methodology as used for the overall land capacity analysis – multifamily units are split with 75 percent of units going to the 0-80 percent AMI category and the remaining 25 percent (representing smaller units that may not be affordable to one-person households earning 80 percent AMI) going towards the 80-120 percent category. Additionally, several projects including Meadow Grove, Peyton Lane, and MC Gateway, are known affordable housing projects targeting households earning less than 80 percent AMI. Therefore, these projects are categorized accordingly in the table below.

Appendix II Table 10. Pending Units in the City of Walla Walla for LCA

Year	Project / Info	Single Family Units	Townhome Units	ADUs	Duplexes	Multifamily (0-80% AMI)	Multifamily (80-120% AMI)
2020	Permitted Units	31		5	2	3	1
2021	Permitted Units	39	4	11	8	94	31
2022	Permitted Units	48		2	29	79	26
2023	Permitted Units	110		8	9		
2024	Permitted Units	75	1	8	5	3	1
2025	Permitted Units	48		3	1		
Under Construction	Meadow Grove					50	
Under Construction	Peyton Lane					7	
Proposed	BMAC Tiny Homes				8		
Proposed	Equinox	119					
Proposed	Pinnacle	35					
Proposed	Waterford					48	16
Proposed	Equinox Commercial						
Proposed	MC Gateway	670					
Proposed	McFeely's Building					15	5
Proposed	Bouchon Area - Palindrome		75			56	19
Proposed	Myra Road - Palindrome		60			248	83
Total		**1,175**	**140**	**37**	**62**	**602**	**182**
Assumed Income Band (% of AMI)		*120% +*	*80-120%*	*0-80%*	*80-120%*	*0-80%*	*80-120%*

Source: City of Walla Walla

Total Capacity by Income Band

The table below shows the total housing unit capacity by income band for The City of Walla Walla for the 2020-2046 planning period, including pending units. As shown in Appendix II Table 11 the city has sufficient capacity to accommodate its housing allocation at all income levels.

Appendix II Table 11. City of Walla Walla Housing Capacity by Income Band, 2020-2046

Income Band	Housing Needs	Aggregated Housing Needs	Pending Units	Remaining Needs	Total Capacity	Surplus/ Deficit
0-30 PSH	428	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	**127**
0-30 Non PSH	714	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	**127**
30-50	517	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	**127**
50-80	157	1,816	639	1,177	1,304	**127**
80-100	93	209	384	-175	570	**745**
100-120	116	209	384	-175	570	**745**
120+	323	323	1,175	-852	948	**1,800**
Total	**2,348**	**2,348**	**2,198**	**150**	**2,588**	**2,672**

Emergency Housing

In addition to permanent housing, jurisdictions are required to show sufficient land capacity to accommodate their allocation of Emergency Housing and Emergency Shelter under RCW 36.70A.070(2)(c). However, Commerce's Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) indicates that Walla Walla County already has a sufficient capacity of Emergency Housing and Emergency Shelter to accommodate the projected need during the 2020-2046 planning horizon, as shown below. Therefore, an Emergency Housing Land Capacity Analysis for the City of Walla Walla is not required.

Affordability Level (% of AMI)	Housing Needed to Eliminate Existing Renter Cost Burden	Housing Needed for Existing Homeless Population	Housing Need for Cost Burdened + Homeless	Pct. of Households by Income Level (2018)	Remaining Housing Need to Address Household Growth***	Projected Future Net New Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Need	Total Net New Housing Need 2020-2046
0-30%	1,629	247	1,876	11.0%	170		2,046
0-30% (Not PSH)							*1,279*
PSH						*767*	*767*
>30%-50%	740	27	767	10.4%	161		928
>50-80%	43	-	43	15.8%	245		288
>80-100%	7	-	7	10.4%	162		169
>100-120%	58	-	58	9.9%	154		212
>120%	-	-	-	42.4%	656		656
Total	**2,477**	**274**	**2,751**	100.0%	**1,548**		**4,299**
Projected Emergency Housing Net Need: 2020-2046							-

Appendix II Figure 6. Detail from Walla Walla County Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) Showing No New Emergency Housing Needed Countywide 2020-2046

Source: Washington Department of Commerce, Walla Walla County

Employment Capacity

To calculate employment capacity, the acreage of vacant and underutilized parcels in commercial zones, and the share of acreage of vacant and underutilized parcels in mixed-use zones allocated to commercial uses (after removing the share of acreage allocated to residential uses, as shown above in Appendix II Table 3) was used. Next, density assumptions for commercial development were developed, based on Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of recent development (since 2015) in commercial and industrial zones based on CoStar data. Assumptions of square foot of building area per employee were developed based on the U.S. Energy Information

Administration's Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey, which includes metrics on square feet per worker by building activity. The table below shows share of commercial acreage, total developable commercial acres, assumed FAR, and assumed Square Feet per Job, which are then used to calculate an assumed job density in jobs per acre.

Appendix II Table 12. Net Developable Commercial Acreage in the City of Walla Walla, 2020-2046

Zone	Description	% Commercial	Net Commercial Developable Vacant/ Underutilized Acres	Assumed FAR	Assumed Square Feet per Job	Assumed Job Density for LCA (Jobs/Acre)
CC	Central Commercial	75%	7.1	0.5	600	36.3
CH	Highway Commercial	75%	98.9	0.4	600	29.0
IH	Heavy Industrial	100%	93.2	0.3	1500	8.7
IL	Light Industrial / Commercial	100%	53.2	0.3	1500	8.7

Applying the densities shown above to the vacant and underutilized commercial acreage by zone results in an employment land capacity of 4,405 jobs over the planning horizon, split by zone as shown below:

Appendix II Table 13. The City of Walla Walla Employment Land Capacity by Zone, 20202-2046

Zone	Description	Net Job Capacity
CC	Central Commercial	**256**
CH	Highway Commercial	**2,873**
IH	Heavy Industrial	**812**
IL	Light Industrial / Commercial	**464**
	TOTAL	**4,405**

In addition, two proposed developments – MC Gateway and Equinox, contain 80,000 and 87,120 square feet of proposed commercial development, respectively. Additionally, communication with the developer indicated that the proposed project at Myra Road is expected to generate 904 jobs. Together, this totals 1,183 pending jobs over the planning period. When added to the land capacity for 4,405 jobs, this results in a grand total capacity of 5,588 jobs, which represents a significant surplus over the City of Walla Walla's target of 2,348 jobs, as shown below.

Appendix II Table 14. The City of Walla Walla Employment Capacity, 2020-2045

Employment Land Capacity	Pending Jobs	Total Employment Capacity	Target	Surplus
4,405	1,183	5,588	2,348	**3,240**

Conclusion

As shown above in Appendix II Table 11, the City of Walla Walla has sufficient capacity to meet its housing units at each income band, as required by the GMA, given reasonable assumptions of future density, commercial/residential split, and accounting for a variety of income bands and housing types to be potentially accommodated in most zones that allow housing. As shown in Appendix II Table 14, the City also has sufficient capacity to meet its employment targets.

As discussed in detail in "Housing Unit Capacity by Income Band" beginning on p. 48, these results demonstrate capacity for housing at all income bands, but zoned land capacity does not guarantee that all units will be built at the income levels shown below. The "Adequate Provisions" section in Appendix III. Adequate Provisions Analysis continues this analysis by documenting Walla Walla's existing affordable housing, recent affordable housing production trends, and pipeline affordable housing projects. The Adequate Provisions analysis also discusses the quantity of subsidy which would be required to meet Walla Walla's subsidized housing targets and documents the available and potential sources of that funding.

Appendix III. Adequate Provisions Analysis

October 15, 2025

Introduction

RCW 36.70A.070(2)(d) requires jurisdictions planning under the GMA to include in their comprehensive plan a housing element that "[m]akes adequate provisions for existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community, including:

a) Incorporating consideration for low, very low, extremely low, and moderate-income households;

b) Documenting programs and actions needed to achieve housing availability including gaps in local funding, barriers such as development regulations, and other limitations;

c) Consideration of housing locations in relation to employment location; and

d) Consideration of the role of accessory dwelling units in meeting housing needs."

This section begins with Commerce's Adequate Provisions checklists which document potential barriers to housing production, and continues with an analysis of Walla Walla's existing subsidized housing inventory, pipeline for subsidized housing units and preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing, a discussion of housing vouchers, a gap analysis of potential funding levels needed to develop the quantity of affordable units needed to meet housing targets, and a list of potential sources of funding for those subsidized units over the planning horizon.

Barrier Review Checklists

In their August 2024 Guidance for Updating Your Housing Element (also known as "Book 2"), the Department of Commerce developed checklists for jurisdictions to evaluate regulatory, process, financial, and land constraints to the development of affordable housing. These checklists for moderate-density housing, low- and mid-rise housing, PSH and emergency housing, and ADUs follow:

Appendix III Exhibit 1. Moderate Density Housing Barrier Review Checklist

	Is this barrier likely to affect housing production? (yes or no)	Why or why not? Provide evidence.	Actions needed to address barrier.
DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS			
Unclear development regulations	No	Development regulations are clear and publicly accessible.	
Prohibiting some moderate density housing types, such as: • Duplexes • Triplexes • Four/five/six-plexes • Townhomes • Cottage housing • Live-work units • Manufactured home parks	No	Duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage housing, and townhomes are all allowed in the RN and RM zones. Manufactured home parks are permitted in these zones as well as the MHC zone.	
High minimum lot sizes	No	There are no minimum lot sizes in the RN and RM zones.	
Low maximum densities or low maximum FAR	No	The minimum density in the RN zone is 4 dwelling units per acre. This density is sufficient for accommodating the moderate density housing types the zone's description indicates are desired.	.
Low maximum building heights	No	The maximum building height is 35 feet (approximately three stories) in the RN zone and 60 feet (approximately 5 stories) in the RM zone.	
Large setback requirements	No	Front and rear setbacks are 20 feet in the RN district. The RM district has 15-foot front setbacks and 10-foot rear setbacks. Both districts have 5-foot side setbacks.	

	Is this barrier likely to affect housing production? (yes or no)	Why or why not? Provide evidence.	Actions needed to address barrier.
High off-street parking requirements	No	The recently updated development code incudes an exemption for residences under 1,200 square feet and no parking required for affordable housing, senior housing/congregate care or transitional housing. 1 space is required for SFR and.5 spaces per units is required for multifamily units. For all other housing types in the RN zone 1 space per unit, except for .5 spaces for units on lots less than 6,000 square feet. Tandem Parking calculation was recently updated to be counted at a rate of 1 space for every 20 linear feet. Residential parking stall widths were recently reduced from 9.0 to 8.0 feet, parallel to aisle at 90-degree angle.	
High impervious coverage limits	No	The maximum lot coverage is 50% in the RN zone and 65% in the RM zone.	
Lack of alignment between building codes and development codes	No	There does not appear to be a lack of alignment between building and development codes.	
Other (for example: complex design standards, tree retention regulations, historic preservation requirements)	No	There are no additional requirements that are challenging to development feasibility.	
PROCESS OBSTACLES			
Conditional use permit process	No	A conditional use permit is not required for moderate density housing in the RN zone.	
Design review	No	Design review is not required for moderate density housing in the RN zone.	

	Is this barrier likely to affect housing production? (yes or no)	Why or why not? Provide evidence.	Actions needed to address barrier.
Lack of clear and accessible information about process and fees1	No	Information about process and fees is clear and publicly available.	
Permit fees, impact fees and utility connection fees	No	Permit fees are not significantly higher than comparable jurisdictions.	
Processing times and staffing challenges	No	In August of 2025 the City converted from a Paper to Digital permit tracking system using Tyler's EPL and all staffing positions are filled throughout the Department with two full-time inspectors/plans examiners, one Building Official, two permit technicians, one permit coordinator, two senior planners and one code enforcement officer.	
SEPA process	No	SEPA process is explained clearly within the code.	
LIMITED LAND AVAILABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS			
Lack of large parcels for infill development	No	Walla Walla's Land Capacity Analysis found sufficient capacity to accommodate needed housing units at all income levels and housing types.	
Environmental constraints	No	The city has very few critical areas overall, and the Land Capacity Analysis found that critical areas do not significantly affect developable acreage.	

[1] For example: guidance resources are unclear or difficult to find, no digital permit tracking system, staff do not provide fee estimates or permitting time estimates are unavailable or inaccurate.

Appendix III Exhibit 2. Low-Rise or Mid-Rise Housing Barrier Review Checklist

	Is this barrier likely to affect housing production? (yes or no)	Why or why not? Provide evidence.	Actions needed to address barrier.
DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS			
Unclear development regulations	No	Development regulations are clear and publicly accessible.	
High minimum lot sizes	No	There are no minimum lot sizes in the RN and RM zones.	
Low maximum densities or low maximum FAR	No	The minimum density in the RM zone is 20 dwelling units per acre; the maximum density is 75 dwelling units per acre.	
Low maximum building heights	No	The maximum building height in the RM zone is 60 feet (approximately 5 stories)	
Large setback requirements	No	The RM zone has 15-foot front setbacks, 5-foot side setbacks, and 5-foot rear setbacks.	
High off-street parking requirements	No	The recently updated development code includes an exemption for residences under 1,200 square feet and no parking required for affordable housing, senior housing/congregate care or transitional housing. 1 space is required for SFR and.5 spaces per units is required for multifamily units. For all other housing types in the RN zone 1 space per unit, except for .5 spaces for units on lots less than 6,000 square feet.	
High impervious coverage limits	No	The max lot coverage is 65%.	

	Is this barrier likely to affect housing production? (yes or no)	Why or why not? Provide evidence.	Actions needed to address barrier.
Lack of alignment between building and development codes	No	There does not appear to be a lack of alignment between building and development codes.	
Other (for example: ground floor retail requirements, open space requirements, complex design standards, tree retention regulations, historic preservation requirements)	No	There are no additional requirements impacting development feasibility in these zones.	
PROCESS OBSTACLES			
Conditional use permit process	No	A conditional use permit is not required for multifamily housing in the RM zone.	
Design review	No	Design review is not required for multifamily housing in the RM zone.	
Lack of clear and accessible information about process and fees	No	Information about process and fees is clear and publicly available.	
Permit fees, impact fees and utility connection fees	No	Permit fees are not significantly higher than comparable jurisdictions.	

	Is this barrier likely to affect housing production? (yes or no)	Why or why not? Provide evidence.	Actions needed to address barrier.
Process times and staffing challenges	No.	The City in August of 2025 converted from a Paper to Digital permit system using Tyler's EPL and all staffing positions are filled throughout the Department with 2 full-time inspectors/plans examiners, a Building Official, 2 permit technicians, 1 permit coordinator, 2 senior planners and 1 code enforcement officer.	
SEPA process	No	SEPA process is explained clearly within the code.	
LIMITED LAND AVAILABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS			
Lack of large parcels for infill development	No	Walla Walla's Land Capacity Analysis found sufficient capacity to accommodate needed housing units at all income levels and housing types.	
Environmental constraints	No	The city has very few critical areas overall, and the Land Capacity Analysis found that critical areas do not significantly affect developable acreage.	

Appendix III Exhibit 3. Supplementary Barrier Review Checklist for PSH and Emergency Housing

	Is this barrier likely to affect housing production? (yes or no)	Why or why not? Provide evidence.	Actions needed to address barrier.
DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS			
Spacing requirements (for example, minimum distance from parks, schools or other emergency/PSH housing facilities)2	No	There are no specifically outlined space requirements for PSH/emergency housing.	
Parking requirements	No	The development code was recently updated to include a new parking exemption Section, WWMC 20.127.007. No parking required for affordable hedrf2qwqousing, senior housing/congregate care or transitional housing.	
On-site recreation and open space requirements	No	There are no specific open space requirements for emergency/PSH	
Restrictions on support spaces, such as office space, within a transitional or PSH building in a residential zone	No	Emergency/PSH is allowed by right in commercial zones, such as CC and CH. These zones allow for complementary services.	
Arbitrary limits on number of occupants (in conflict with RCW 35A.21.314)	No	There are no limits on the number of occupants.	

[2] Note that RCW 35A.21.430 expressly states requirements on occupancy, spacing, and intensity of use may not prevent the siting of a sufficient number of permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, indoor emergency housing or indoor emergency shelters necessary to accommodate each code city's projected need for such housing and shelter under RCW 36.70A.070(2)(a)(ii). The restrictions on these uses must be to protect public health and safety.

	Is this barrier likely to affect housing production? (yes or no)	Why or why not? Provide evidence.	Actions needed to address barrier.
Requirements for PSH or emergency housing that are different than the requirements imposed on housing developments generally (in conflict with RCW 36.130.020)	Yes	A conditional use permit is required for emergency/PSH in the RN and RM zones.	Consider allowing Level I or Level II review of emergency/PSH in these zones.
Other restrictions specific to emergency shelters, emergency housing, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing	No	There are no additional restrictions impacting the development of emergency/PSH.	

Appendix III Exhibit 4. Accessory Dwelling Unit Barrier Review Checklist

	Is this barrier likely to affect housing production? (yes or no)	Why or why not? Provide evidence.	Actions needed to address barrier.
DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS			
Consistent with HB 1337 (2023) • **Must allow two ADUs on each lot in urban growth areas;** • **May not require the owner to occupy the property, and may not prohibit sale as independent units, but may restrict the use of ADUs as short term rentals;** • **Must allow an ADU of at least 1,000 square feet;** • **Must set parking requirements based on distance from transit and lot size;** • **May not charge more than 50% of the impact fees charged for the principal unit;** • **Must permit ADUs in structures detached from the principal unit;** • **May not restrict roof heights of ADUs to less than 24 feet, unless that limitation applies to the principal unit;** • **May not impose setback requirements, yard coverage limits, tree retention mandates, restrictions on entry door locations, aesthetic requirements, or requirements**	No	Two ADUs are allowed per lot in residential zones pursuant to HB 1337. Accessory dwelling units may be attached or detached from a permitted residential unit. The setbacks for an ADU shall be a minimum of 5 feet from the side property line, 5 feet from the rear property line, and up to, but not within, the required front yard. No alleys are plowed.	

	Is this barrier likely to affect housing production? (yes or no)	Why or why not? Provide evidence.	Actions needed to address barrier.
for design review for ADUs that are more restrictive than those for principal units; • Must allow an ADUs on any lot that meets the minimum lot size required for the principal unit; • Must allow detached ADUs to be sited at a lot line if the lot line abuts a public alley, unless the city or county routinely plows snow on the public alley; • Must allow conversions from existing structures, even if they violate current code requirements for setbacks or lot coverage; and • May not require public street improvements as a condition of permitting ADUs.			
Unclear development regulations	No	Development regulations for ADUs are clear.	
Large setback requirements	No	A five-foot rear setback is not overly large, and aligned with the requirements of HB 1337 as the city does not plow alleys	
Off-street parking requirements	No.	No off-street parking required for ADUs.	
Other (for example: burdensome design standards, tree retention regulations, historic preservation	No	There are no additional standards impacting the development of ADUs.	

	Is this barrier likely to affect housing production? (yes or no)	Why or why not? Provide evidence.	Actions needed to address barrier.
requirements, open space requirements, etc.)			
PROCESS OBSTACLES			
Lack of clear and accessible information about process and fees	No	Fee and process information is available publicly.	
Permit fees, impact fees and utility connection fees that are not proportionate to impact	No	The ADU impact fees in Walla Walla are not more than 50% of those for single family homes.	
Processing times and staffing challenges		The City in August of 2025 converted from a Paper to Digital permit system using Tyler's EPL and all staffing positions are filled throughout the Department with two full-time inspectors/plans examiners, one Building Official, two permit technicians, one permit coordinator, two senior planners and one code enforcement officer.	

Appendix III Exhibit 5. Checklist for Local Option Tools for Addressing Affordable Housing Funding Gaps

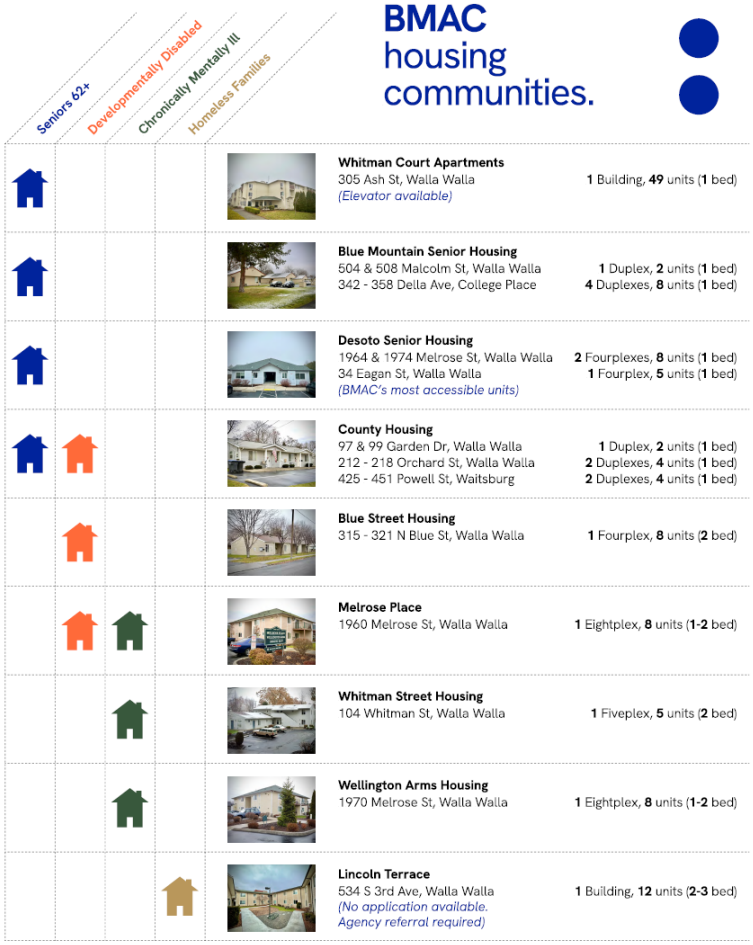
Local option tools for addressing affordable housing funding gaps*	Implementation status	Plans for implementation
Housing and related services sales tax (RCW 82.14.530)		
Affordable housing property tax levy (RCW 84.52.105)		
REET 2 (RCW 82.46.035) – GMA jurisdictions only and only available through 2025		
Affordable Housing Sales Tax Credit (RCW 82.14.540) – was only available to jurisdictions through July 2020		
Lodging Tax (RCW 67.28.150 and RCW 67.28.160) to repay general obligation bonds or revenue bonds	3.15.060 Lodging tax fund.	
Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Tax (RCW 82.14.460) – jurisdictions with a population over 30,000		
Donating surplus public lands for affordable housing projects (RCW 39.33.015)	An RFP was issued in February 2026 for a site at 280 W. Sumach St. The site is 0.33 acres and has water and sewer available.	Applications for a proposal to develop the site were reviewed, and the Council selected a proposal in August 2026.
Impact fee waivers for affordable housing projects (RCW 82.02.060)	City currently provides letters indicating that they will waive fees for affordable projects applying for CHIP funding.	City is considering codifying these fee waivers in an ordinance.
Application fee waivers or other benefits for affordable housing projects (RCW 36.70A.540)		
Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) with affordable housing requirement (RCW 84.14)	Chapter 2.28 MULTIFAMILY HOUSING TAX INCENTIVES	
General funds (including levy lid lifts to increase funds available)		

Subsidized Housing Inventory

Walla Walla has a substantial inventory of subsidized housing, primarily owned and operated by the Walla Walla Housing Authority (WWHA). The Housing Authority owns and manages 613 units, and provides rental assistance to another 1,174. An additional 50 units (Meadow Grove) came online in Fall of 2025. The WWHA reports that there are approximately 1,900 households on their wait lists, and that their wait list is consistently larger than 1,500 households. Their target income for qualifying for their programs is below 60% AMI.

Of the 613 units owned and managed by the WWHA, 128 units are targeted to agricultural workers. Additionally, there is one transitional program targeting homeless veterans which has nine units totaling 34 beds. The WWHA indicated that since the early 1990s, their programs has grown from 84 owned units with 20 rental assistance slots, into the numbers reported above. This equates to approximately 15 new subsidized units per year, on average.

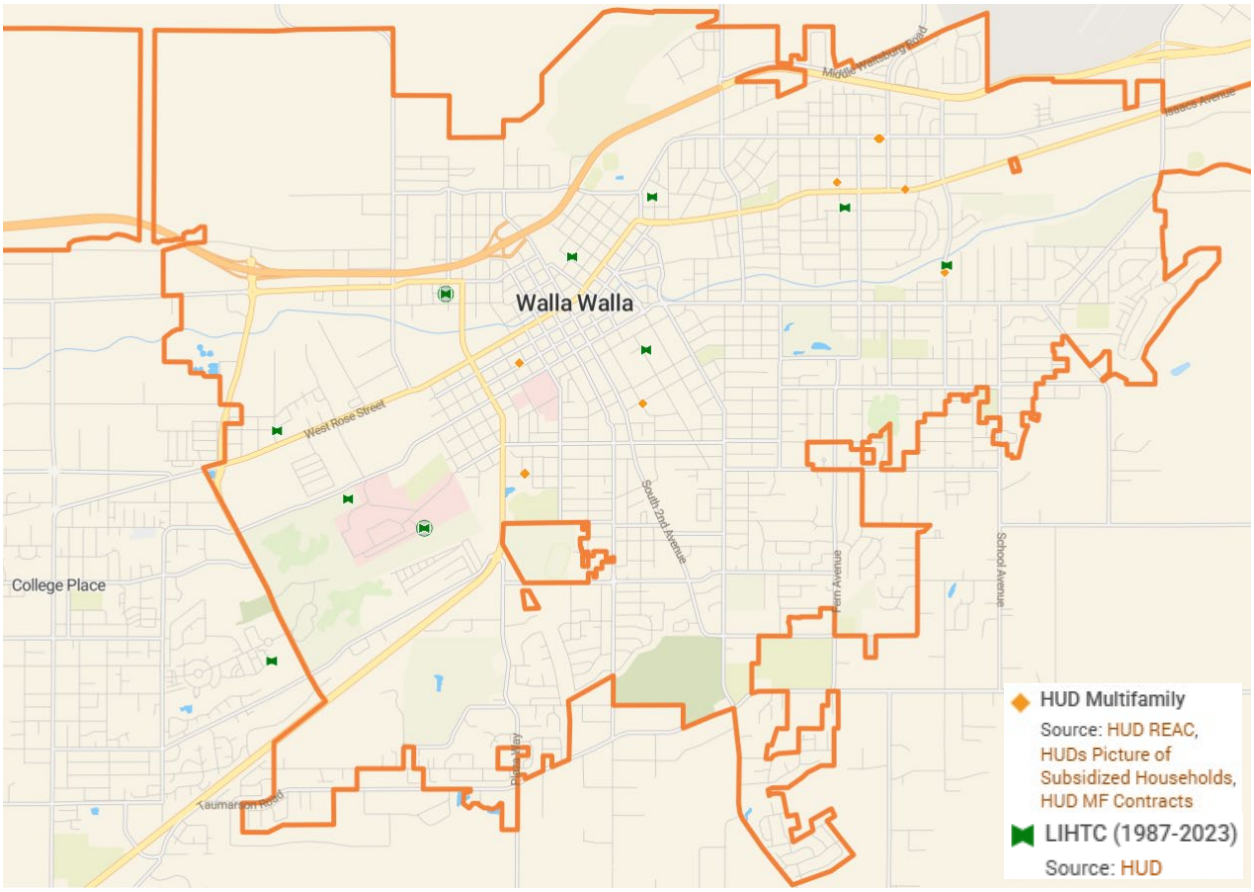
In addition to WWHA, the Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC) provides a variety of services to low-income Walla Walla residents, including housing serving seniors, developmentally disabled residents, chronically mentally ill residents, and shelters serving homeless families. The sheet below details BMAC's largest projects in Walla Walla. BMAC reports that they also have several other smaller locations serving these categories as well.



Appendix III Figure 1. Blue Mountain Action Council Major Housing Sites in Walla Walla

Source: Blue Mountain Action Council

The map below shows locations of subsidized housing in Walla Walla developed using various HUD funding sources (in orange) and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (in green).



Appendix III Figure 2. Subsidized Housing Locations in Walla Walla

Source: PolicyMap

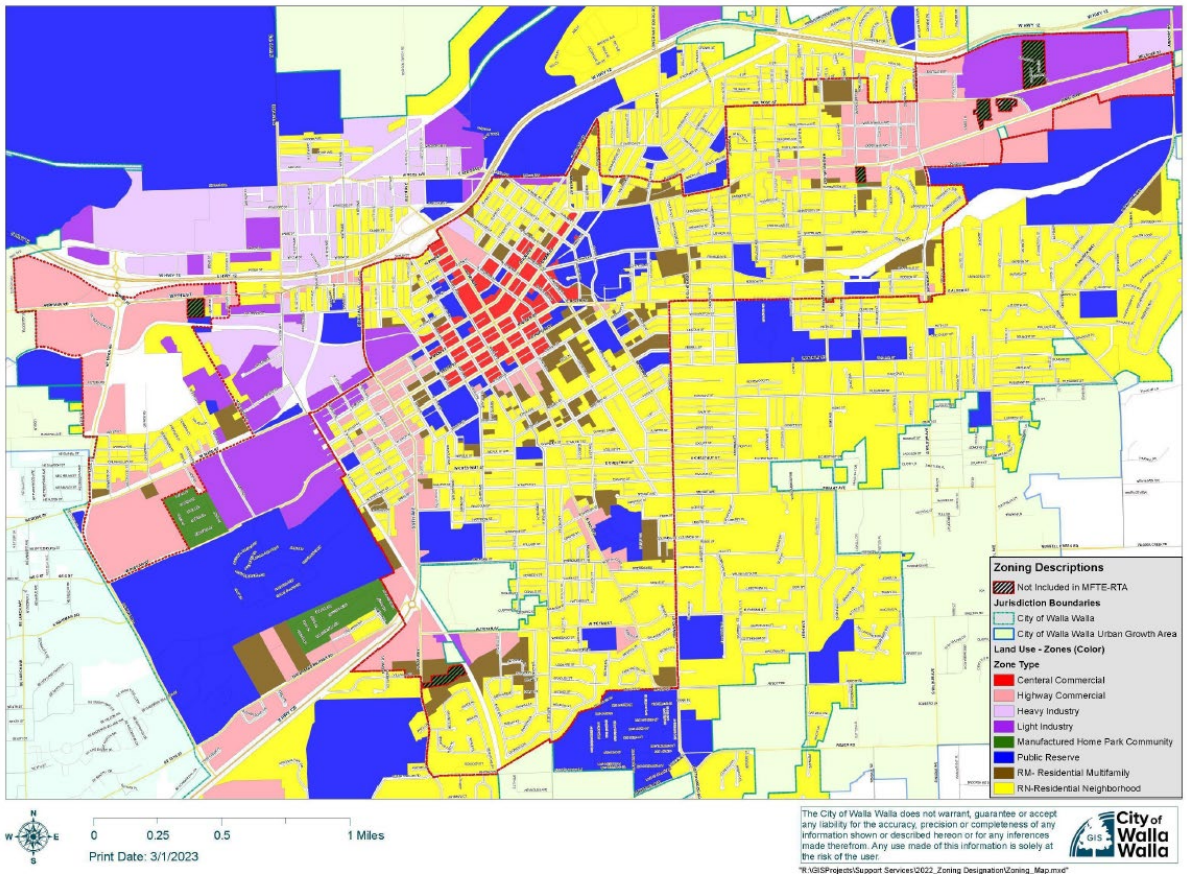
Subsidized Housing Pipeline

In addition to the existing subsidized units detailed above, there are plans for several more developments in the near future, including:

- 48 units at Wilbur Avenue (across from the fire station), proposed by the WWHA, to include:
  - 12 units at 0-30% AMI
  - 24 units at 40-50% AMI
  - 12 units at 60% AMI
- Eight tiny home units proposed by BMAC at 714 Carrie Ave., serving 80-120% AMI.

Additionally, note that the WWHA has a significant track record of developing affordable housing in the city, on average 15 units a year since the 1990s, as discussed above.

The City of Walla Walla also has a Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) program, which was recently updated in 2021. This program offers a tax exemption to residential multifamily developments in the targeted area, shown outlined in red on the map below. MFTE projects must commit to providing 25 percent of units in their projects at rents or sale prices affordable to low-income households and complying with HUD's Fair Market Rent (FMR) thresholds for Walla Walla County for twelve years, with the possibility of extension. Therefore, any new multifamily development in the targeted area will also generate additional subsidized units over the planning horizon.



Appendix III Figure 3. MFTE Residential Targeted Area in Walla Walla

Source: City of Walla Walla

Housing Assistance / Vouchers

The Walla Walla Housing Authority (WWHA) operates housing assistance programs which provide vouchers to eligible households and rental assistance at specific locations as follows:

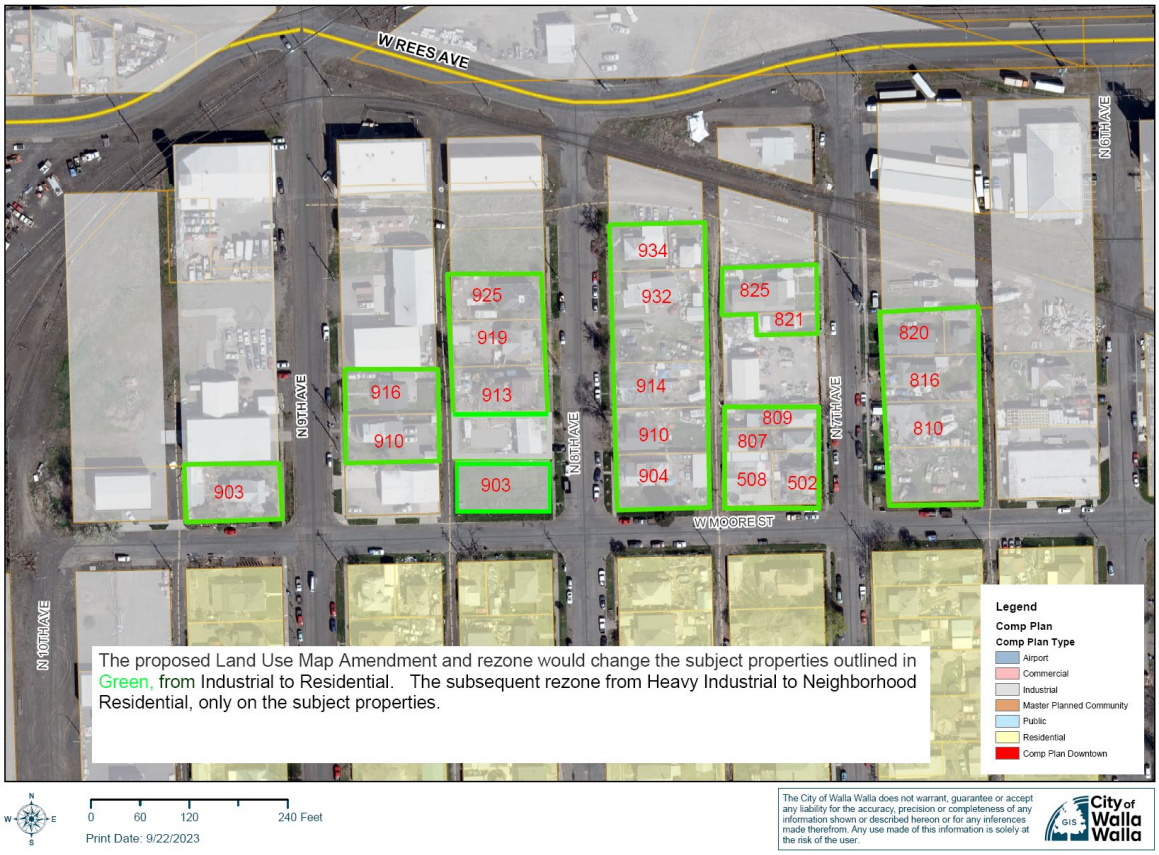
- The Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program provides vouchers to eligible households funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The wait list in Walla Walla is currently closed per the WWHA website.
- The Project-Based Voucher program offers rental assistance at specific housing locations around the city, including Belmont Apartments, Emerald Family Properties, Evergreen Commons, Marjorie Terrace, and Rosehaven Cottages. Full details of all sites are available at wallawallaha.org/rental-assistance.

- The HUD-VASH program combines the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Housing Choice Voucher program for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Veterans Medical Administration Center (VMAC) located in Walla Walla.
- The HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program utilizes federal funds to support communities by providing utility, deposit, and ongoing rental assistance. The Washington State Department of Commerce funds the TBRA program and those monies are contracted to local providers. Eligible households are referred to TBRA through the local Coordinated Entry System.

In total, the WWHA provides rental assistance to 1,174 households. The WWHA reports that there are approximately 1,900 households currently on their wait lists.

Preservation of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing

Recently, a comprehensive plan amendment has been proposed to convert the parcels shown below in green from heavy industrial to single-family residential. These parcels have pre-existing nonconforming residential uses, and contain housing which serves lower-income residents. The rezoning of these parcels is intended to prevent displacement of these residents and loss of this existing naturally occurring affordable housing. This single-family zoning is not reducing housing capacity, since housing is not allowed in the industrial zones, and the same potential for ADUs or middle housing anywhere else in the city under new regulations will also apply to these parcels.



Appendix III Figure 4. Proposed Rezone Parcels North of Moore Street

Source: City of Walla Walla

Surplus City-Owned Property

As allowed by RCW 39.33.015, the Walla Walla City Council may dispose of surplus publicly owned property for affordable housing development. In 2026, the city issued an RFP to solicit developers or teams for development of a site at 280 W. Sumach St. The City completed its RFP and Council selected a proposal for development. The site is 0.33 acres and has water and sewer available. The site is zoned PR, and multifamily dwellings and townhomes are allowed on the site. The city is seeking housing that can serve households earning 80 percent of the Area Median Income or below, for a minimum term of 30 years, with scoring bonuses for senior, family, and special needs housing.

Affordable Housing Funding Gap

The Department of Commerce suggests analyzing the potential funding gap that would be needed to fund the quantity of subsidized housing needed to meet the jurisdiction's targets at lower income bands. As noted previously, about 15 subsidized units per year have been built in the city since the 1990s. Given a continuation of this rate of production, this would equate to 392 units over the 2020-2046 planning horizon. Based on Walla Walla's housing targets, and removing pending units, there would be a gap of 784 housing units needed to serve Walla Walla's target. Given Commerce's estimation of $316,272 (as of 2023) needed to construct a subsidized unit in Walla Walla County, this would equate to a need for **$247.9 million** in additional subsidized housing funding, or **$9.5 million per year** (not adjusted for inflation).

Sources of Affordable Housing

Commerce guidance directs cities to document likely potential sources of funding to help address the gap needed to develop the amount of housing needed to meet the targets, detailed above. The following are existing and potential sources of affordable housing funding in Walla Walla over the 20-year planning horizon:

- **Lodging Tax –** As authorized by RCW 67.28.150 and RCW 67.28.160, Walla Walla has established a "Lodging Tax Fund" detailed in WWMC 3.15.060. These funds, which are generated by a special excise tax on lodging, can be used for tourism-related purposes, general obligation bonds for tourism, or any other uses authorized by RCW 67.28, which includes affordable workforce housing.
- **Multifamily Tax Exemption –** As authorized by RCW 84.14, and as detailed above under "Subsidized Housing Pipeline," starting on p. 73, Walla Walla has a Multifamily Tax Exemption program which provides 25 percent of new units affordable to lower-income households in multifamily developments which take advantage of the program.
- **Housing Trust Fund and HOME Funds –** The Department of Commerce provides state and federal funding for affordable housing construction and preservation through these programs, which targets low-income and special needs populations and are open to local governments, tribes, and nonprofits.
    - commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/housing/housing-trust-fund/
    - commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/housing/housing-trust-fund/home-program/
- **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) –** This program, administered by the Washington State Housing Finance Commission (WSHFC) allocates federal income tax credits to developers for the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing. As shown above in **Error! Reference source not found.**, there are several affordable housing projects in Walla Walla funded using this program, and nonprofit developers are expected to continue to take advantage of this financing option, the most common method of financing affordable housing nationwide.
- **Fee Waivers –** The City anticipates that the 2026 annual code amendments will include an exemption for utility connections: a program to waive applicable capital facility charges (e.g. utility connection fee) and permit fees for the affordable units contingent on receiving of CHIP grant funds for the sewer utility work. A transportation impact fee program is currently under development and could include waivers for certain projects, such as affordable housing,
- **Housing Development Fund –** Walla Walla has adopted a "housing development fund," as codified in WWMC 3.15.140 into which shall be paid funds to be used for the purpose of low income housing development, as authorized by RCW 35.21.685 and RCW 35A.33.150.
- **Connecting Housing to Infrastructure Program (CHIP) –** Created in 2021, this State program helps local governments encourage the creation of affordable housing by reducing the cost of infrastructure associated with development. The program can

reimburse water, sewer, and stormwater extensions and connections as well as regional stormwater systems and upgrades. It can also reimburse System Development Charges (SDCs) that the city waives for affordable housing. Walla Walla has not codified fee waivers for affordable housing in its municipal code. However, the city is providing letters to developers applying for CHIP funding indicating that they will waive these fees for affordable projects.

In addition, city staff have indicated that the city is planning to consider the use of additional surplus land to be donated or provided at a discount for the purposes of developing affordable housing, as well as the creation of a Real Estate Excise Tax 2 (REET 2) which can be imposed at 0.25% to be used for capital projects, including partially for affordable housing funding.



Appendix IV. Racially Disparate Impacts Analysis

July 10, 2026

Introduction

In 2021, the Washington State Legislature passed House Bill 1220 (HB 1220) as an amendment to the state Growth Management Act (GMA). HB 1220 requires that local governments plan for housing at all income levels and assess the racially disparate impacts (RDI) of existing housing policies. Conditions that indicate that policies have racially disparate impacts can include segregation, cost burden, displacement, educational opportunities, and health disparities.

According to state guidance, there are five steps to understanding and addressing racially disparate impacts:

- Step 1: Engage the Community
- Step 2: Gather & Analyze Data
- Step 3: Evaluate Policies
- Step 4: Revise Policies
- Step 5: Review & Update Regulations

This report accounts for both Step 2 and Step 3 – it includes a summary of findings based on data from the US Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and other sources. These findings then inform the policy evaluations and recommendations found at the end of the report.

Key Findings

- Walla Walla is about as diverse as Walla Walla County; both jurisdictions are about 70 percent white with a much higher share of households identifying as Hispanic or Latino (24 percent and 22 percent, respectively) in comparison to the state (13 percent).
- While the share of White households and households of color that are cost-burdened is roughly equal (32 percent and 35 percent, respectively), 82 percent of Black households are cost-burdened. Asian households have the lowest cost burden, at 12 percent of households.
- Home ownership is most common among Asian and Other Race (includes multiple races) households in Walla Walla: 74 percent of Asian households own their homes, and 68 percent of Other Race households own their homes. White and Hispanic households are about equally as likely to be owners (59 and 58 percent, respectively); Only 18 percent of Black households own their homes.

- There is a shortage of housing available in Walla Walla for those making less than 30 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) and those making greater than 80 percent AMI. However, from 2014 to 2019, the amount of housing affordable increased only for the two highest brackets (50-80 percent AMI and above 80 percent AMI).
- Asian households have the highest share in the above median income category (61 percent), while Black or African American households have the largest share in the extremely low-income category (77 percent). White and "All" groups have more balanced distributions, with notable portions in the above median income category (45 percent and 42 percent, respectively). Between 2015 and 2020, the share of households in the above median income category grew for White and Other Races households, while the share shrunk for all other racial groups. Conversely, the share of households in the extremely-low income bucket grew for all racial groups besides White and Other Races.

Historical Context

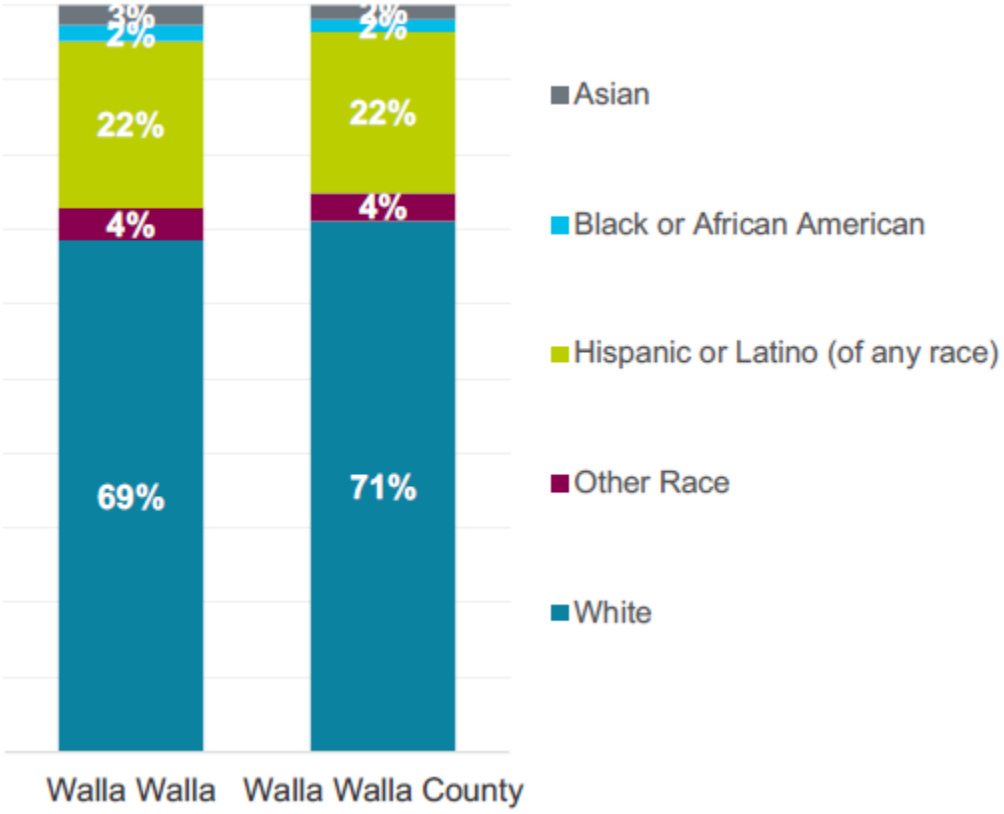
Throughout the history of the United States, a combination of laws and practices have impacted where specific groups of people live, what opportunities they have access to, and their ability to build wealth through stable housing.

Unfortunately, many of these policies explicitly or implicitly benefited white residents at the expense of all others. The legacy of policies like redlining, which used racial criteria in determining which neighborhoods were suitable for government-backed loans, highway development through predominantly-Black neighborhoods, and racial covenants explicitly excluding certain groups from owning specific properties continues to impact non-white communities today.

While many cities have acknowledged the harms of these policies, many of which are no longer legal, there are still policies in effect today that hold cities back from rectifying systemic harms. These can include policies that reference vague concepts like “neighborhood character,” as well as those that permit only the most expensive homes to be built, thus shutting lower-income residents out of high-opportunity areas.

Assessing Racially Disparate Impacts

Appendix IV Figure 1 below shows the racial and ethnic composition of Walla Walla and Walla Walla County. While Walla Walla County became slightly more diverse between 2015 and 2020, the racial distribution in the City of Walla Walla did not see significant changes. The Hispanic or Latino population decreased from 24 percent to 22 percent, while the share of white residents increased slightly from 68 percent to 69 percent.



Appendix IV Figure 1. Racial Composition of Walla Walla and Walla Walla County (2020)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table DP05); Washington Department of Commerce, 2023.

As shown below in Appendix IV Table 1, between 2015 and 2020, the city lost 201 Hispanic or Latino households, 122 American Indian/Alaska Native households and 22 Black/African American households over this period, despite gaining a net total of 994 new households.

Appendix IV Table 1. Change in Population by Race/Ethnicity, Walla Walla and Walla Walla County

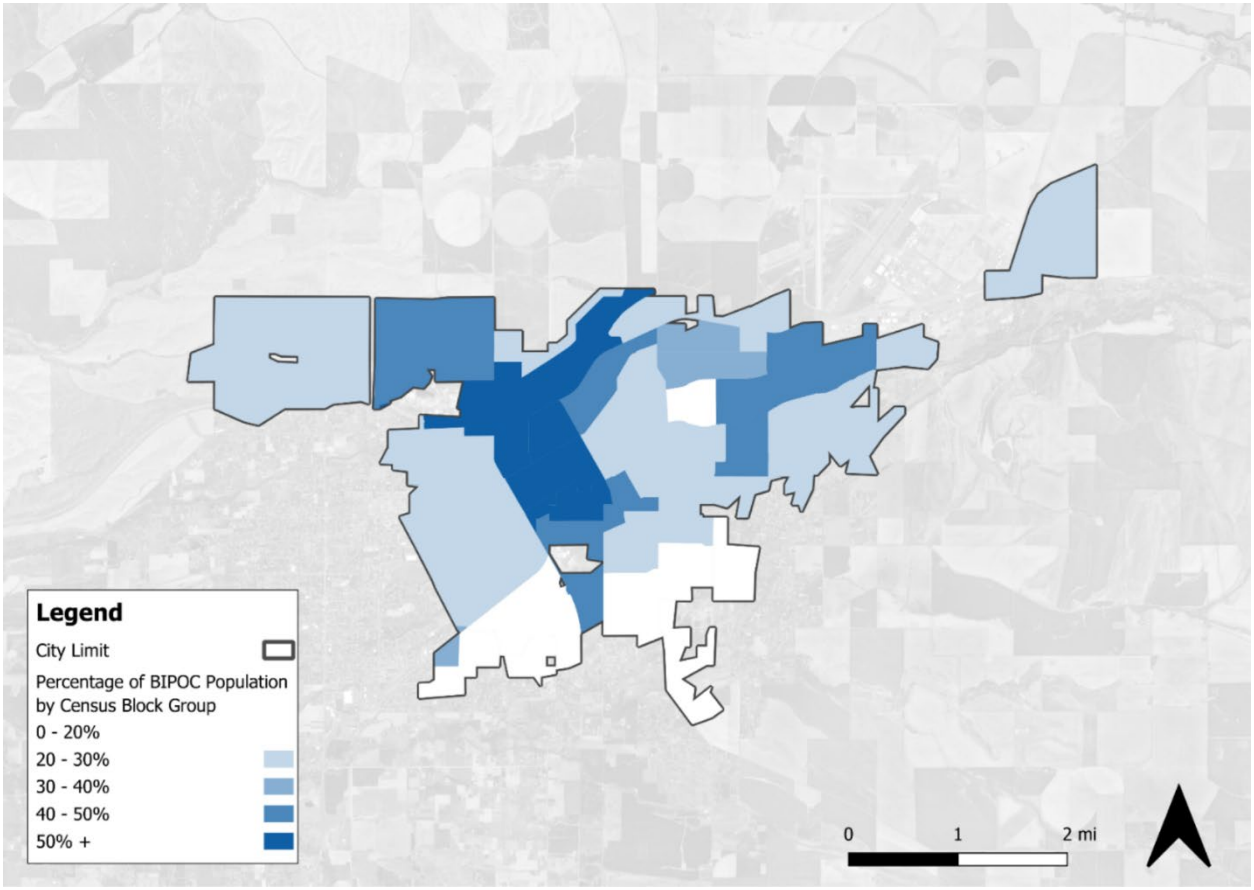
Race or Ethnic Category	Walla Walla 2015	Walla Walla 2020	Change	Walla Walla County 2015	Walla Walla County 2020	Change
American Indian and Alaska Native	227	105	-122	285	180	-105
Asian	726	878	152	918	1,119	201
Black or African American	713	691	-22	908	1,026	118
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	7,567	7,366	-201	12,528	13,115	587
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	19	58	39	41	104	63
Other Race	5	0	-5	94	45	-49
Two or more races	1,129	1,242	113	1,559	1,930	371
White	21,571	22,611	1,040	43,393	43,266	-127
Total	**31,957**	**32,951**	**994**	**59,726**	**60,785**	**1,059**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 and 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table DP05); Washington Department of Commerce, 2023.

The map of Walla Walla in Appendix IV Figure 2 indicates that Walla Walla's residents of color are spread across most of the city, with the highest concentrations in the northern and central areas. While residents of color made up 31 percent of the population in 2020, some census block groups are at least 50 percent residents of color, while other clusters are almost 100 percent white residents. The census block groups with the lowest share of residents of color—0 to 20 percent—are in the southern end of the city.

The remainder of the report indicates disparities in income and tenure (renter or homeowner) across race and ethnicity. Where these disparities are identified, it should be considered that the prevalence of those disparities are more concentrated in the areas shown in Appendix IV Figure 2.

City of Walla Walla | Race and Ethnicity, 2020



Appendix IV Figure 2. Race and Ethnicity in Walla Walla by Census Block (2020)

Source: 2020 U.S. Census Table P9, WSDOT, LCG

Household Tenure and Cost Burden

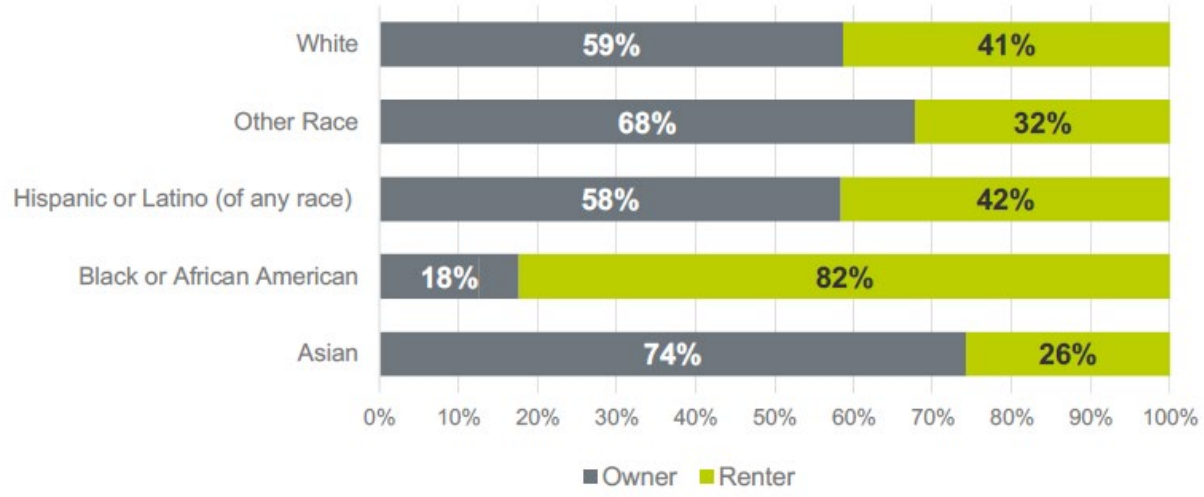
Appendix IV Table 2 below shows the most recently available counts for cost burden by race and ethnicity available through the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) database. Though rates of cost burden have decreased in the years since the release of this dataset, disparities across renters and homeowners remain. This sharp divide in stability between renters and owners can result in racially disparate impacts when renters are more likely to be people of color.

Appendix IV Table 2. Number of Households by Cost Burden in Walla Walla (2019)

	White	Black or African American	Asian	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Pacific Islander	Other Race	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	Total
Owner Households								
Not Cost Burdened	4,740	15	105	10	0	110	965	5,945
Total Cost-Burdened	970	0	10	0	0	25	235	1,240
Cost-Burdened (30-50%)	*555*	*0*	*10*	*0*	*0*	*10*	*135*	*710*
Severely Cost-Burdened (>50%)	*415*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*15*	*100*	*530*
Not Calculated	85	0	0	0	0	0	0	85
Total	5,790	15	115	10	0	135	1,200	7,265
Renter Households								
Not Cost Burdened	1,845	0	30	0	0	55	305	2,235
Total Cost-Burdened	2,180	70	10	4	0	10	520	2,794
Cost-Burdened (30-50%)	*960*	*25*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*245*	1,230
Severely Cost-Burdened (>50%)	*1,220*	*45*	*10*	*4*	*0*	*10*	*275*	1,564
Not Calculated	55	0	0	0	0	0	30	85
Total	**4,080**	**70**	**40**	**4**	**0**	**65**	**855**	**5,114**
Total Households	**9,870**	**85**	**155**	**14**	**0**	**200**	**2,055**	**12,379**

Source: U.S. HUD, 2015-2019 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 9); Washington Department of Commerce, 2023

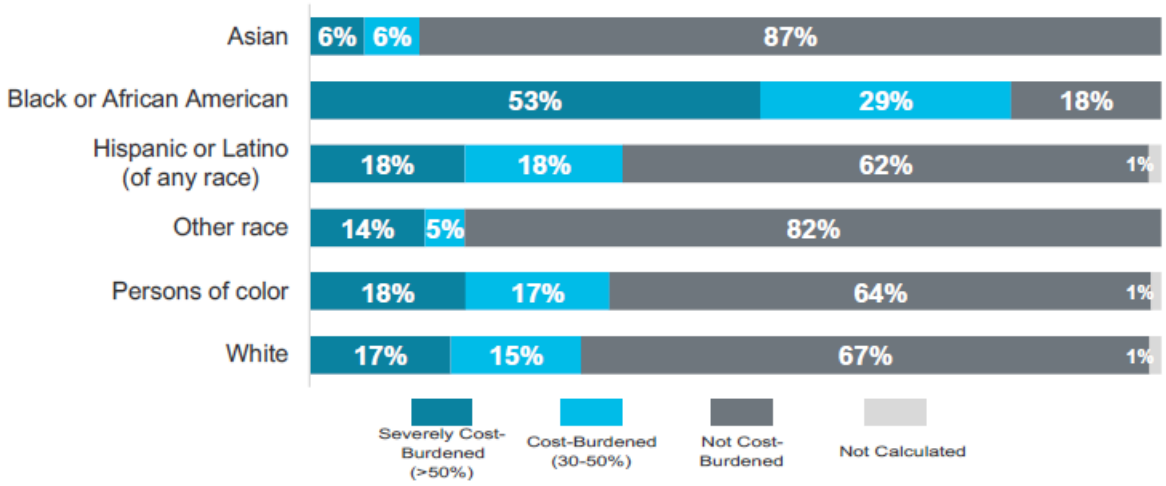
Appendix IV Figure 3 below shows the same CHAS dataset for rates of homeownership and renter households across race and ethnicity. As of 2019, in Walla Walla, 41 percent of White households rent their homes, compared to 82 percent of Black/African American households. However, Asian and other race households are more likely to own than white households, and Hispanic/Latino households have a comparable homeownership rate to white households in Walla Walla (58 percent).



Appendix IV Figure 3. Walla Walla Owner and Renter Households by Race & Ethnicity (2019)

Source: U.S. HUD, 2015-2019 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 9).

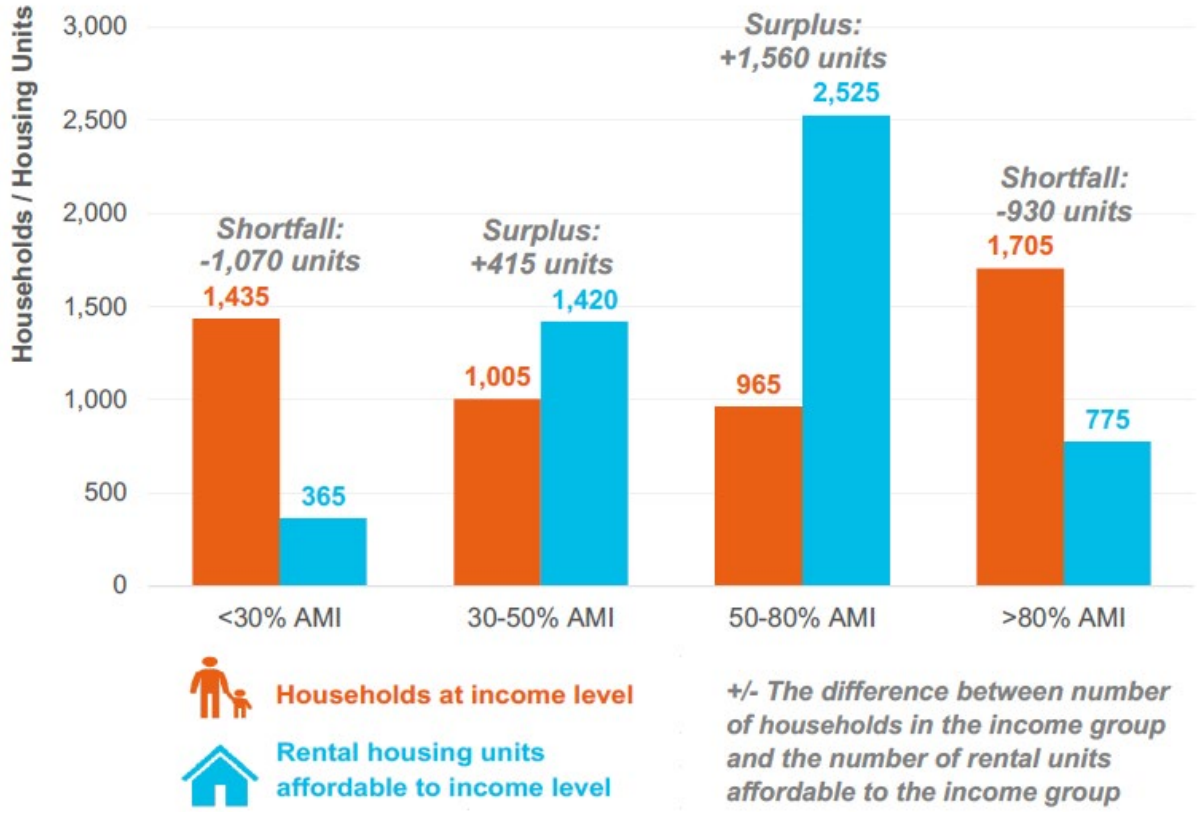
Appendix IV Figure 4below shows the same CHAS dataset for households experiencing housing cost burden. While 82 percent of Black/African American households are severely cost burdened, 32 percent of white households and 36 percent of Hispanic households are cost burdened.



Appendix IV Figure 4. Walla Walla Percent of All Households Experiencing Housing Cost Burden, 2019

Source: U.S. HUD, 2015-2019 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 9); Washington Department of Commerce, 2023.

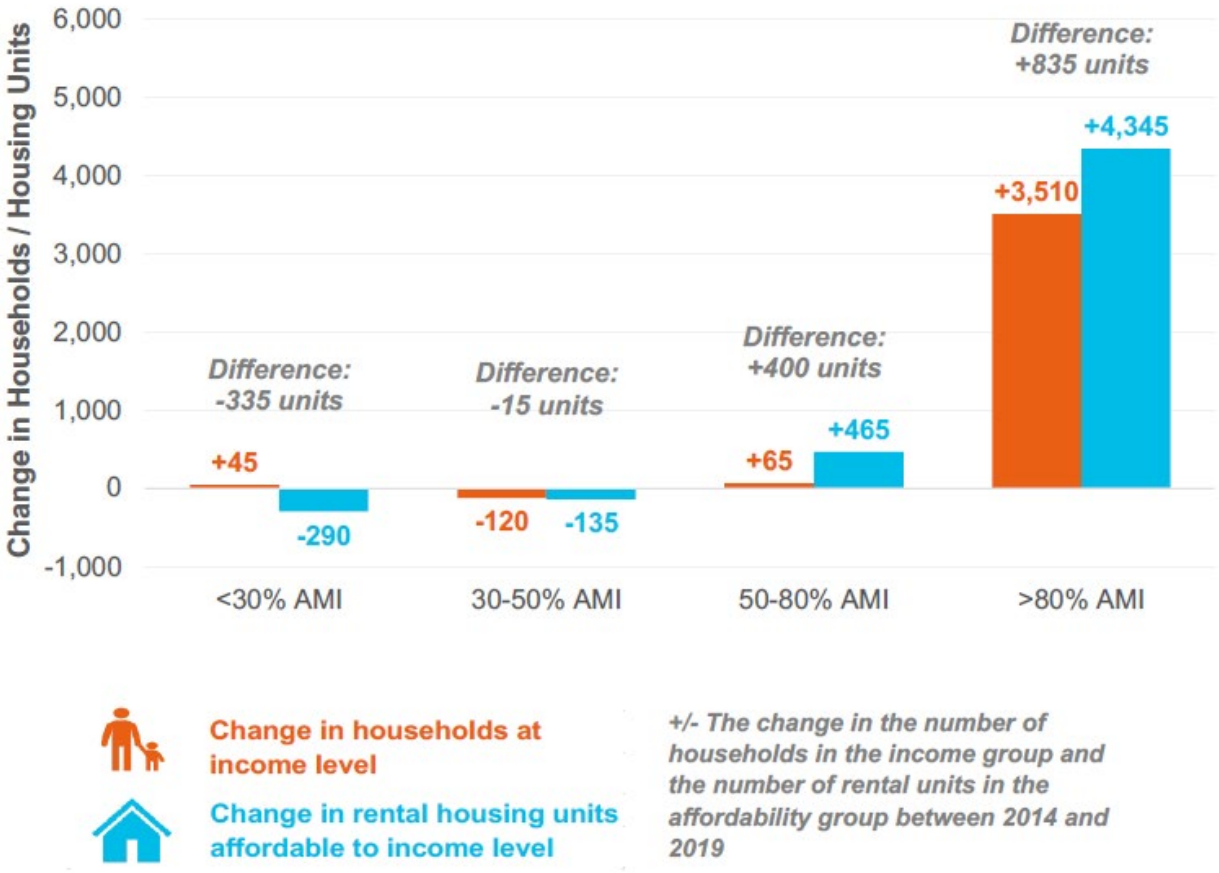
Appendix IV Figure 5 below shows a comparison of renters and rental units affordable across low-income households. This shows that the renter cost burden in Walla Walla is largely driven by a 1,070-unit shortfall of units affordable for households making less than 30 percent of area median income (AMI) and a 930-unit shortfall of units affordable for households making more than 80 percent AMI.



Appendix IV Figure 5. Walla Walla Renter Households by Income Compared to Rental Units by Affordability, 2019

Sources: U.S. HUD, 2015-2019 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 15C) & US HUD, 2015-2019 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 14B).

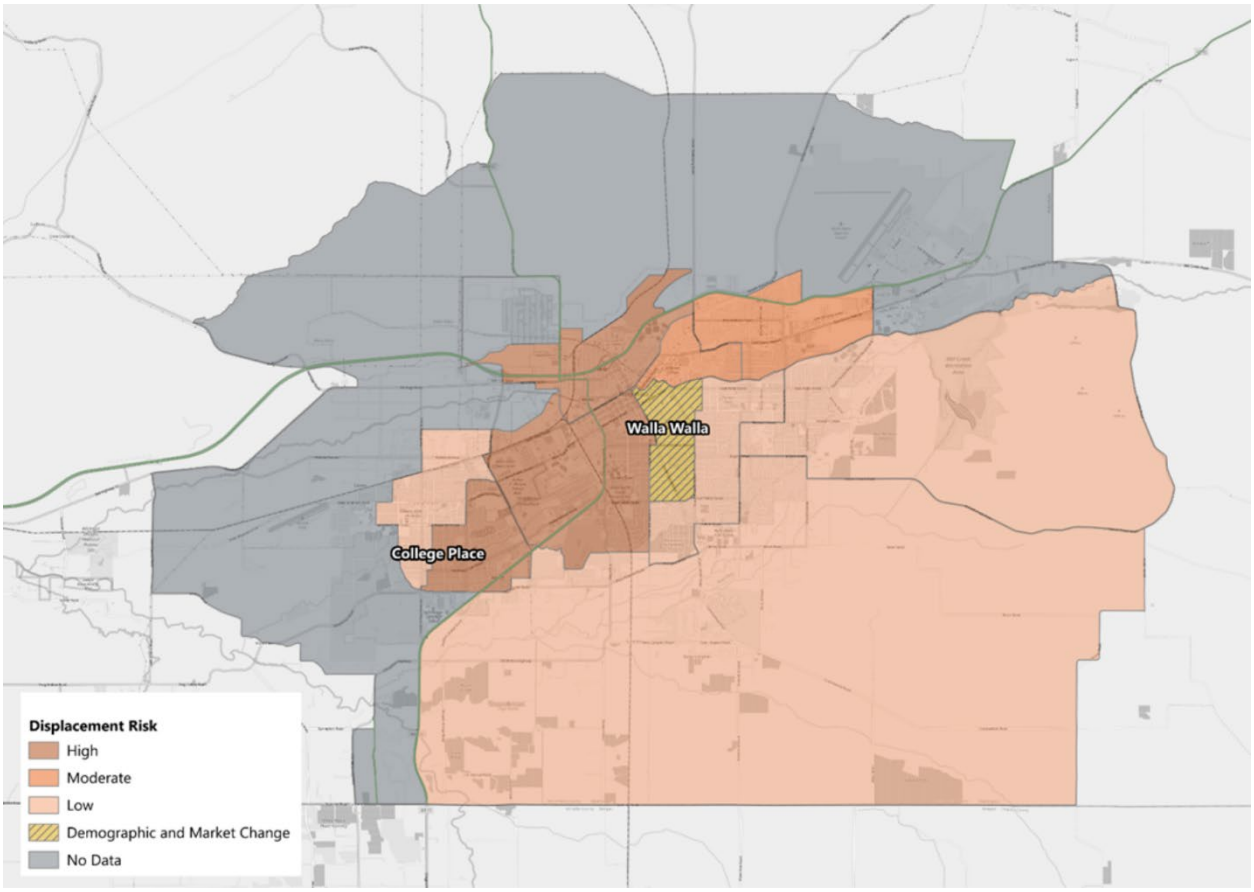
Appendix IV Figure 6 below shows that between 2014 and 2019, 4,810 more rental units were added to the stock of units affordable to households making at least 50 percent AMI, while Walla Walla lost 425 units affordable to households making less than that. These numbers do not necessarily reflect construction and demolition activity – in many cases, existing rental units have become more expensive due to increased market rents, and a lagging in household incomes, meaning that units that were once affordable to households making 50-80% AMI are now no longer affordable.



Appendix IV Figure 6. Walla Walla Five-Year Change in Renter Households by Income and Rental Units by Affordability, 2014-2019

Sources: U.S. HUD, 2015-2019 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 15C) & US HUD, 2015-2019 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 14B) & U.S. HUD, 2010-2014 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 15C) & U.S. HUD, 2010-2014 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 14B).

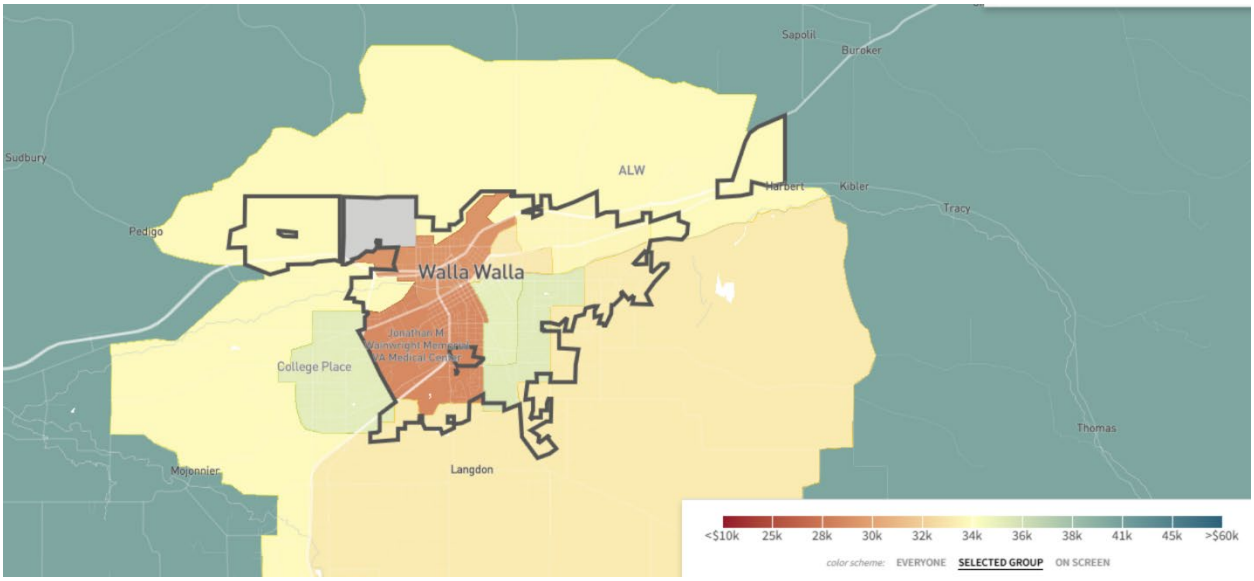
Appendix IV Figure 7below shows Washington Department of Commerce's Draft Displacement Risk Map. Walla Walla has significant areas with high displacement risks, particularly on the western side of town. The area just south of Downtown Walla Walla is currently undergoing demographic and market change, a measure indicating existing trends across three categories of analysis: a decrease in BIPOC populations and increase in incomes, an increase in rents between 2010 and 2020, and a prevalence of BIPOC, renter, and lower-income households. Notably, the areas of highest risk of displacement in the city closely map to the areas with the highest share of residents of color, indicating the need for City policy to address inequitable patterns of local development (see Policy Evaluation below).



Appendix IV Figure 7. Washington Department of Commerce Draft Displacement Risk Map for Walla Walla

Sources: Washington Department of Commerce Draft Displacement Risk Map Tool.

The Opportunity Atlas shown below in Appendix IV Figure 8 measures the average annual household income for low-income children who grew up in a specific area, regardless of race or gender. The tool shows that as of 2015, the earning potential for children who grew up in low-income households in Walla Walla is lower in areas that have a high displacement risk. In addition, those who grew up in and adjacent to the city of Walla Walla have lower earnings than those who grew up in other parts of the county.



Appendix IV Figure 8. Household Incomes at Age 35 for Children in Low-Income Households, Walla Walla & Surrounding Communities

Sources: Opportunity Atlas County & Metro Mobility Outcomes Map Tool.

Household Income

Appendix IV Table 3 below breaks down household income by race and ethnicity. In Walla Walla, 61 percent of Asian households make above the median income – the highest share among all racial and ethnic groups. Among white households, 45 percent make above median income compared with just 29 percent of Hispanic/Latino households. Over three quarters of Black/African American households make less than 30 percent AMI, and an additional five percent make between 30 and 50 percent AMI.

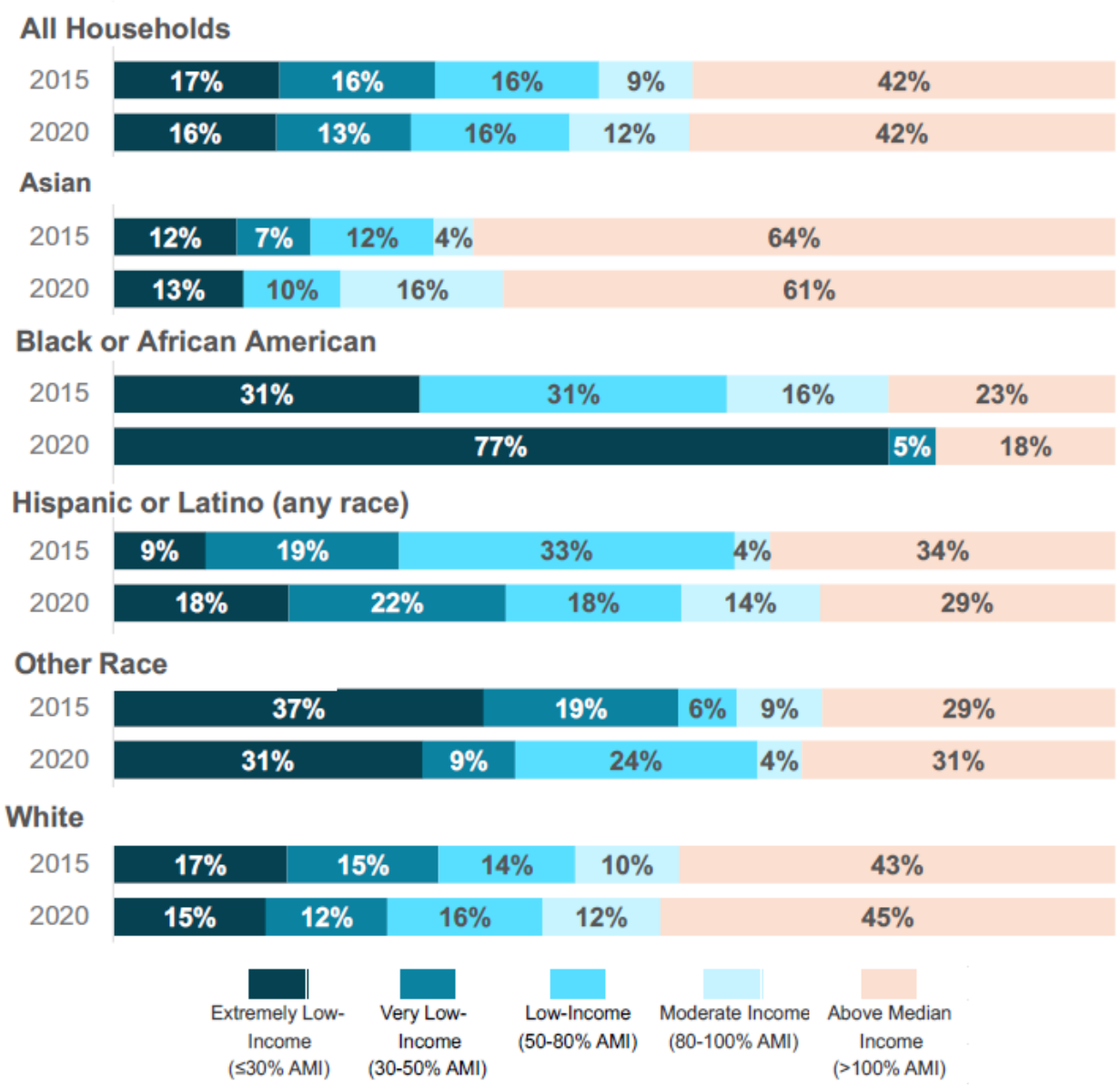
Appendix IV Table 3. Walla Walla Count of Households by Income and Race, 2019

Income Category (% of AMI)	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	Pacific Islander	White	Not Reported	All
Number								
Extremely Low-Income (≤30% AMI)		4		20		65	360	-
Very Low-Income (30-50%)	-		-			4	445	-
Low-Income (50-80%)		10		15	-		360	-
Moderate Income (80-100%)	-			25	-		285	-
Above Median Income (>100%)	-			94		15	605	-
Total for published estimates	14	154	84	2,055	-	9,860	213	12,375
Percentage								
Extremely Low-Income (≤30% AMI)	0%	1%	3%	18%	0%	74%	3%	
Very Low-Income (30-50%)	0%	0%	0%	27%	0%	72%	1%	
Low-Income (50-80%)	1%	1%	0%	18%	0%	78%	2%	
Moderate Income (80-100%)	0%	2%	0%	19%	0%	78%	1%	
Above Median Income (>100%)	0%	2%	0%	12%	0%	85%	1%	

** The category "Other (including multiple races, non-Hispanic)" is suppressed in source data (CHAS 2015-2019 Table 1)*

Sources: U.S. HUD, 2015-2019 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 1) & U.S. HUD, 2015-2019 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 8)

Appendix IV Figure 9 below shows the distribution of households by income and race. Between 2015 and 2020, the percentage of households making between 30 and 50 percent AMI decreased from 16 percent to 13 percent. Over that same period the percentage of Black/African American households making below 30 percent AMI increased significantly, from 31 percent to 77 percent. While the share of white households making above median income increased from 43 to 45 percent, the share of households at that income level decreased in nearly every other racial group.



Appendix IV Figure 9. Walla Walla Percentage of All Households by Income Category and Race (2010-2014 vs. 2015-2019)

Sources: U.S. HUD, 2015-2019 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) (Table 1).

Policy Evaluation

Based on the above analysis, there is room for improvements to policies in Walla Walla to reduce racially disparate impacts, and the data was used to inform the next steps of the racially disparate impacts assessment process – evaluating and revising policies that reinforce historical patterns of segregation, displacement, and inequitable outcomes. Taking a proactive approach in shaping policy to address these challenges will benefit all Walla Walla households as the City seeks to build a more equitable future.

Based on guidance provided by the Washington State Department of Commerce, the following policy evaluation framework was used to evaluate Walla Walla's existing Housing Element policies:

Criteria	Evaluation
The policy is valid and supports meeting the identified housing needs. The policy is needed and addresses identified racially disparate impacts, displacement and exclusion in housing.	**S** Supportive
The policy can support meeting the identified housing needs but may be insufficient or does not address racially disparate impacts, displacement and exclusion in housing.	**A** Approaching
The policy may challenge the jurisdiction's ability to meet the identified housing needs. The policy's benefits and burdens should be reviewed to optimize the ability to meet the policy's objectives while improving the equitable distribution of benefits and burdens imposed by the policy.	**C** Challenging
The policy does not impact the jurisdiction's ability to meet the identified housing needs and has no influence or impact on racially disparate impacts, displacement or exclusion.	**NA** Not applicable

Appendix IV Table 4. Policy Evaluation

Existing Goal / Policy #	Existing Goal/Policy	Equity Assessment	Why	Notes
	Goal H 1: A broad range of housing choices is available to meet the needs of people of diverse socioeconomic status, household type, and age.			
H 1.1	Provide an array of housing choices such as apartments, small lot single-family housing, accessory dwelling units, townhomes, manufactured homes, and cottages to meet the needs of people of all incomes throughout their lifespan.	**Approaching**	Providing an array of housing choices will help support the needs of a variety of households. However, it is important to ensure that where these types of housing are located do not enforce any existing patterns of segregation.	Ensure that this array of housing choices is allowed throughout a variety of zones in the city, including lower density residential zones, to ensure that neighborhoods are socially, racially, and economically diverse.

Existing Goal / Policy #	Existing Goal/Policy	Equity Assessment	Why	Notes
H 1.2	Address the causes of homelessness by working with local agencies and non-profits that provide services to this community.	**Approaching**	Working with local organizations that provide homeless services can help the City better understand and address the causes of homelessness. However, the City should also address the needs of those at risk of homelessness and promote housing stability.	Along with local organizations serving homeless residents, the City should also work with residents experiencing housing precarity - such as the high share of Black households who are extremely cost burdened - to help keep people housed.
H 1.3	Encourage the use of existing housing stock to provide affordable housing for households with middle and lower incomes.	**Approaching**	It is not clear what is meant by "encourage the use of existing housing stock." Making this policy more specific will help the city to develop equitable programs.	Clarify what the City intends with this program, i.e., provide financial assistance for repairs and maintenance for low- and middle-income homeowners and owners of un-regulated affordable rental housing (as in H 2.7).
H 1.4	Develop incentives for construction of housing affordable to households with low and moderate incomes such as density bonuses, waived fees, multi-family property tax exemption, or a transfer of development rights program.	**Approaching**	Incentives for affordable housing construction will help improve affordability challenges and reduce cost burden for low- and middle-income households. However, it is important to ensure that this housing is not concentrated in one area of the city.	Ensure that affordable housing is allowed in enough areas that it is feasible to build and not concentrated in one location. Currently, Walla Walla's multifamily zone applies to just a small percentage of city land - the City should consider expanding that zone or allowing affordable multifamily housing in lower-density neighborhoods (as described in H 2.1).



Existing Goal / Policy #	Existing Goal/Policy	Equity Assessment	Why	Notes
H 1.5	Coordinate and collaborate with private agencies to ensure housing for people with special needs including seniors, people with physical and developmental limitation, victims of domestic violence, and homeless individuals and families.	**Approaching**	It is not clear what is meant by "ensure housing" - does the City intend to provide financial support or incentives for this type of housing, or provide services for permanent supportive housing?	Clarify how the City intends to ensure housing for these groups, and ensure that the housing can be built in a variety of neighborhoods - especially those near essential services.
H 1.6	Apply for state and federal housing program funds to support efforts to provide funding for housing to serve people with low and moderate incomes and people with special needs.	**N/A**	State and federal housing program funds are necessary to support the construction of housing for low- and moderate-income households.	Keep
H 1.7	Allow manufactured housing and accessory dwelling units in single-family residential areas.	**Supportive**	Allowing for lower-cost housing types like manufactured housing and accessory dwelling units will help ensure that lower-density neighborhoods will support households at a variety of income levels, including both renters and homeowners.	
H 1.8	Work with educational institutions to ensure the provision of adequate housing for students.	**N/A**		Keep
H 1.9	Explore the possibility of establishing a housing land trust.	**N/A**		Keep
	Goal H 2: Attractive and functional neighborhoods are welcoming to all types of households.			
H 2.1	Integrate housing for lower and moderate income households and those with special needs into a variety of geographical locations throughout the city.	**Supportive**	This policy will help ensure that Walla Walla's neighborhoods are economically, socially, and racially integrated.	

Existing Goal / Policy #	Existing Goal/Policy	Equity Assessment	Why	Notes
H 2.2	Develop minimum property maintenance standards to ensure the safety and suitability of existing housing stock.	**Challenging**	While minimum property maintenance standards can help maintain the attractiveness of neighborhoods as well as aging housing stock, penalties for failing to meet these maintenance standards can result in housing instability for lower-income households, particularly those with elderly residents.	Ensure that penalties for failing to meet property maintenance standards do not lead to housing instability for vulnerable groups. Ensure that policy H 2.7 is in place and funded to help lower-income residents maintain their homes.
H 2.3	Develop design guidelines to ensure that all new housing, including that for lower and middle income owners and renters, adheres to good standards of planning, design, and construction.	**Challenging**	While this is a laudable goal which will help ensure the longevity and attractiveness of lower- and middle-income housing, excessive planning and design standards can add significant costs to housing development. This can exacerbate the feasibility gap for low-income housing, creating a disincentive to build new, much needed housing units.	Work with affordable housing providers to ensure that the design guidelines are not overly rigid and couple design requirements with incentives for affordable housing, as described in H 1.4. Ensure that design requirements do not enshrine one style of housing and/or landscaping as superior - housing should be designed to meet personal and cultural needs.
H 2.4	Enhance the character of neighborhoods through superior design, responsible stewardship, the application of sustainability principles, and historic preservation.	**Challenging**	This policy seems a bit redundant with policies H 2.2, H 2.3, and H 2.5. The Department of Commerce RDI guidelines suggest removing references to neighborhood character, as this concept has historically led to patterns of segregation due to the prioritization of single family neighborhoods.	Remove this policy, or focus instead on providing resources for historic preservation, as the other parts of this policy are addressed in other policies.



Existing Goal / Policy #	Existing Goal/Policy	Equity Assessment	Why	Notes
H 2.5	Plan for energy efficient housing that is designed to maximize use of renewable resources such as solar and wind power.	**N/A**		Keep
H 2.6	Locate new housing near transportation and community facilities to allow seniors to age in place.	**Supportive**	Allowing seniors to age in place, especially in areas with access to transit and services, will help reduce displacement.	
H 2.7	Develop a housing assistance program that helps homeowners with low incomes with small remodeling projects to improve weatherization, increase sustainability, and provide accommodations for disabilities.	**Supportive**	This is an essential goal to support households without the resources to meet the city's goals regarding neighborhood attractiveness and will help support lower-income residents in houses that were not built to withstand the changing climate.	

Appendix V. Economic Profile

July 10, 2026

Introduction

This economic profile is intended to provide a basis for the goal and policy recommendations in the Economic Development element of the City of Walla Walla's comprehensive plan. It includes an overview of population and employment characteristics, recent business activity, education and workforce development, and an overview of the major commercial centers in Walla Walla and their impact on the local economy.

Key Findings

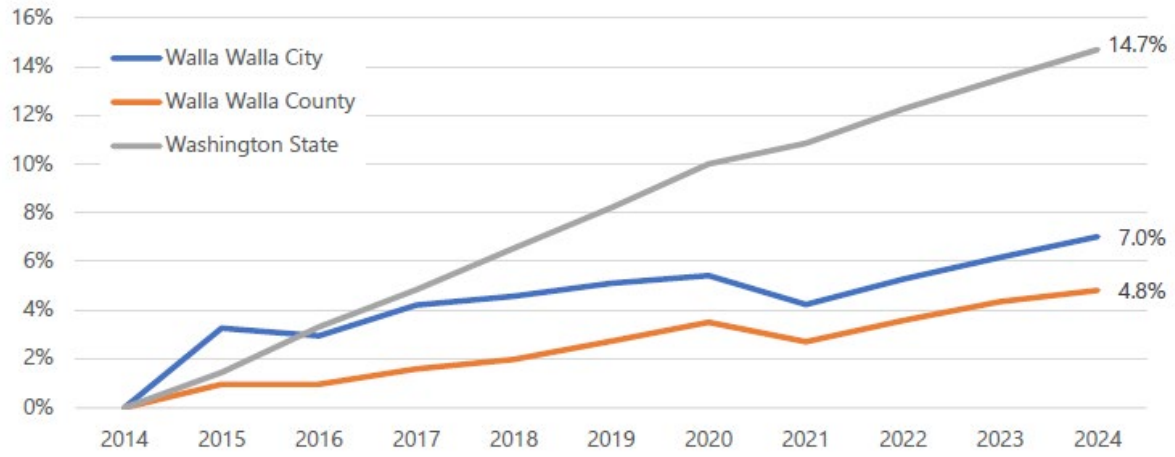
- Since 2014, Walla Walla City's population growth has outpaced the county's but lagged behind the state average. Over the past decade, it has grown by seven percent, an average of 0.7 percent per year. Continued population growth over this time reflects the area's strength as an economic center in the region.
- Walla Walla's population is becoming more educated, with a quarter of adult residents having attained a Bachelor's degree or higher as of 2023. Growth in the healthcare and education sectors will continue to bring more highly educated workers to the city.
- The median household income is lower in Walla Walla City than in the county, with over a fifth of city households making less than $25,000 annually. However, this is largely driven by the high concentration of students studying at local colleges and universities.
- Between 2012 and 2022, the sectors that added the most jobs in Walla Walla City were educational services, accommodation and food services, health care and social assistance, and public administration. Together, these sectors added nearly 2,000 jobs to the city's economy. Over the same period, the retail trade, finance and insurance, and other services sectors saw the most job losses.
- While wages for common jobs in Walla Walla's top sectors vary widely, jobs in the healthcare and education sectors are among the highest paying in the local economy. As these higher-paying sectors continue to grow, household incomes should rise. However, jobs in the accommodations and food services industry, important in the city's downtown business district and wine industry, are much lower paying. These jobs are essential to a healthy economy, but workers are susceptible to displacement as the cost of living rises.
- Ten of the top 15 employers in Walla Walla County are located in Walla Walla City. The largest of these include Providence St. Mary Medical Center, the Washington State Penitentiary, and Walla Walla Public Schools. The county's biggest manufacturing and food processing employers are largely located outside of the city in areas like Prescott and Wallula.

- Between 2020 and 2023, taxable sales grew in the retail, construction, and accommodations and food services industries in Walla Walla County. In 2022, food and beverage sales reached $105 million, up from $47 million in 2020 at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in 2023 taxable sales in the industry dropped significantly, recovering only slightly in 2024.
- Educational institutions in Walla Walla, including Whitman College and Walla Walla Community College, offer a unique opportunity for workforce development and business attraction, especially for students and employers in the health care, food services, and viticulture sectors. Building on this opportunity will be key to economic growth in the future.
- Downtown Walla Walla is a significant commercial center for the region as well as a high-quality amenity for residents, visitors, and businesses. Investments in Downtown—like the recent completion of Walawála Plaza and Heritage Square—will help attract new workers and businesses to the city.
- The wine industry is a major driver of tourism and has contributed to significant growth in the accommodations sector, but headwinds in the beverage industry could pose a challenge for future growth. Still, there are opportunities to grow this sector beyond the wine industry to create opportunities for year-round visits as well as nightlife and family-oriented amenities for residents.

Population and Household Demographics

Population Growth

Although the City of Walla Walla has grown over the past decade, growth in both the city and county have lagged behind statewide growth. As of 2024, the population in Walla Walla is 34,580, roughly 55 percent of the County population of 63,375. Since 2014, Walla Walla's population grew by 7 percent, an average of 0.7 percent annually. Over the same period, Walla Walla County's population grew by just under 5 percent (0.6 percent annually) and Washington's population grew by nearly 15 percent (1.4 percent annually).



Appendix V Figure 1. Cumulative Population Growth in Walla Walla City, Walla Walla County, and Washington (2014-2024)

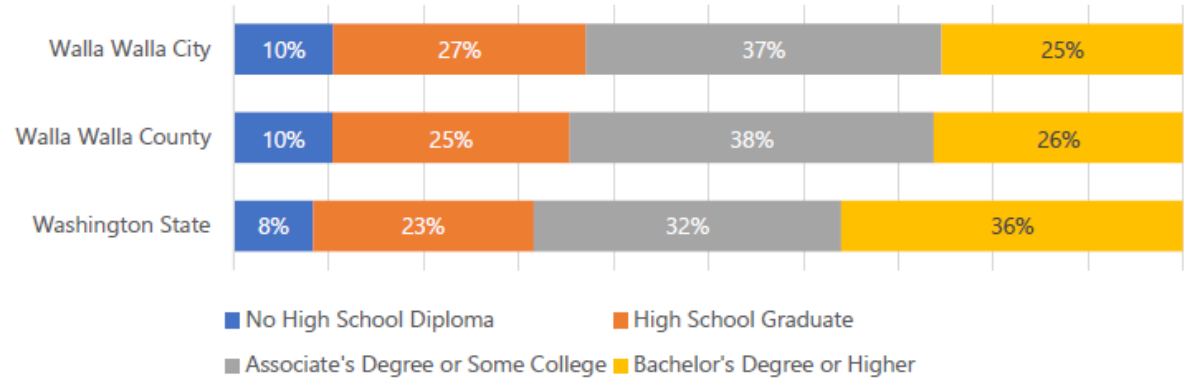
Source: Washington Office of Financial Management.

Educational Attainment

Education is an important sector in Walla Walla, providing a supply of educated young workers and potential opportunities for workforce development. The concentration of higher education institutions, including Whitman College and Walla Walla University, impacts the housing needs and demographics of the city. Many of the students are under the age of 25 with a high share living in dorms or similar group arrangements. Between 2015 and 2020, roughly 4,000 Walla Walla residents resided in group quarters. They also tend to work part time, earning lower annual incomes than other residents. The Education & Workforce Development of this report highlights opportunities for the City to capitalize on its role as a regional education hub to attract businesses and improve workforce skills.

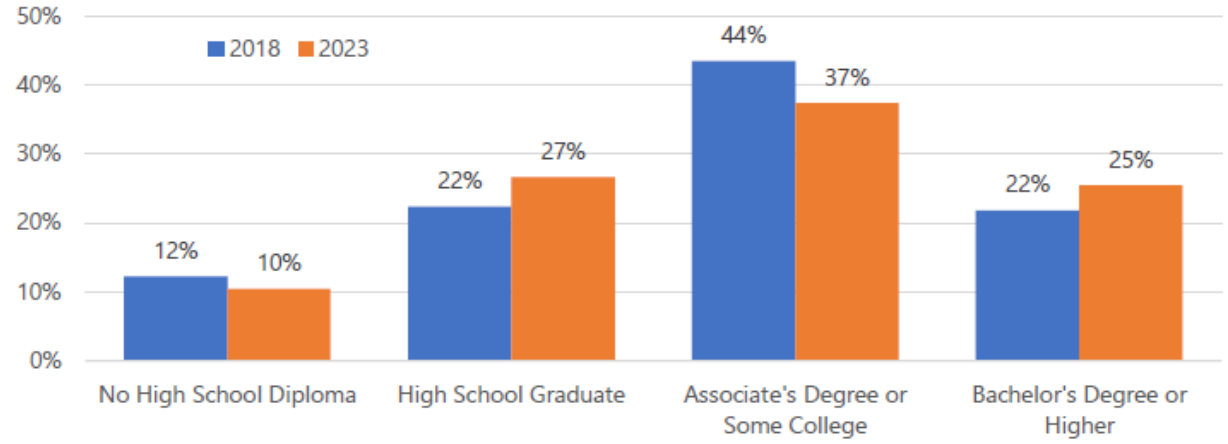
While both Walla Walla City and Walla Walla County have lower shares of residents with at least a bachelor's degree than the state, the city's population has grown more educated since 2018. As of 2023, a quarter of residents have at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 22 percent in 2018, likely brought on by the growth in both education and healthcare. However, stakeholders interviewed during this planning process, including business owners and local elected officials, have indicated a lack of professional job opportunities and affordable housing has led many recent graduates to leave Walla Walla after graduating, despite some wanting to stay.

Housing, in particular, is a limiting factor in drawing new businesses due to an inability to find and attract more educated workers.



Appendix V Figure 2. Population over 18 by Educational Attainment, 2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS, Table S1501



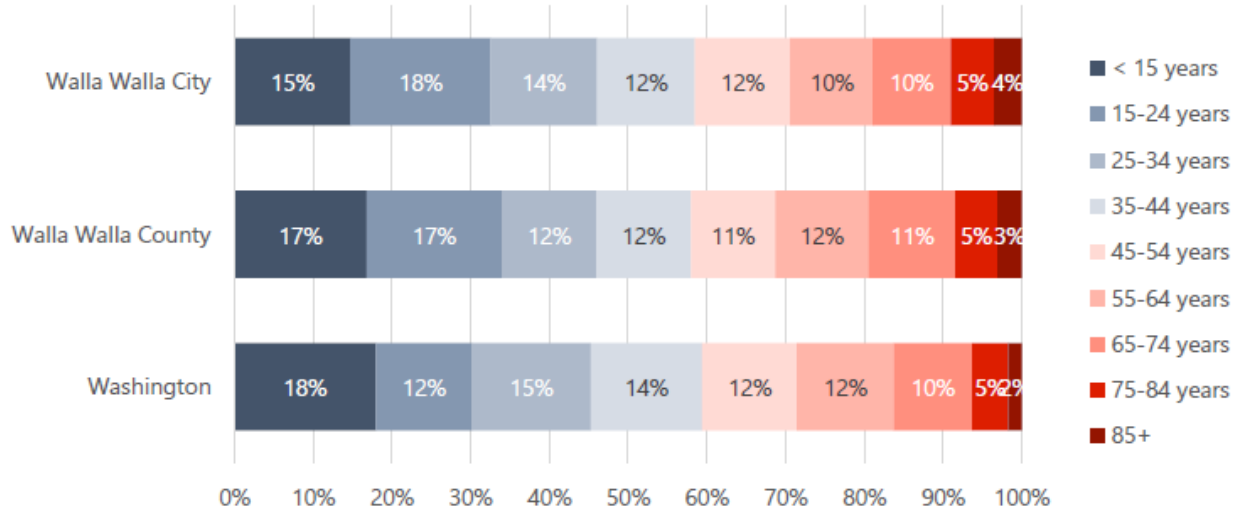
Appendix V Figure 3. Educational Attainment among Adults 18 or Older in Walla Walla, 2018-2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS, Table S1501.

Age Distribution

Understanding the age distribution of the population can help drive economic decision making. Employers are attracted to locations that have a high share of upwardly mobile young workers and an educated workforce. From a retail and services perspective, age distribution can provide insights into what types of businesses and amenities can best serve the population. The Tourism Master Plan, which is discussed in more detail in the **Error! Reference source not found.** section of this report, found that Walla Walla's relatively young population is interested in more opportunities for nightlife as well as family-friendly activities.

Age distribution among Walla Walla City residents is similar to both the County and the State, though Walla Walla County and City have a higher share of residents between the ages of 15 and 24, likely due to the large student population. In Walla Walla City and County, 19 percent of residents are at least 65 years old, compared to 16 percent statewide, a number that has grown in recent years. Though nearly half (49 percent) of Walla Walla City residents are between the prime working ages of 25 and 64, the increase in older residents could lead a shrinking of the local workforce.

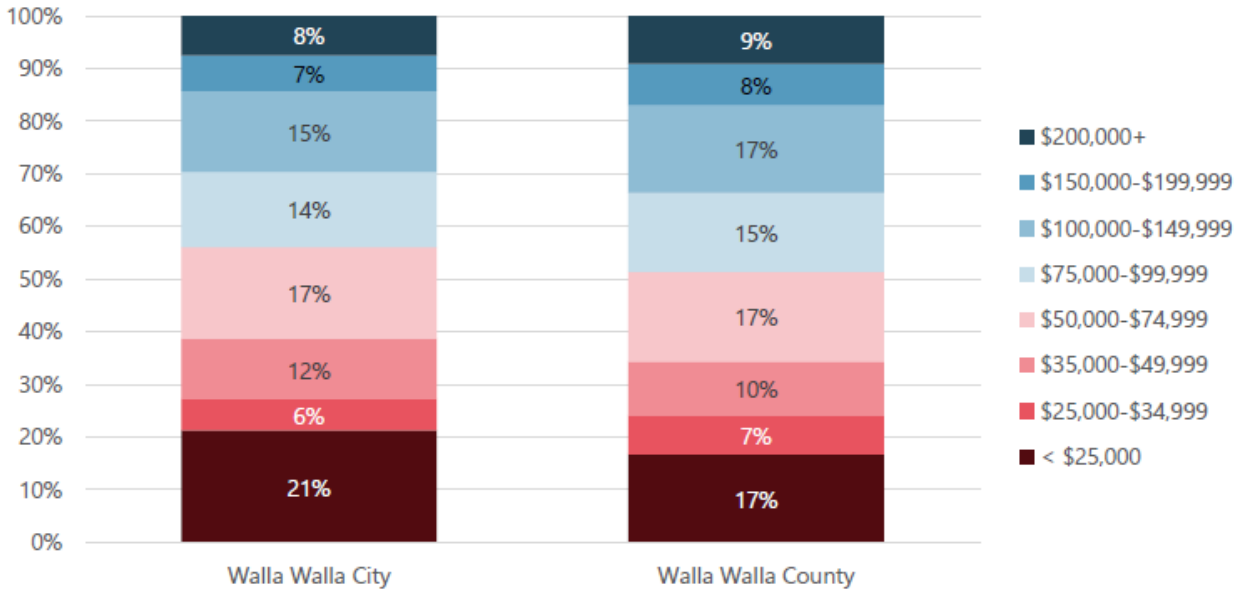


Appendix V Figure 4. Age Distribution in Walla Walla City, Walla Walla County, and Washington, 2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS, Table S0101.

Household Income

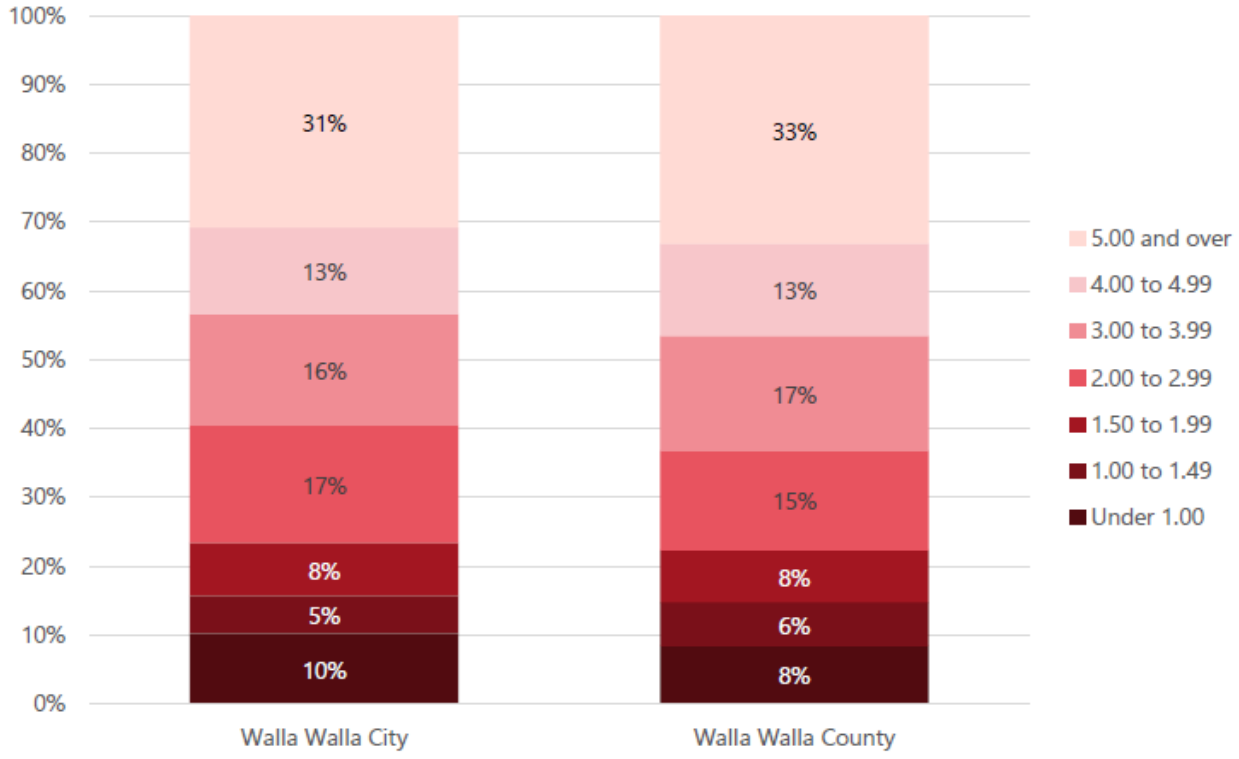
The median household income in Walla Walla City is $65,493 compared to $72,212 countywide. Around 21 percent of Walla Walla City residents make less than $25,000 annually, in part due to the high share of students in the city. Countywide, over a third of households make at least $100,000. This suggests significant purchasing power, which can help support local retail, entertainment, and food services.



Appendix V Figure 5. Share of Households by Income, Walla Walla City and County, 2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS, Table S1901.

Ten percent of Walla Walla City residents have incomes below the federal poverty level, compared to 8 percent countywide. This represents a decrease over 2018 poverty levels, when 14 percent of City residents and 10 percent of County residents were below the poverty level. More than three-quarters of city residents make at least twice the poverty level, as shown below. As Walla Walla's economy grows, City leaders should ensure that there are attainable opportunities for low-income residents to live, work, and access educational opportunities.



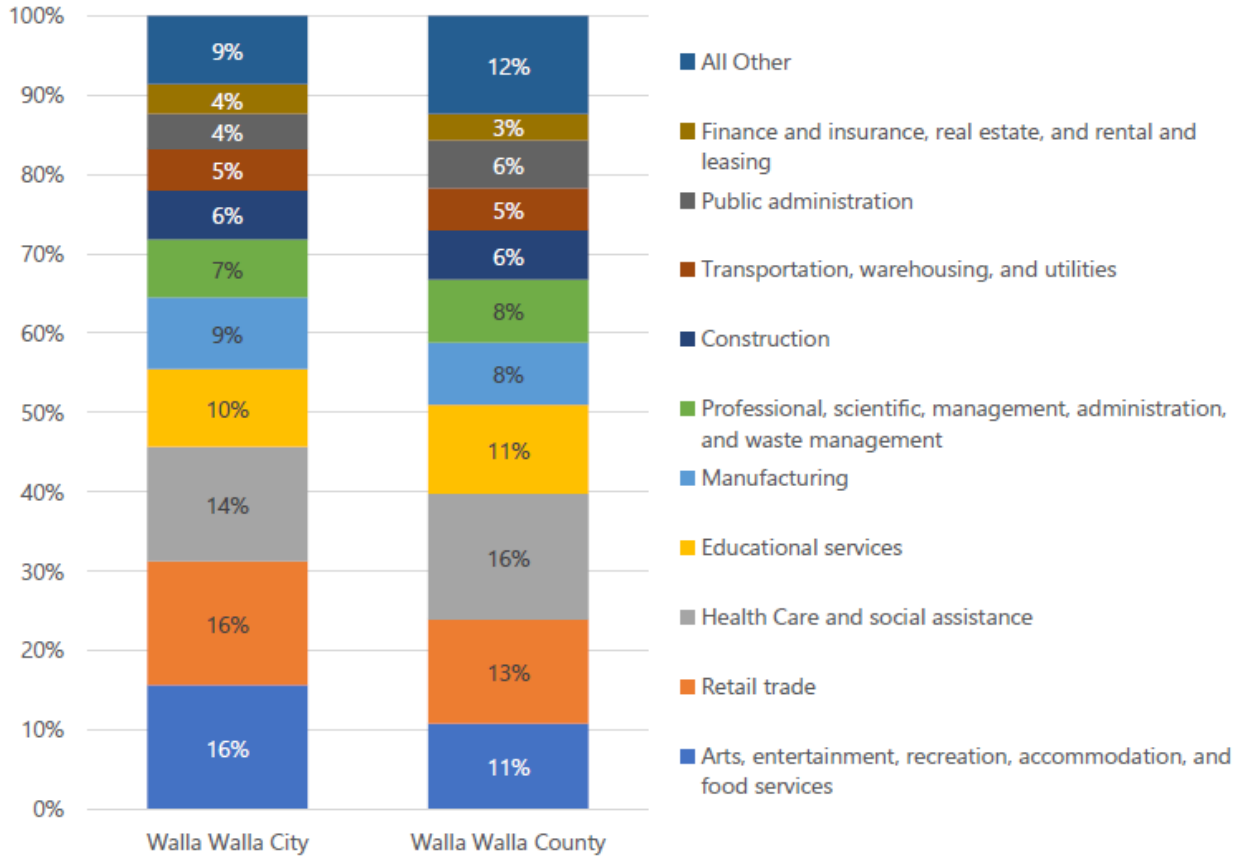
Appendix V Figure 6. Income to Poverty Ratio in Walla Walla City and County, 2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 Five-Year ACS, Table B17026.

Employment Characteristics

Employment by Industry

The largest employment sectors among Walla Walla City residents are arts, entertainment, and recreation, retail trade, health care and social assistance, and educational services. While these are also the largest sectors countywide, Walla Walla City has a higher share of residents working in arts, entertainment, and recreation (16 percent) than the county (11 percent). A higher share of county residents is employed in health care and social assistance (16 percent) compared to city residents (14 percent). These industries include jobs at a variety of income levels, suggesting a need for housing, services, and other amenities at a variety of price points.



Appendix V Figure 7. Employment by Industry among Residents in Walla Walla City and Walla Walla County (2023)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 5-Year ACS, Table S2405.

As of 2022, the City of Walla Walla was home to 15,754 jobs, up from 13,944 in 2012 (an increase of 13 percent). The largest employment sectors in Walla Walla City include healthcare and social assistance, public administration, educational services, and accommodation and food services. Between 2012 and 2022, the educational services sector saw the highest employment gains, adding 797 jobs to the city's economy. The "other services (excluding public administration)" sector shank by 626 jobs over the same period. This category covers a wide range of jobs,

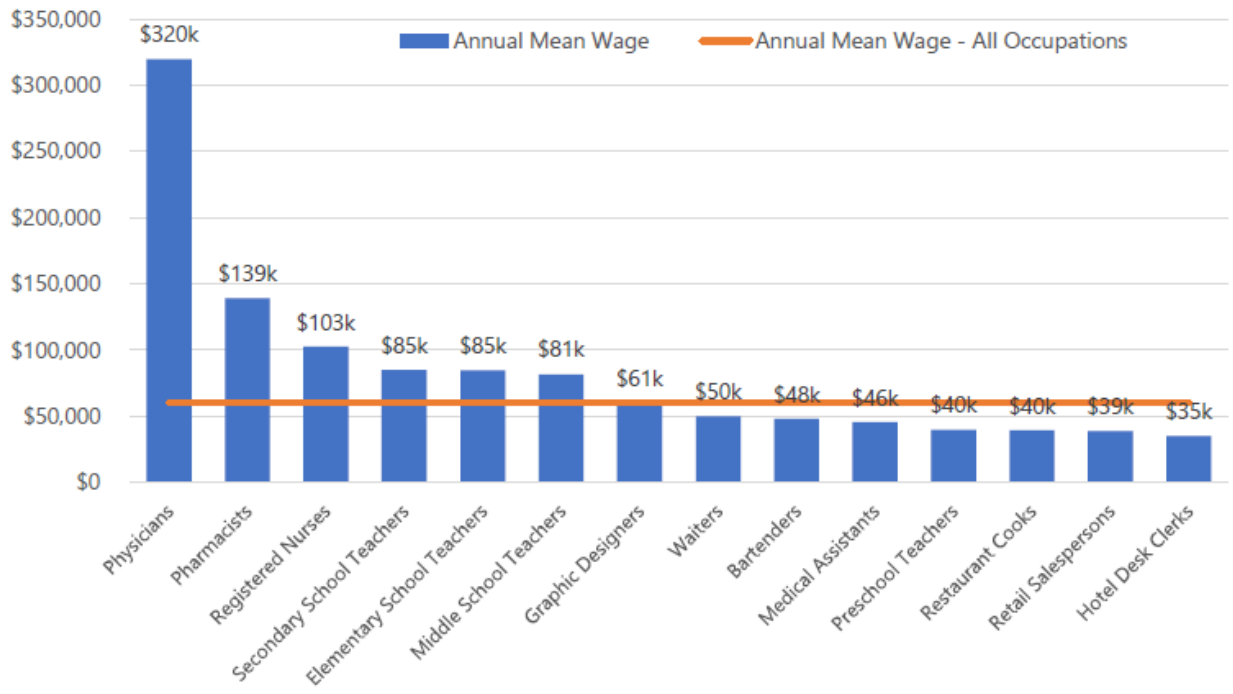
including equipment and machine repair, religious activities, advocacy, dry cleaning, personal care, and pet care services.

Appendix V Table 1. Walla Walla City Jobs by Sector, 2012-2022

	2012	2022	Change	% Change
Educational Services	1,105	1,902	797	72%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,385	1,815	430	31%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,664	4,050	386	11%
Public Administration	1,547	1,926	379	24%
Construction	352	551	199	57%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	197	355	158	80%
Administration & Support, Waste Manage	279	397	118	42%
Wholesale Trade	278	393	115	41%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	76	153	77	101%
Manufacturing	839	881	42	5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	339	371	32	9%
Utilities	68	86	18	26%
Transportation and Warehousing	133	148	15	11%
Management of Companies and Enterprise	27	41	14	52%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extract	1	4	3	300%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	181	180	(1)	-1%
Information	263	247	(16)	-6%
Retail Trade	1,620	1,470	(150)	-9%
Finance and Insurance	640	460	(180)	-28%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	950	324	(626)	-66%
	13,944	**15,754**	**1,810**	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.

The annual mean wage for jobs in top sectors for the Walla Walla MSA varies significantly, from nearly $320,000 per year for Physicians to $35,000 annually for hotel desk clerks. Jobs in the fast-growing health care and education sectors are among the highest paying, though medical assistants and preschool teachers make less than the annual mean wage for all occupations ($60,600).



Appendix V Figure 8. Annual Mean Wages for Jobs in Top Sectors, 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics May 2023 Metropolitan & Nonmentropolitan Area Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates (OEW).

Top Employers

The major employers in Walla Walla County reflect the top job sectors, though outside of the city there is a higher concentration of manufacturing jobs. Among the top 15 employers in Walla Walla County, 10 are located within the city of Walla Walla. The largest employers in the city include Providence St. Mary Medical Center, the Washington State Penitentiary, Walla Walla Public Schools, and Whitman College. Walmart is the largest retailer countywide.

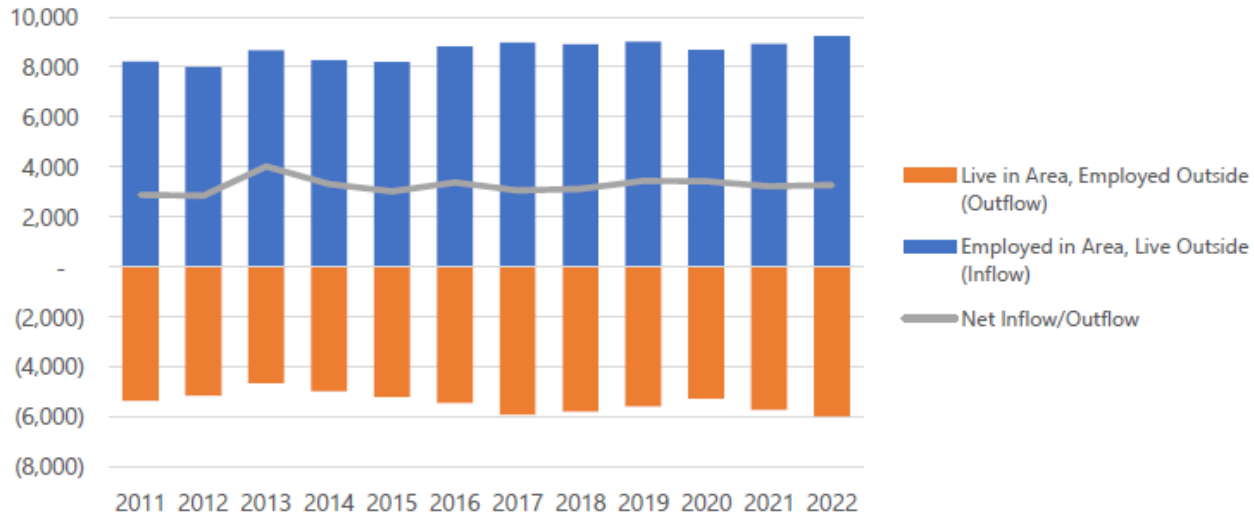
Appendix V Table 2. Top Employers in Walla Walla County, 2019

Employer	Sector	Location	Total Employees (FT + PT)
Broetje Orchards	Agriculture	Prescott	2,500
Tyson Fresh Meats, Inc.	Food Processing	Wallula	1,460
Providence St. Mary Medical Center	Health Care	Walla Walla	1,173
Washington State Penitentiary	Corrections	Walla Walla	1,080
Walla Walla Public Schools	Education	Walla Walla	833
Whitman College	Higher Education	Walla Walla	609
U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs	Health Care	Walla Walla	558
Walla Walla Community College	Education	Walla Walla	597
Packing Corp. of America / Boise Paper	Manufacturing	Wallula	456
City of Walla Walla	Government	Walla Walla	445
Walla Walla University	Education	College Place	416
Key Technology, Inc.	Manufacturing	Walla Walla	405
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Government	Walla Walla	358
Walmart	Retail	Various	338
Walla Walla County	Government	Walla Walla	312

Source: Port of Walla Walla Business Survey.

Commute Patterns

As of 2022, 9,232 workers in Walla Walla City lived in other communities (inflow), while 5,955 Walla Walla residents commuted elsewhere (outflow) and 6,522 residents both live and work in the city. The net inflow has held relatively stable over time, indicating that Walla Walla is a major regional employment center attracting workers from other communities.

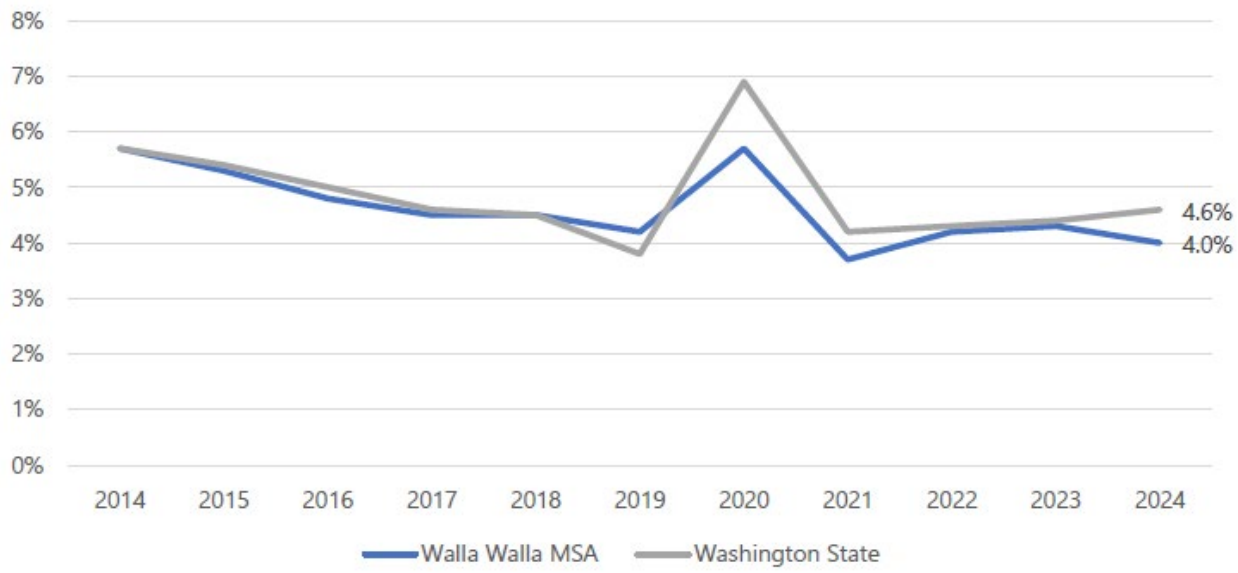


Appendix V Figure 9. Worker Inflow-Outflow in Walla Walla City, 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.

Unemployment

As of November 2024, the unemployment rate in the Walla Walla MSA was 4 percent, slightly lower than the statewide rate of 4.6 percent. For most of the past decade, the MSA's unemployment rate has remained slightly below the state's but has followed the same general trajectory. In November of 2020, Walla Walla's unemployment rate was just 5.7 percent, indicating that it was recovering more quickly than the state from COVID-19 pandemic business closures. While low unemployment is a positive sign for the regional economy, it also suggests that business growth may be challenging as workers become harder to find. Increasing opportunities for workforce development will help Walla Walla's economy continue to grow by increasing the pool of skilled workers.



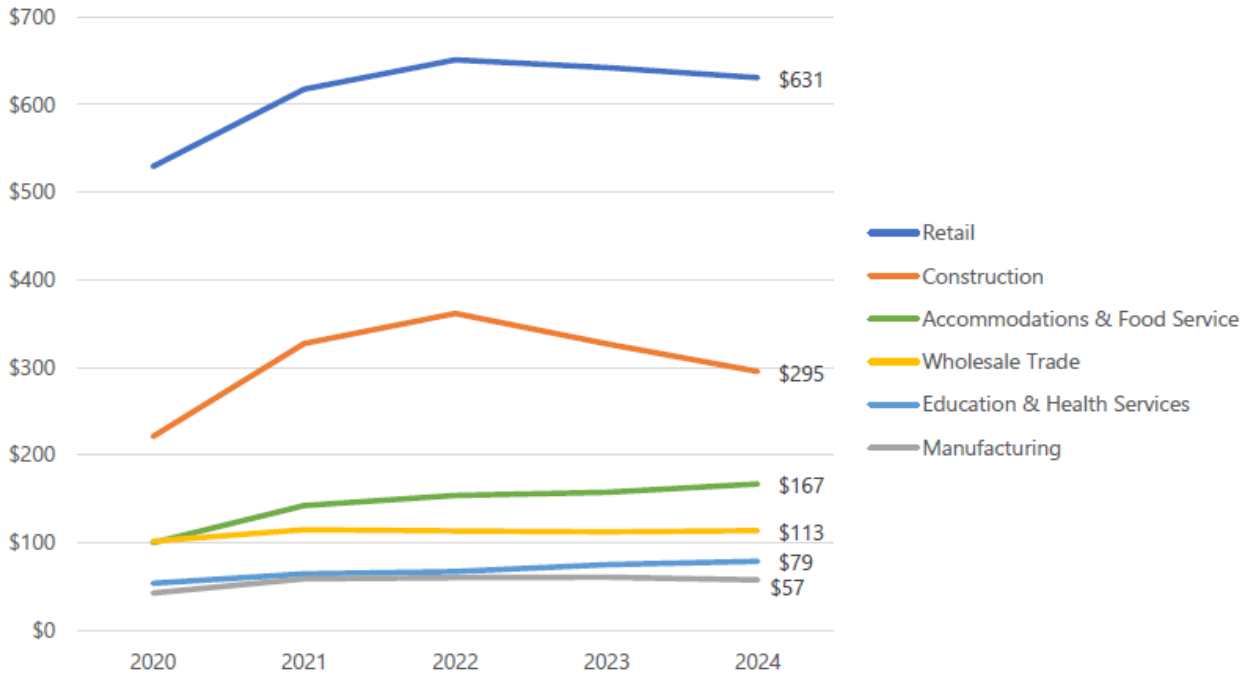
Appendix V Figure 10. Unemployment Rate in the Walla Walla MSA and Washington State, 2014-2024

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (FRED). Data as of November of each year.

Business Activity

Taxable Sales

Sales tax is an important revenue source for Washington cities and counties. Between 2020 and 2024, taxable sales in Walla Walla County grew from $1.2 billion to over $1.5 billion. Sales in the manufacturing and construction sectors saw the highest growth over that period (36 and 34 percent, respectively). Taxable retail sales grew by over 19 percent as the economy recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 2024, the County had $631 million in taxable retail sales, up from $529 million in 2020 but slightly below the $642 million in taxable sales countywide in 2023. The recently completed Tourism Master Plan includes strategies to increase year-round tourism opportunities, which should help bolster sales tax revenues in the retail and accommodations and food service sectors.

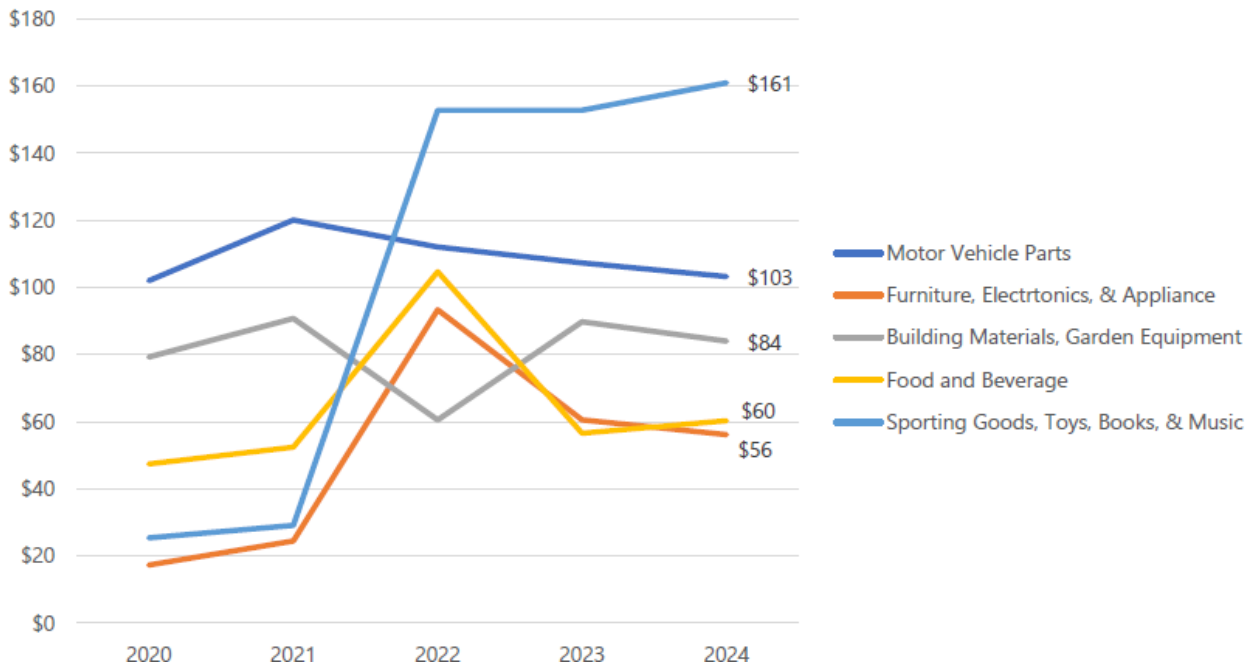


Appendix V Figure 11. Taxable Sales ($MM) by Industry in Walla Walla County, 2020-2024

Source: Washington State Department of Revenue via Port of Walla Walla.

Retail Sales

Within the retail sector, the biggest subcategories by taxable sales were sporting goods, toys, books and music followed by motor vehicle parts. While food and beverage had a strong year in 2022 with $105 million in taxable sales, sales in 2023 dropped to near 2021 levels. Between 2023 and 2024 the sector saw a modest increase in taxable sales of $3 million, but it is still down significantly from the 2022 peak. This trend likely reflects broader challenges in the beverage industry.



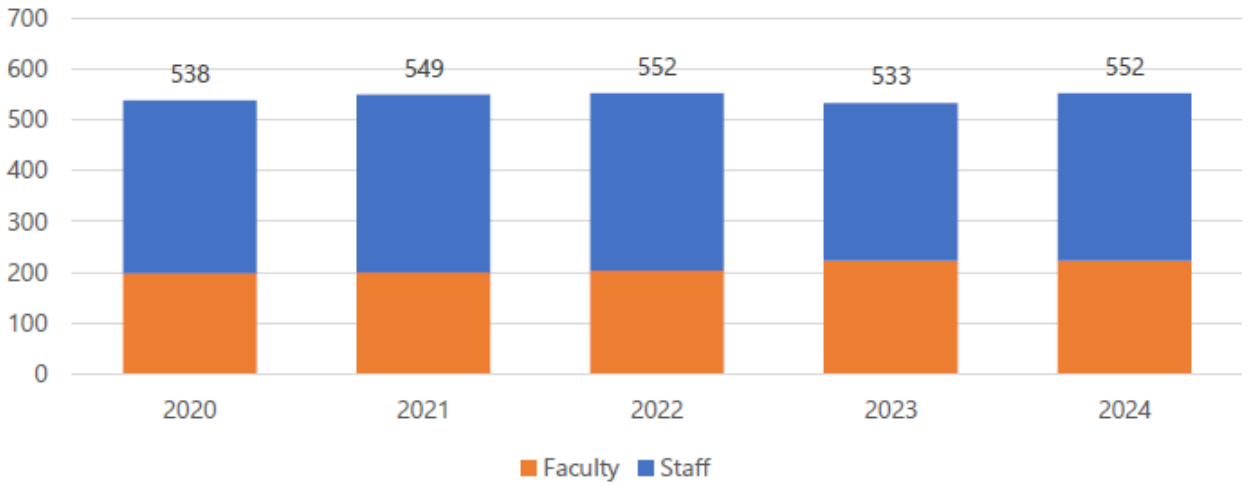
Appendix V Figure 12. Taxable Sales ($MM) by Retail Category, 2020-2024

Source: Washington State Department of Revenue via Port of Walla Walla.

Education and Workforce Development

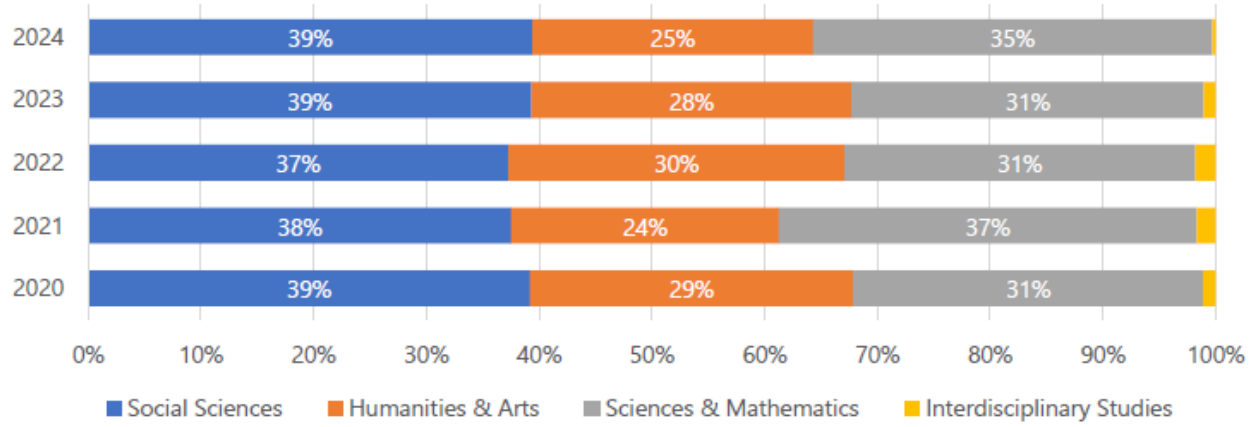
Higher Education

The educational sector is a major asset for Walla Walla. Along with the 1,902 jobs in the sector citywide, the presence of multiple higher education institutions provides the city with unique opportunities to grow its workforce and attract employers. As of the Fall of 2024, Whitman College employed 223 faculty and 329 staff, with 460 of these employees working full time. Student enrollment has also grown from 1,360 in 2020 to 1,561 in 2024. Nearly 40 percent of 2024 graduates majored in the social sciences, and another 35 percent in sciences and mathematics. The most popular majors in the social sciences are psychology and anthropology-environmental studies, while the most common sciences and mathematics majors are biology and biochemistry.



Appendix V Figure 13. Whitman College Employment (Full and Part Time), 2020-2024

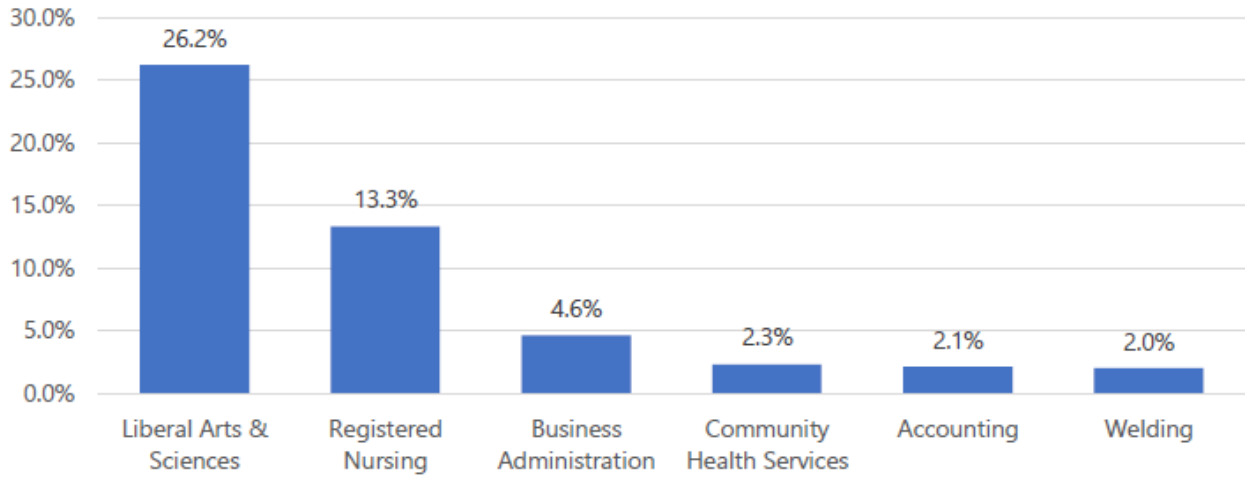
Source: Whitman College



Appendix V Figure 14. Whitman College Graduates by Major, 2020-2024

Source: Whitman College

Similarly, health care fields are among the top Associate's degree programs at Walla Walla Community College. While over a quarter of degree recipients study liberal arts and sciences, 13 percent study registered nursing and an additional 2.3 percent study community health services. WWCC also has strong culinary arts and viticulture programs. These majors could align with the needs of employers in the fast-growing health care and social assistance sector, as well as the accommodation and food services sectors.



Appendix V Figure 15. Walla Walla Community College Top Associate's Degree Programs by Enrollment

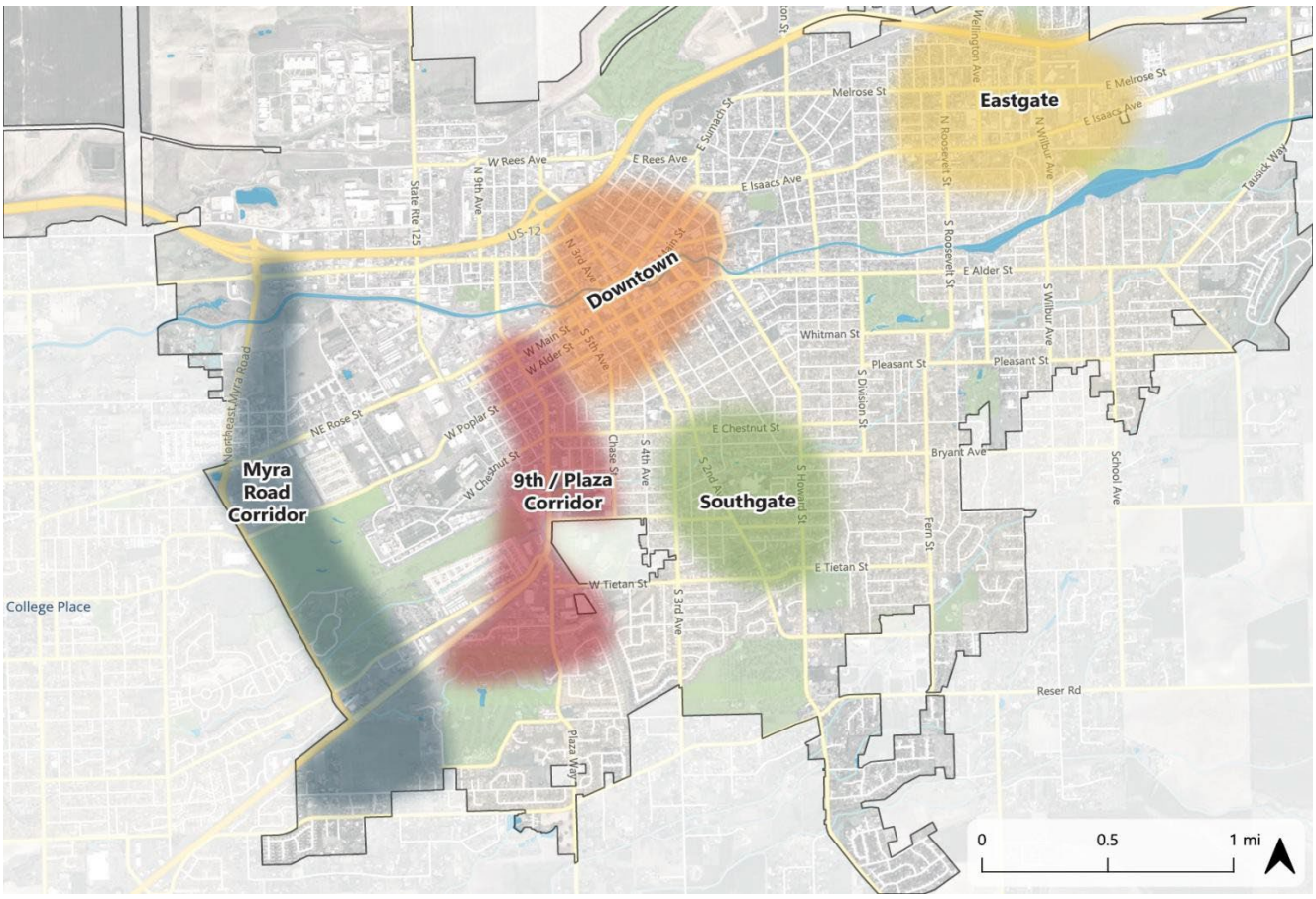
Source: IPEDS via Google

Finding ways to connect local employers with educational institutions can help encourage graduates to stay in Walla Walla once they have obtained their degrees, helping to grow the regional employment base.

Commercial Centers

This section profiles the areas of Walla Walla with the most significant commercial activity. Figure 18 below shows the five identified centers, which include:

- **Downtown Walla Walla**, the physical and historic center of Walla Walla.
- **Eastgate,** centered on Isaacs Avenue and North Wilbur Avenue, this center is anchored by the Eastgate Marketplace, a major shopping center in the northeast of the city.
- **Southgate,** focused along South 2nd Avenue between East Chestnut Street and West Tietan Street, this center is a major employment center anchored by the Southgate Medical Park and the Southgate Shopping Center.
- **9th and Plaza Corridor**, located along South 9th Avenue and Plaza Way between West Poplar Street and Granite Place, this center represents the newest hub of retail activity in the city, and is anchored by Safeway, Bi-Mart, and Rosauers.
- **Myra Road/Poplar Street/Rose Street,** centered on these streets and anchored by the Walla Walla Town Center



Appendix V Figure 16. Walla Walla Commercial Centers

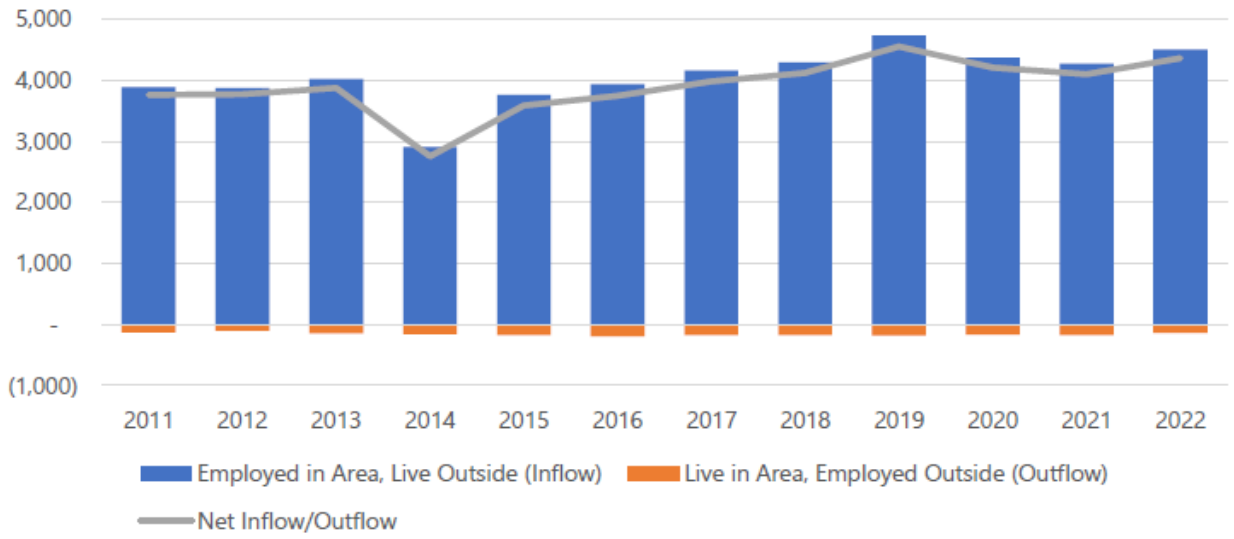
Source: Leland Consulting Group

Downtown Walla Walla

Downtown Walla Walla is a major commercial hub in the city and broader region, with the densest concentration of businesses, shops, and restaurants in the city and region. It is also a significant amenity attracting residents, visitors, and businesses. Walawála Plaza, a pedestrian plaza that was completed in Downtown in 2023, has become a major attraction and gathering place for the city, providing a sense of community and identity for residents.

Investing in placemaking and community amenities in Downtown Walla Walla will help attract more investment citywide.

As of 2022, there were 4,523 jobs in Downtown Walla Walla. Most of these jobs are filled by people living outside of Downtown, which is primarily a commercial district. Just 23 people both live and work in Downtown Walla Walla, while 4,500 Downtown workers commute from other locations and 136 Downtown residents commute out.



Appendix V Figure 17. Inflow and Outflow in Downtown Walla Walla

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.

Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest job sector in Downtown Walla Walla, and added the most jobs of any sector between 2012 and 2022. This is largely due to the presence of Providence St. Mary Medical Center. Accommodation and food services and public administration are also major job sectors downtown that have seen growth over the past decade. Over the same period, Downtown lost 154 jobs in the finance and insurance sector.

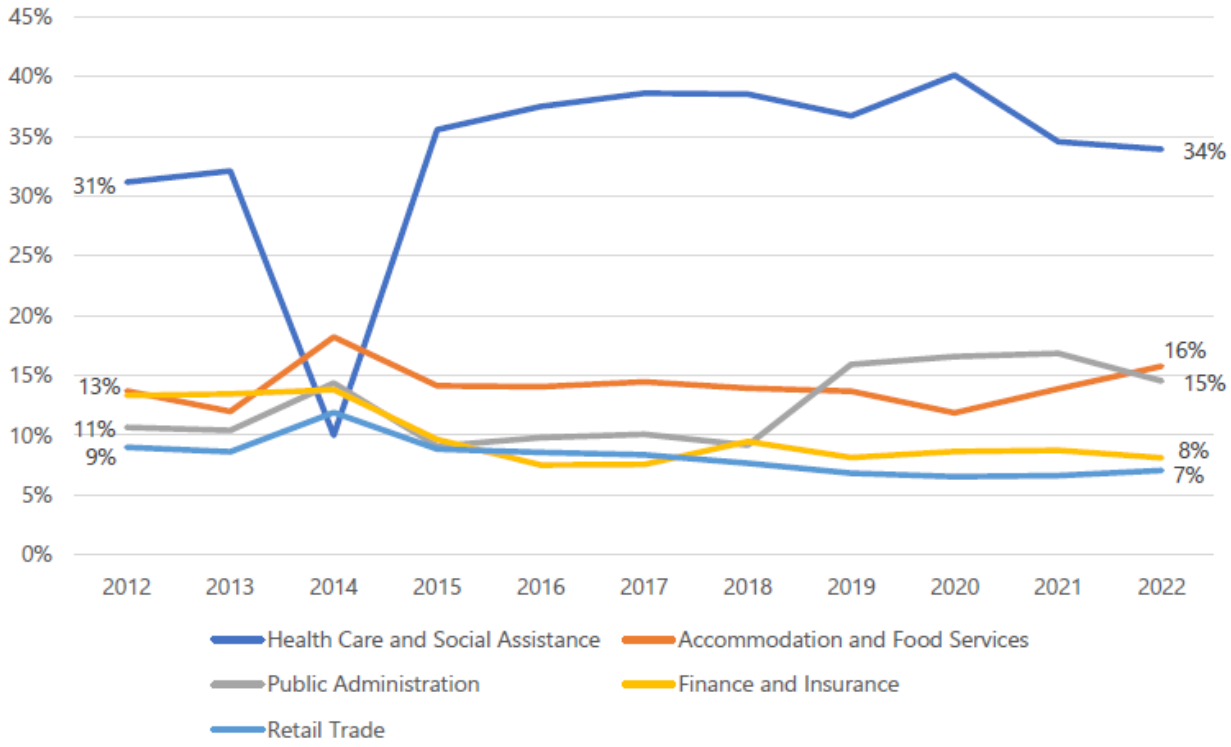
Appendix V Table 3. Jobs in Downtown Walla Walla, 2012-2022

	2012	2022	Change	% Change
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,217	1,533	316	26%
Public Administration	416	657	241	58%
Accommodation and Food Services	535	713	178	33%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	13	91	78	600%
Administration & Support, Waste Management	150	214	64	43%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	39	70	31	79%
Educational Services	0	14	14	1400%
Manufacturing	93	104	11	12%
Transportation and Warehousing	1	9	8	800%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	10	15	5	50%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1	0	(1)	-100%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3	0	(3)	-100%
Construction	20	15	(5)	-25%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	184	178	(6)	-3%
Information	121	110	(11)	-9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.

Health care and social assistance has consistently been the top job sector since 2012, except for in 2014. As of 2022, 34 percent of all Downtown jobs are in this sector. The share of public administration jobs has grown over time, from 11 percent in 2011 to 15 percent in 2022. The share of finance and insurance jobs has decreased from 13 percent in 2012 to 8 percent in 2022.



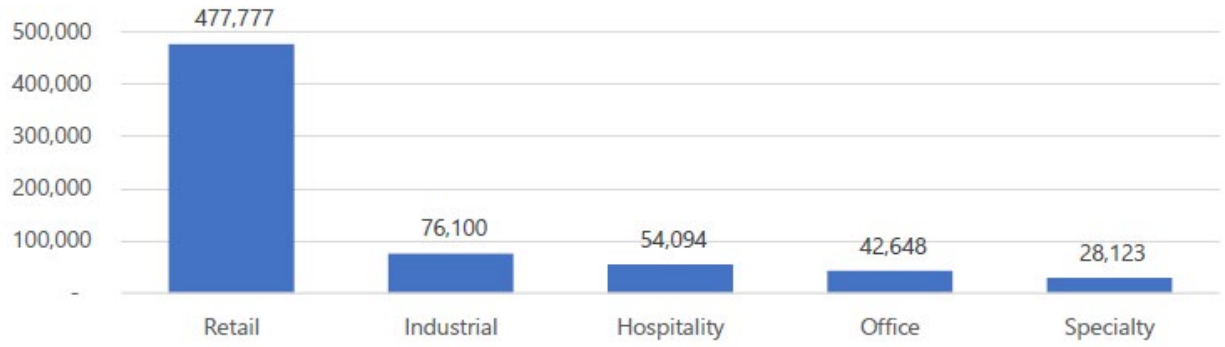


Appendix V Figure 18. Share of Downtown Jobs for Top Sectors, 2012-2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.

Eastgate

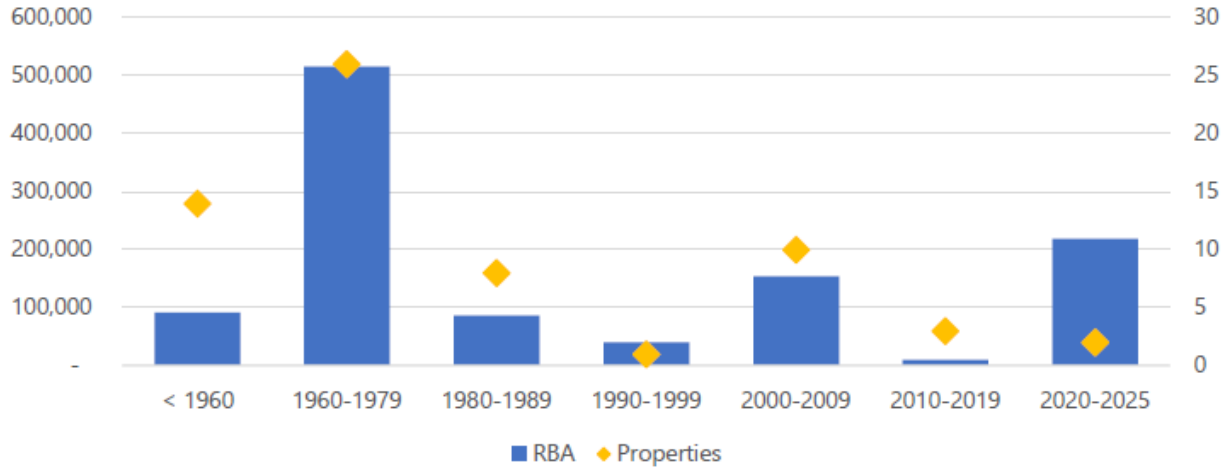
The Eastgate commercial area is located just south of Highway 12, roughly between White Street and Criss Lane. Major retailers in this area include Safeway and Harbor Freight. Eastgate includes 59 commercial and eight multifamily properties, with a total of over 1 million square feet of rentable building area (RBA). Of this, nearly 480,000 square feet (45 percent) is retail space.



Appendix V Figure 19. Eastgate RBA by Property Type

Source: CoStar

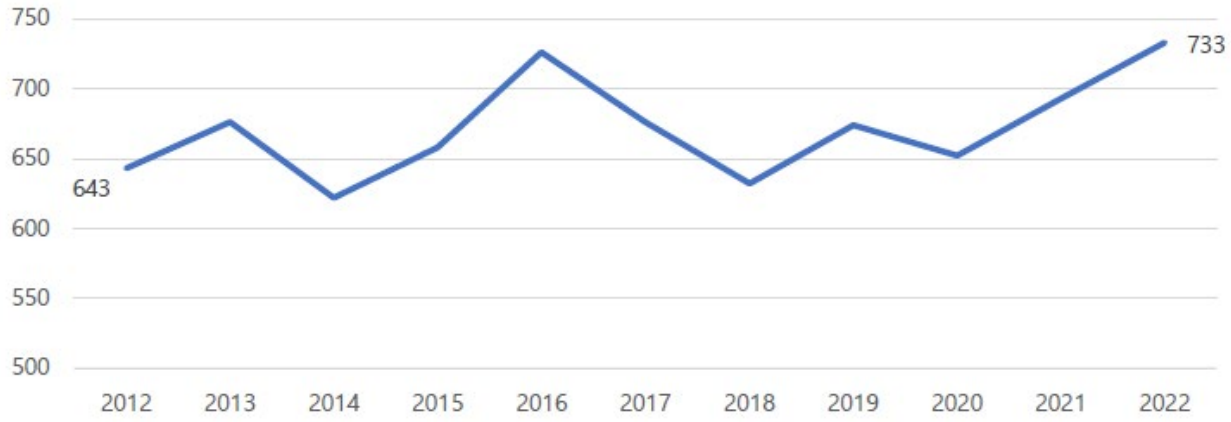
Properties in the Eastgate area are aging. Around 41 percent of properties in Eastgate were built between 1960 and 1979. Just five properties with a total of 228,000 square feet have been built since 2010, and the average vintage of retail properties is 1976. As commercial properties in this area continue to age, they could be targets for redevelopment.



Appendix V Figure 20. RBA and Properties by Decade Built in Eastgate

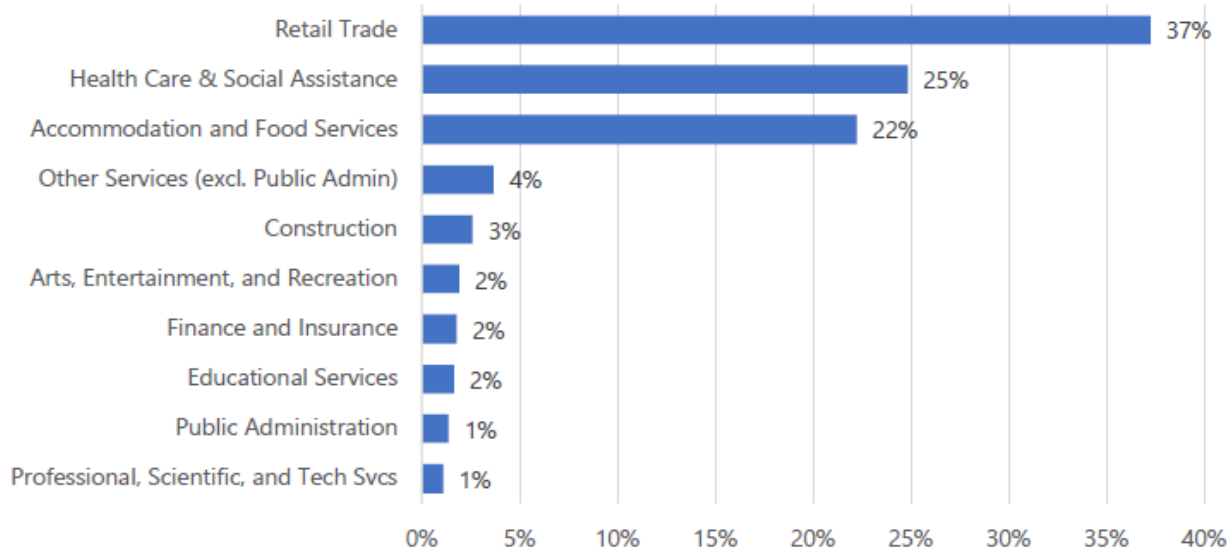
Source: CoStar

Between 2012 and 2022, 90 jobs were added to the Eastgate commercial center, an increase of 14 percent. As of 2022, the area is home to 733 jobs – 37 percent of these jobs are in the retail sector, and a quarter are in health care and social assistance.



Appendix V Figure 21. Figure 24. Jobs in Eastgate, 2012-2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.



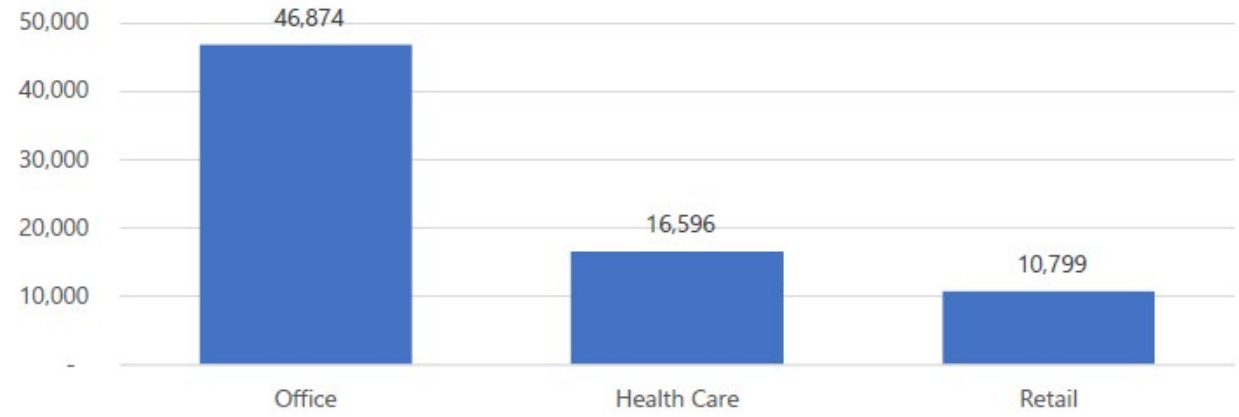
Appendix V Figure 22. Share of Jobs by Sector in Eastgate

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.

Southgate

The Southgate commercial area is located along South 2nd Avenue between Chestnut Street and Tietan Street. Major anchors include the Southgate Shopping Center and Providence Urgent Care.

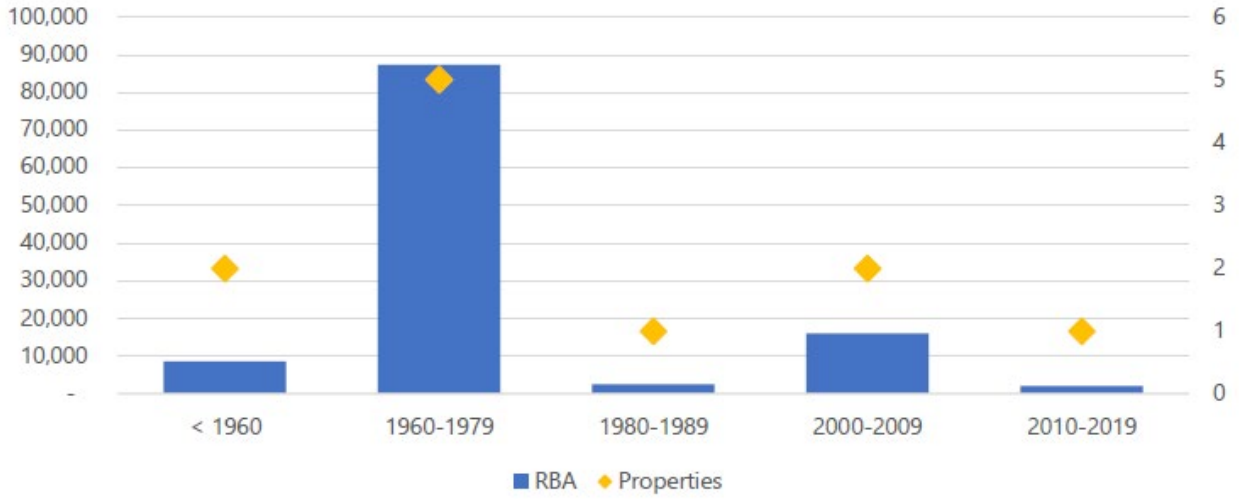
The area includes over 74,000 square feet of commercial and 44,700 square feet of multifamily residential space. Of the commercial space, 63 percent is office and 22 percent is health care.



Appendix V Figure 23. Southgate RBA by Property Type

Source: CoStar

As in Eastgate, a substantial share (75 percent) of rentable building area in the Southgate commercial area was built between 1960 and 1979. Just one property — a 12-unit apartment building on Durum Drive — has been built since 2010. The average vintage of office properties in Southgate is 1984, compared with 1979 for health care properties and 1955 for retail.



Appendix V Figure 24. RBA by Decade Built in Southgate

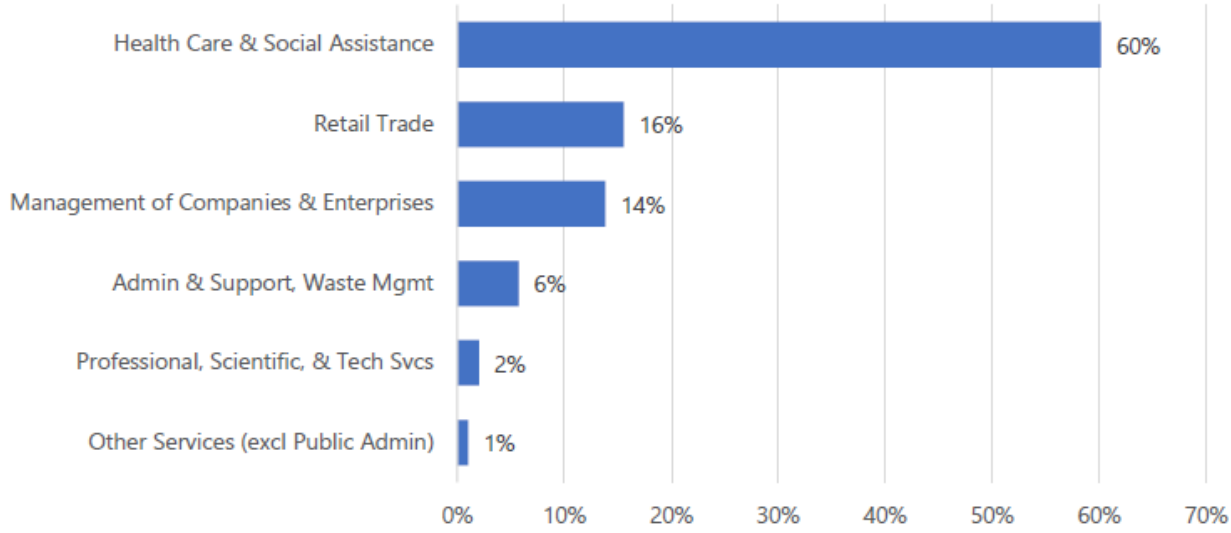
Source: CoStar

Between 2012 and 2022, Southgate lost 82 jobs, a decline of 21 percent. Most of these job losses have occurred since 2017. As of 2022, the area was home to 296 jobs, 60 percent of which were in the health care and social assistance sector.



Appendix V Figure 25. Jobs in Southgate, 2012-2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.



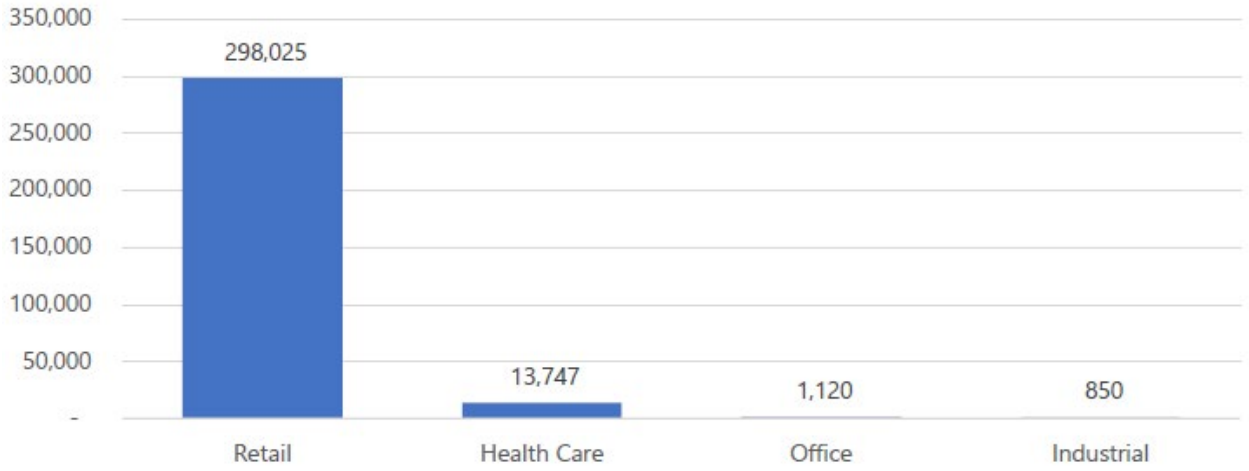
Appendix V Figure 26. Share of Jobs by Sector in Southgate

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.

9th / Plaza Corridor

The 9th / Plaza Corridor is a retail dominated commercial center located along South 9th Avenue and Plaza Way between West Poplar Street and Granite Place. Anchors include Safeway, Bi-Mart, and Rosauers

The corridor has nearly 314,000 square feet of commercial RBA and 309,000 square feet of multifamily. Of the commercial space, 95 percent is retail.



Appendix V Figure 27. Ninth / Plaza Commercial RBA by Property Type

Source: CoStar

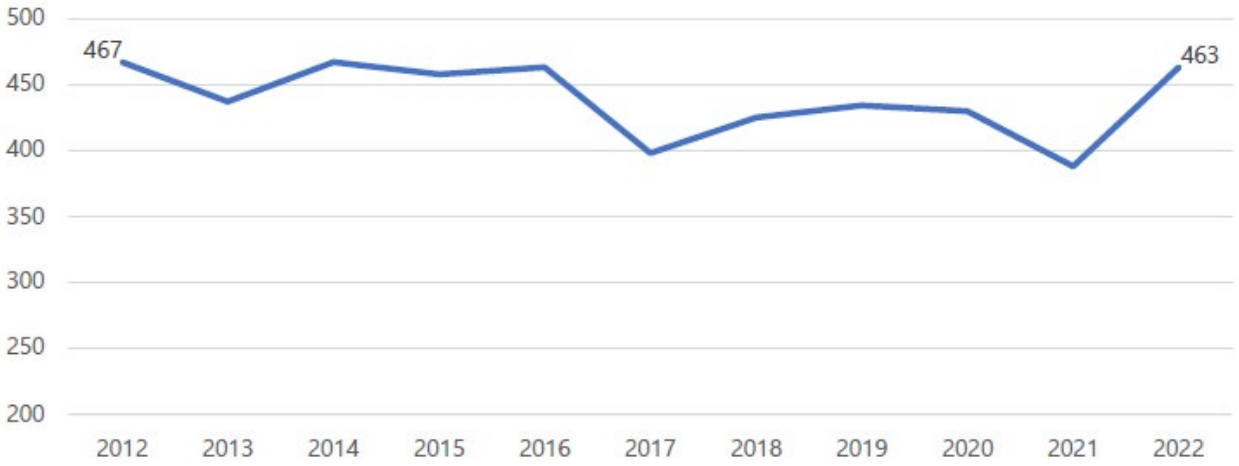
The retail in this corridor is newer than in Eastgate and Southgate, with an average year built of 1980. The major health care employer is the Park Manor Rehabilitation Center, which was built in 1962. Three properties have been built in this area since 2010.



Appendix V Figure 28. RBA by Decade Built in the Ninth / Plaza Corridor

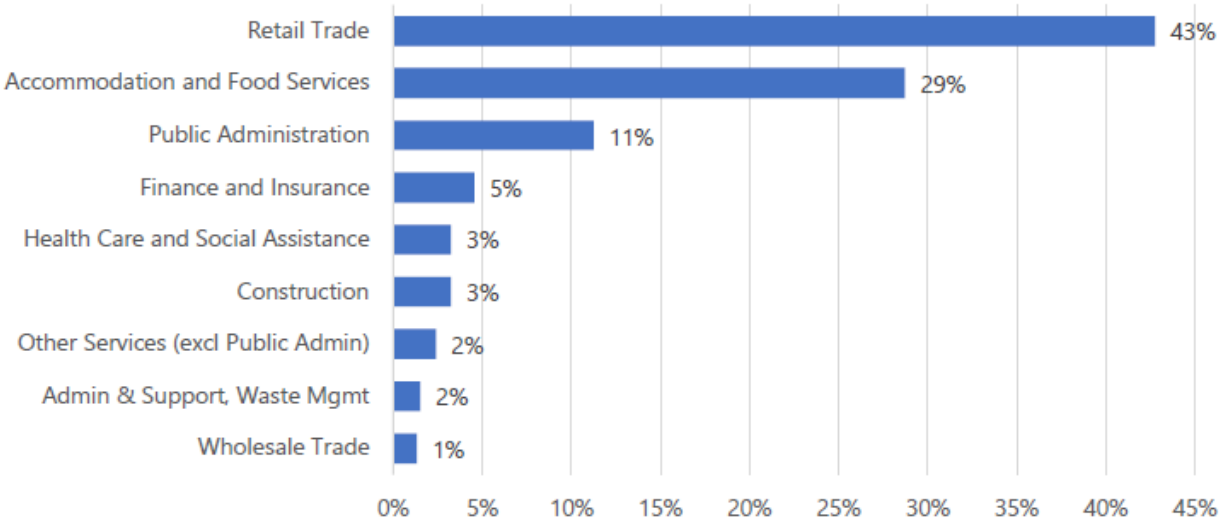
Source: CoStar

Employment remained relatively stable in the Ninth / Plaza Corridor between 2012 and 2022, with the area losing just four jobs over that period. Of the area's 463 jobs, 43 percent are retail and 29 percent are in the accommodations and food services industry. This commercial center has a wider variety of employment than Eastgate and Southgate, with jobs in the public administration, construction, and administrative support sectors.



Appendix V Figure 29. Employment in the Ninth / Plaza Corridor, 2012-2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.

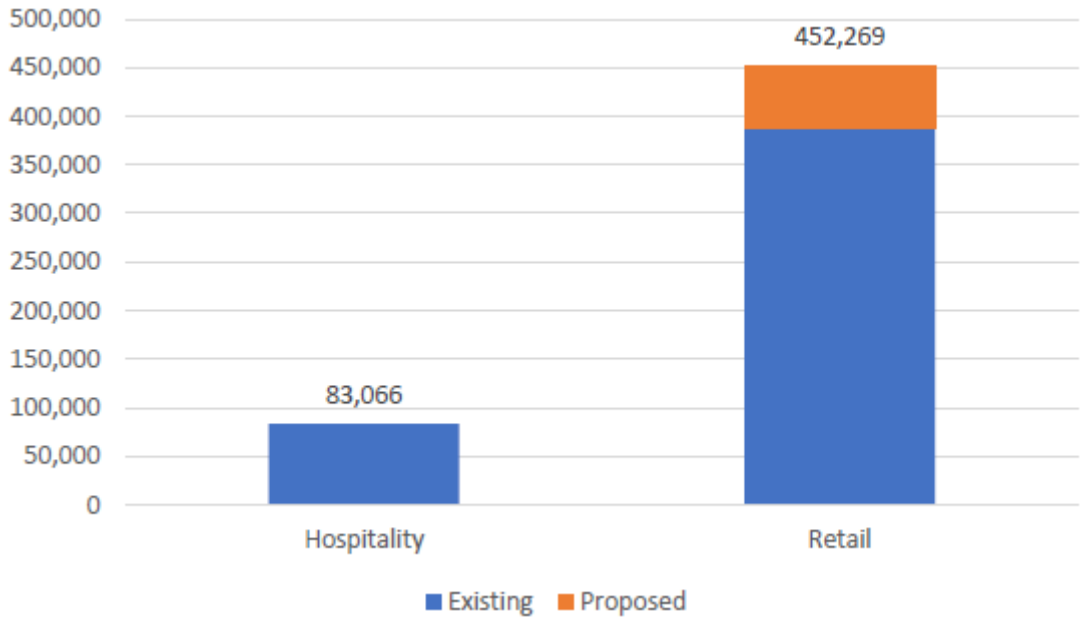


Appendix V Figure 30. Share of Jobs by Sector in the Ninth / Plaza Corridor

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.

Myra Road Corridor

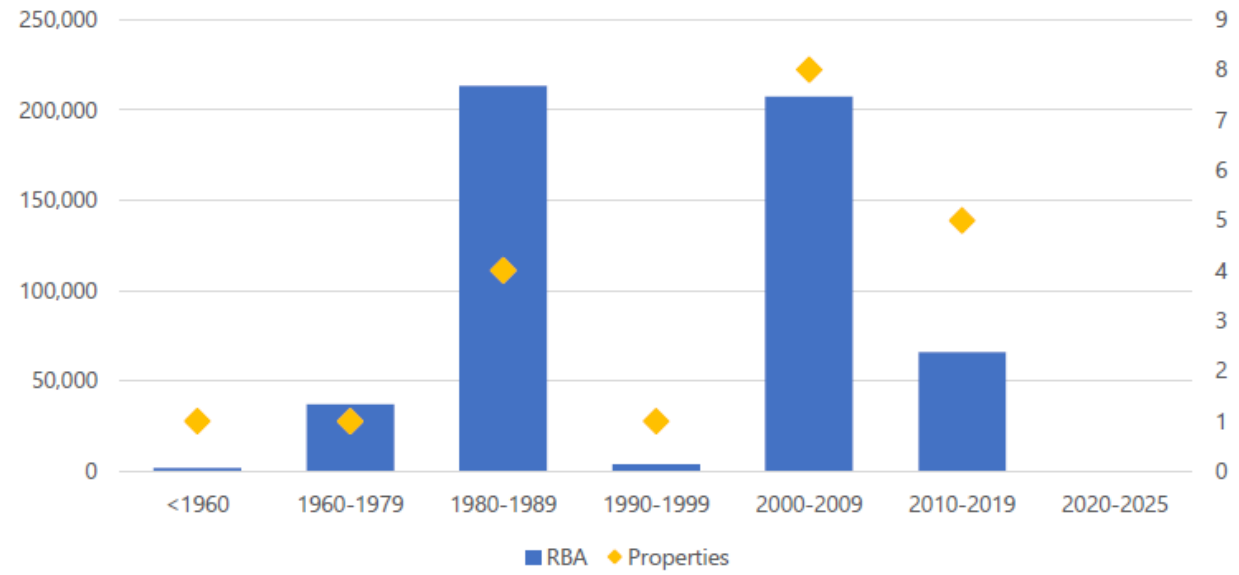
The Myra Road Corridor is located along the western edge of the City along Myra Road between Highway 12 and Taumarson Road. The area includes 157 hotel beds and 86 apartments as well as 388,269 square feet of retail space. An additional 64,000 square feet of retail space is proposed in the Walla Walla Town Center.



Appendix V Figure 31. Myra Road Corridor RBA by Property Type

Source: CoStar

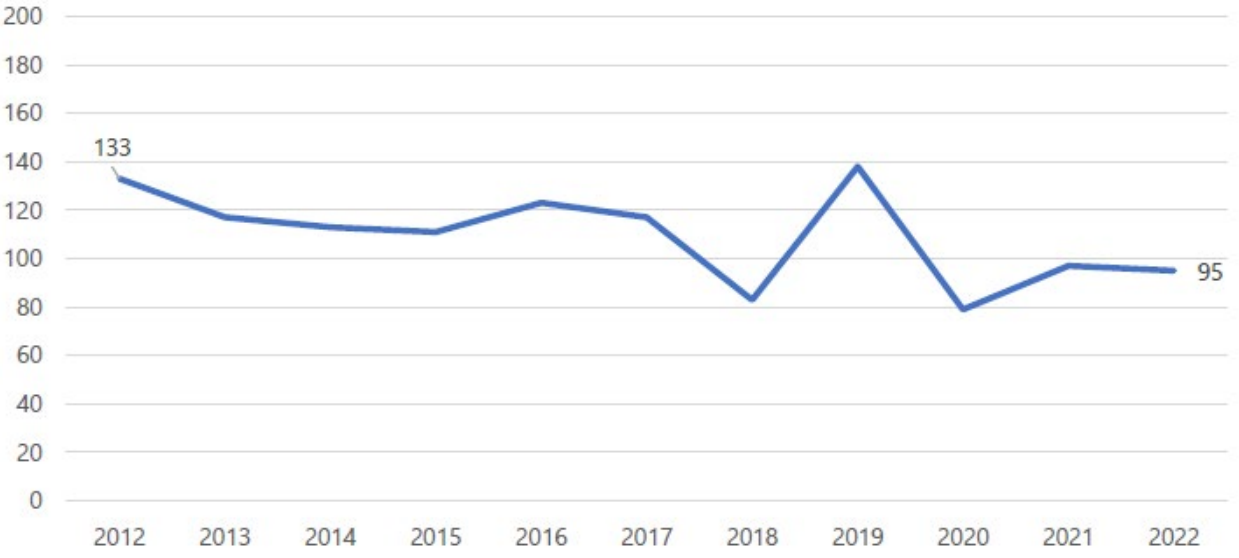
Most of the properties in the Myra Road Corridor were built between 2000 and 2008. An additional five properties were built between 2018 and 2019, though these properties were much smaller on average. New development occurred in the Myra Road Corridor in 2026 along the Myra Road South Extension.



Appendix V Figure 32. RBA by Decade Built in the Myra Road Corridor

Source: CoStar

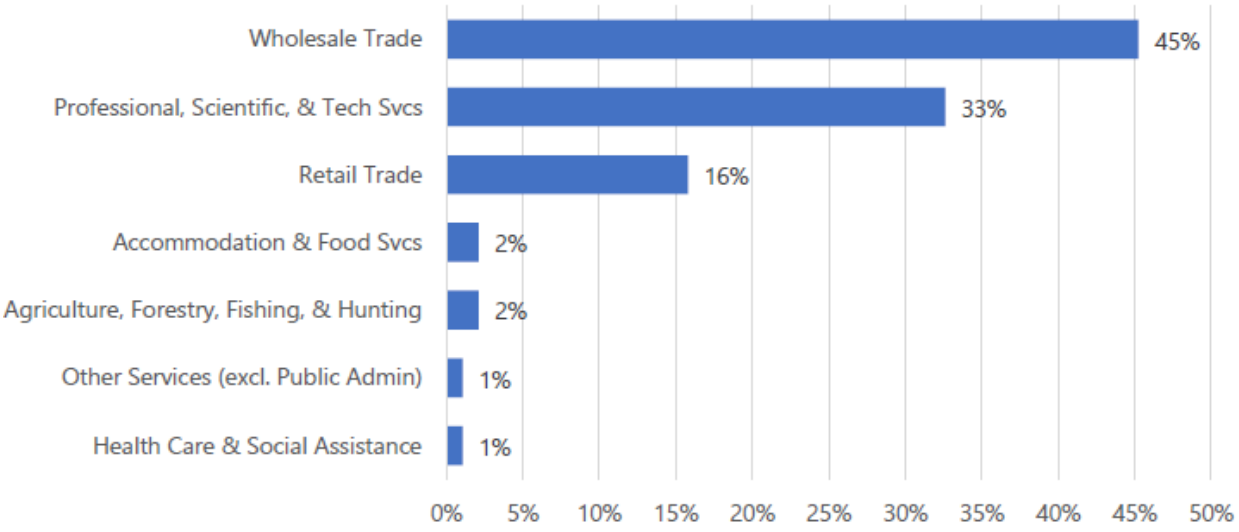
As of 2022, the Myra Road area was home to just 95 jobs, down from 133 in 2012. Between 2019 and 2020, the number of jobs in the corridor dropped from 138 to 79, largely due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic on retail businesses. While the corridor has regained some of those jobs, it has not recovered to its pre-pandemic peak.



Appendix V Figure 33. Employment in the Myra Road Corridor, 2012-2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.

Nearly half of the jobs in the Myra Road Corridor are in wholesale trade, while an additional 33 percent are in professional, scientific, and tech services. Despite the presence of the Walla Walla Town Center, just 16 percent of jobs are in retail trade and 2 percent are in accommodation and food services.



Appendix V Figure 34. Share of Jobs by Sector in the Myra Road Corridor

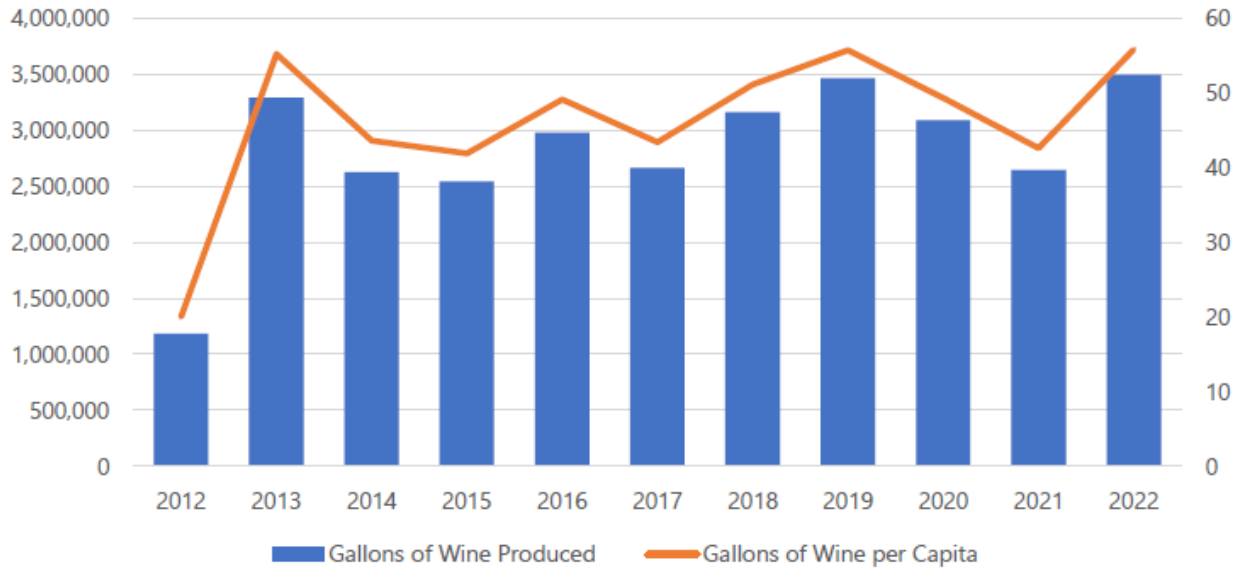
Source: U.S. Census Bureau via LEHD OntheMap.

Regional Economy and Tourism

Walla Walla recently completed a Tourism Master Plan that highlighted the continued importance of tourism and the wine industry on the local economy. The ten-year plan for tourism includes maintaining a robust wine tourism industry, taking advantage of opportunities for new amenities, investing in resources and partnerships to support a sustainable tourism industry, and identifying big-picture ideas that could lead to long-term improvements. The plan provides strategic direction to strengthen and diversify the tourism industry while focusing on benefits to the local community.

In 2022, winemakers in Walla Walla County produced nearly 3.5 million gallons of wine (55.8 gallons per capita). This is the highest production level since at least 2009, indicating strong growth in the sector and a rebound from the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there are indications that the alcoholic beverage industry, and wine in particular, could face significant headwinds in the coming years. Nationwide, the demand for wine has been declining since 2020. A report by Silicon Valley Bank[1] shows that across the U.S. the total wine volume consumed has declined in 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. These trends indicate that Walla Walla may need to diversify its economic and tourism base beyond wine to achieve sustainable growth in the near term.

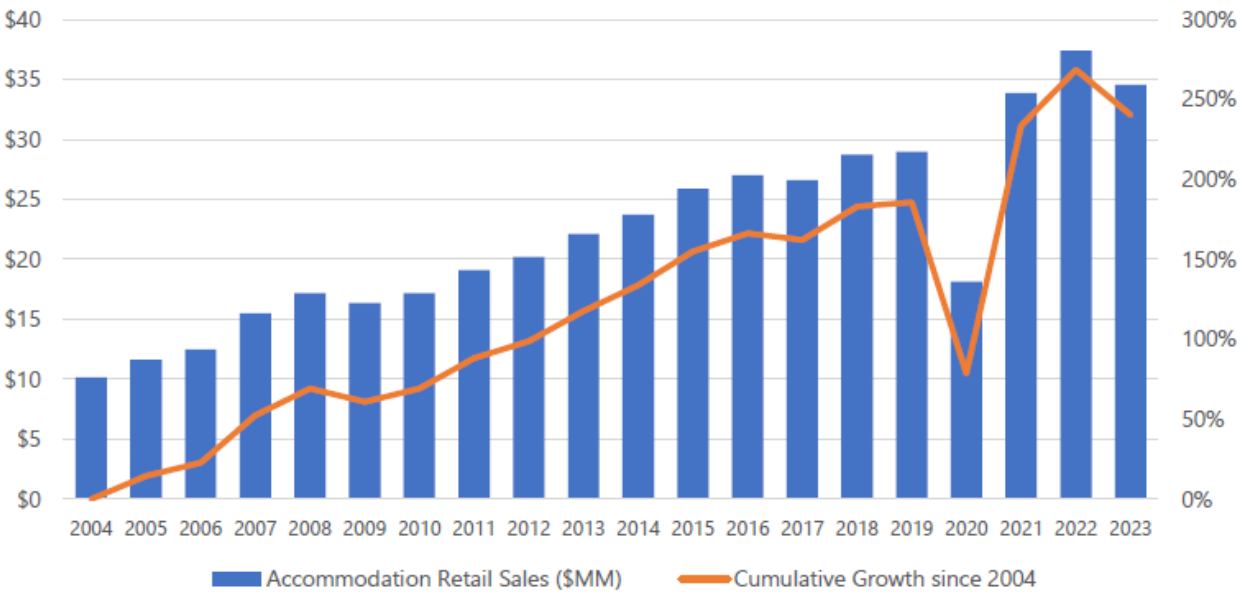
[1] Silicon Valley Bank. *State of the US Wine Industry 2025.* svb.com/globalassets/library/uploadedfiles/wine/svb-state-of-the-us-wine-industry-report-2025.pdf



Appendix V Figure 35. Wine Production in Walla Walla County

Source: Walla Walla Trends

Accommodation sales have also seen strong growth in Walla Walla County recently. Sales in the accommodation sector have been growing consistently since 2004, dropping in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic but rebounding significantly in 2021 and 2022. While 2023 saw a slight drop from 2022, sales were higher than in 2021. Between 2004 and 2023, accommodation retail sales grew by 240 percent countywide.



Appendix V Figure 36. Total Accommodation Retail Sales and Cumulative Growth since 2004

Source: Walla Walla Trends

While tourism, driven by the wine industry, continues to be an economic driver for the region, survey results from the Tourism Master Plan reveal that there is concern that the benefits of this growth are not accruing to residents. Residents expressed concerns over the rising cost of living and the need for more recreation, retail, and nightlife opportunities that cater directly to the community of full-time residents. Local leaders are hoping to attract more year-round businesses and entertainment opportunities to temper the seasonality of the tourism industry and to foster a stronger sense of community. To this end, the Tourism Master Plan recommends investing in transportation infrastructure, workforce development, cultural assets, events, and outdoor recreation. These investments should help bolster the tourism economy while providing improved services and new opportunities for residents.



Appendix VI. Comprehensive Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement



City of Walla Walla
Comprehensive Plan Update
Final Enivronmental Impact Statement

May 2018

City of Walla Walla

1.0 Summary

1.0 Summary

1.1. PURPOSE OF PROPOSED ACTION

The City of Walla Walla is updating its Comprehensive Plan in compliance with the Growth Management Act (GMA). The update includes the following:

- Revisions to the Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan Elements to address growth during the 2018-2038 planning period; land use plan and zoning changes to accommodate growth targets for population, housing, and employment; transportation and capital facilities plans, and housekeeping amendments.
- Amendments and updates to comprehensive plan elements to ensure consistency with the City's review of its plans in response to GMA requirements and Countywide Planning Policies.
- Consideration of changes to the Urban Growth Area (UGA) to accommodate new growth in an area that is easier to serve with urban infrastructure and remove an area that is difficult to serve and can only support low-density development.

Updates to zoning and development regulations for consistency with the updated future land use plan.

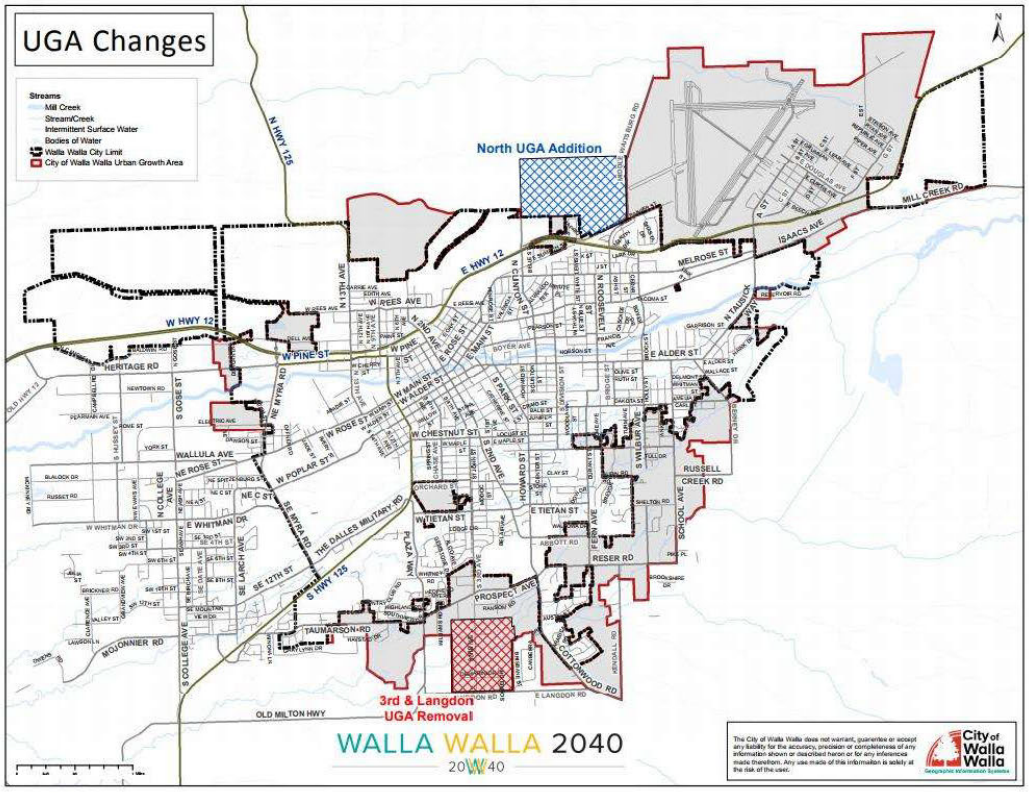
1.2. PLANNING AREA

The primary study area includes the City of Walla Walla and its designated Urban Growth Area (UGA), which is currently approximately 13,238 acres. The proposed areas studied for UGA change include:

- Withdrawal of approximately 198 acres near 3rd and Langdon in the south part of the UGA. This area is characterized by more intensive rural development including 1 unit/acre development on septic and wells. The location, development pattern, and presence of critical areas make it cost prohibitive to provide urban services and facilities in this location.
- Addition of 329 acres to the UGA for the North Area properties. The properties are adjacent to existing urban services and facilities and would be used for future mixed use development.

See Exhibit 1-1. for a map of the City of Walla Walla, its UGA, and the proposed UGA changes.

Exhibit 1-1 Walla Walla Planning Area with UGA Change Study Areas



Source: Walla Walla, 2018.

1.3. STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT PROCESS

This section describes the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the use of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to solicit public input.

1.3.1. Purpose of the EIS

The purpose of this EIS is to assist the public and local government decision makers in considering future growth and land use patterns as well as goals, policies, and development regulations as part of the Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan Update. These broad decisions will provide direction and support for more specific actions by the City, such as capital improvements and implementing regulations.

1.3.2. Programmatic and Integrated Analysis

The Draft EIS provided a qualitative and quantitative analysis of environmental impacts as appropriate to the general nature of a comprehensive plan update. This Final EIS includes comments received on the Draft EIS and responses to those comments. Together the Draft EIS and Final EIS make up the EIS for this

proposal.

The adoption of comprehensive plans or other long-range planning activities is classified by SEPA as a nonproject (i.e., programmatic) action. A nonproject action is defined as an action that is broader than a single site-specific project and involves decisions on policies, plans, and programs. An EIS for a nonproject proposal does not require site-specific analyses; instead, the EIS discusses impacts and alternatives appropriate to the scope of the nonproject proposal and to the level of planning for the proposal (Washington Administrative Code [WAC] 197 11-442).

The City has elected to integrate SEPA and the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) in both the process and the document. Integration of the environmental analysis with the planning process informs the preparation of GMA comprehensive plan amendments and facilitates coordination of public involvement activities. The information contained in the EIS will assist the City in refining a preferred alternative, related comprehensive plan amendments, and implementing regulations.

1.3.3. Phased Review

SEPA encourages the use of phased environmental review to focus on issues that are ready for decision and to exclude from consideration issues already decided or not yet ready for decision making (WAC 197-11-060(5)). Phased review is appropriate where the sequence of a proposal is from a programmatic document, such as an EIS addressing a comprehensive plan, to documents that are narrower in scope, such as those prepared for site-specific, project-level analysis. The City is using phased review in its environmental review of the City Comprehensive Plan update with a programmatic review of the proposal and alternatives. Examples of proposals that may require more area-specific or site-specific SEPA review when more details are known include, but are not limited to, capital improvement projects and private development.

1.3.4. EIS Scoping and Public Comment

In accordance with the requirements of SEPA and GMA, the City has provided for continuous public review and comment over the course of the planning process. First, the City conducted scoping, including an opportunity for written and oral comments. In addition, the City held comment period that was initiated with issuance of this Draft EIS. Public meetings will be held before the Planning Commission and City Council to secure the required approvals for the implementation of this proposal. The required approvals are identified in the fact sheet at the front of this document.

1.4. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The City of Walla Walla adopted a Comprehensive Plan in compliance with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1996. The Comprehensive Plan was updated significantly in 2007. There have also been minor amendments on an annual basis. Each plan update process included extensive opportunities for public involvement both in plan development and as part of the public involvement and notice provisions required for compliance with SEPA.

The City has begun the 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update as required by the GMA. Staff has completed the Periodic Update Checklist for Cities, public workshops seeking the public's vision for the future, and a survey. Feedback from the public involvement process influenced development of the proposal being analyzed as part of the Draft EIS process. The City received few comments on the Draft EIS. These comments and the City's responses to comments are shown in Chapter 2. Comments received on the Draft

EIS resulted in minor changes to the Comprehensive Plan. However, these changes did not affect the analysis of potential impacts in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

1.5. PROPOSED ACTION, ALTERNATIVES, AND OBJECTIVES

1.5.1. Objectives

As part of describing proposed actions and alternatives, SEPA requires the description of proposal objectives and features. Agencies are encouraged to describe a proposal in terms of objectives, particularly for agency actions to allow for consideration of a wider range of alternatives and measurement of the alternatives alongside the objectives.

The objective of the proposal is to plan for the next 20 years of population and employment growth in Walla Walla and its UGA and to complete a periodic update consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA). The Alternatives provide different means of implementing City goals for addressing growth. Although the Comprehensive Plan as a whole guides the development of the City over the next 20 years, the following objectives from the 2007 Comprehensive Plan provide more specific direction for this proposal.

- Objective 1.1 To make development decisions within the context of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Objective 1.2 To ensure compatibility among land uses.
- Objective 1.4 To preserve and enhance the natural beauty of Walla Walla's setting and natural environment, including its many streams.
- Objective 2.1 To preserve historic areas and buildings and to identify unique areas of the City for preservation.
- Objective 2.4 To encourage public participation in planning and implementation.
- Objective 3.3 To incorporate urban design to concentrate development and improve transportation and commuting choices.
- Objective 4.1 To provide an array of sustainable employment and housing choices for all income and age levels.
- Objective 4.6 To encourage a broad range of housing options adequate to meet the needs of underserved middle to lower-income households.
- Objective 6.1 To balance commercial, industrial, and residential development with conservation of natural resources.
- Objective 7.1 To promote an approach to growth management to better conserve infrastructure, land, and natural resources.
- Objective 7.2 To maintain a sound financial condition to allow flexibility that ensures the City is in a position to react and respond to changes in the economy and new service challenges without measurable financial stress.

1.5.2. Proposed Action and Alternatives

The City of Walla Walla is updating its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations in compliance

with the GMA consistent with the purpose objectives above. To consider alternative means to accomplish the purpose and objectives of the update, the following alternatives were developed for the Draft EIS:

Alternative 1 No Action: This is a required alternative under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). This alternative accommodates medium growth through 2038 within the current City limits and UGA boundaries. Minimal policy changes would be made to update the plan to meet new GMA requirements, otherwise no other changes would be made to update the Comprehensive Plan.

Alternative 2 Medium Growth with UGA Alterations: This alternative accommodates medium growth through 2038 within the current City limits and a modified UGA boundary. Approximately 198 acres of the southern UGA near "3rd and Langdon" would be removed because they are encumbered with critical areas and difficult to serve with urban infrastructure and services. Approximately 329 acres in the "North Area" would be added to the UGA for new mixed use development. Other land use changes include adoption of a new residential land use designation that would allow for a greater variety of housing forms and increased density, any privately initiated amendments, and amendments to correct consistency and compatibility issues. In addition to meeting new GMA requirements, there would be a number of policy changes to the plan. These policy changes would address: community character, health, energy efficiency, enhancement of the Mill Creek corridor, improvement of parks and gathering spaces, climate change, housing affordability, neighborhood commercial uses, and transportation improvements.

Alternative 3 High Growth: Alternative 3 looks at how higher growth could be accommodated within the existing City limits and UGA boundaries. Land use changes would be limited to the adoption of a new residential land use designation that would allow a greater variety of housing forms and increase density, any privately initiated amendments, and amendments to correct consistency and compatibility issues. Policy changes would include the changes in Alternative 2 plus additional policy support for multi-family zoning and infill development.

The following Preferred Alternative was developed in response to Walla Walla County's proposal for its Comprehensive Plan update. Walla Walla County is not proposing to extend the City of Walla Walla's UGA into the North Area at this time.

- Preferred Alternative Medium Growth with UGA Alterations and Identification of Long-term Planning Area. This preferred alternative is very similar to Alternative 2. It accommodates medium growth through 2038 within the current City limits and a modified UGA boundary. Approximately 198 acres of the southern UGA near "3rd and Langdon" will be removed because they are encumbered with critical areas and difficult to serve with urban infrastructure and services. However, the approximately 329 acres in the "North Area" will not be added to the UGA. Instead it will be identified as a Long-term Planning Area for new mixed-use development for future growth beyond the 20-year planning horizon. Other land use and policy changes identified in Alternative 2 are included in the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative is within the range of alternatives studied in the DEIS. It has similar impacts to Alternative 2. However, some impacts are reduced because the North Area is not added to Walla Walla's UGA. Instead it is identified as future planning area for further study.

The following table compares the features of the three Draft EIS alternatives and the Preferred Alternative.

Exhibit 1-2 Alternative Comparisons

Topic	Alternative 1 (No Action)	Alternative 2 Moderate Growth with UGA Changes	Alternative 3 Higher Growth without UGA Changes	Preferred Alternative Moderate Growth, UGA Changes, Long-term Planning Area
Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulation Update				
Policy Updates	Consistency updates only	Consistency updates plus community character, health, energy efficiency, enhancement of the Mill Creek corridor, improvement of parks and gathering spaces, climate change, housing affordability, neighborhood commercial uses, and transportation improvements.	Same as Alternative 2, plus additional policies to support multi-family housing and infill.	Same as Alternative 2.
Zoning Map and Regulations	Current Map only	Update	Update	Update
Capital Facility Plan Update	Current Plan	Update	Update	Update
UGA Changes				
3rd and Langdon	Remain in UGA	Remove from UGA	Remain in UGA	Remove from UGA
North Area Properties	Continue as Rural	Expand UGA	Continue as Rural	Continue as Rural, but designate as a long-term planning area for future study.
Population (net increase) 2017-2038	5,690	5,690	6,480	5,690

Source: BERK Consulting, 2018.

1.6. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

1.6.1. Earth, Water, and Natural Resources

How did we analyze Earth, Water, and Natural Resources?

The DEIS analyzes potential impacts to Earth, Water, and Natural Resources by comparing existing conditions to the projected land use in each alternative. It looks at potential effects of activities associated with urban development, including vegetation removal and increased impervious surfaces. Existing conditions were identified through review of City documents such as critical area studies, maps, and shoreline studies.

What impacts did we identify?

Potential impacts are related to increased urbanization including: habitat loss, decreased vegetation, increased impervious surfaces, soil compaction, and environmental contamination.

What does it mean? What is different between the alternatives?

Alternative 2 allows the opportunity for additional protection of critical areas and habitat with the removal of the 3rd & Langdon area from the UGA. Alternative 3 has the highest level of urban growth and is most likely to result in impacts.

In Alternative 1, urban development is expected to change the natural landscape of the City, which may increase erosion, soil compaction, impervious surface coverage, and decrease vegetation. This may lead to increase potential for landslides and habitat loss. Increases in impervious surfaces could affect water flows and reduce groundwater recharge. Changes in waterflow could also include changes in water quality and result in more contaminants in aquatic organisms. Alternative 2 and the Preferred Alternative have the same potential impacts as Alternative 1 for most of the City. However, the removal of 198 acres of rural land encumbered by critical areas in the 3rd & Langdon area would provide additional opportunities to maintain habitat corridors and preserve critical areas. Alternative 3 would provide the highest amount of growth and increase the likelihood of the impacts discussed in Alternative 1.

What are some solutions or mitigation for the impacts?

The City's Critical Area regulations, Shoreline Master Program, stormwater regulations, and tree protection regulations will mitigate adverse impacts. Changes to zoning codes or other regulations, such as landscaping regulations, could further reduce or minimize the cumulative impacts of increased urban development.

With mitigation, what is the ultimate outcome?

There will be some losses of habitat and vegetation and some increase in pollutants as a result of urban development. Although not wholly unavoidable, mitigation can reduce the impacts.

1.6.2. Land Use and Housing

How did we analyze Land Use and Housing?

We used current land use information from the County Assessor to analyze existing patterns of land use and housing. Projected levels of growth and policy change in each of the alternatives were compared to existing land use conditions to identify areas where growth could potentially occur, how land use might change, and if there were potential land use compatibility issues.

What impacts did we identify?

Growth in Walla Walla will consume vacant lands for residential and commercial development. Some lands could also be redeveloped into higher-density development.

What does it mean? What is different between the alternatives?

Alternative 1 would reinforce existing land use patterns with commercial growth along highways and arterials and with residential development in outlying areas, mostly to the south and east of the planning area. Residential development will primarily consist of single-family homes since there are no redevelopable lands zoned for multi-family development. Alternative 2 would consolidate residential land use designations, making it easier to rezone residential areas for increased density in the City or for construction of additional housing units. Removing the 3rd & Langdon area would have little effect on land use patterns because it is difficult to develop and serve. However, adding the North Area Properties would make it possible to develop that area for a mixed use Master Planned Community in the north part of Walla Walla. This alternative would best allow higher-density residential development and promote housing diversity. Alternative 3 would result in the greatest conversion of land uses within the existing City planning area. This would require policy and code updates to accommodate a high level of growth. The Preferred Alternative would be similar to Alternative 2, but a new mixed used community would not be designated in the North Area because it would not be included in the UGA.

What are some solutions or mitigation for the impacts?

Changes to the zoning code, development regulations, and design standards would allow additional development, ensure quality of design, and make it possible for additional diversity and density of housing.

With mitigation, what is the ultimate outcome?

There will be additional development of vacant and underutilized lands and a general increase in intensity of development. Adverse effects can be managed through appropriate mitigation, but some level of change is an unavoidable aspect of growth.

1.6.3. Plans and Policies

How did we analyze Plans and Policies?

The DEIS examines the plans, policies, and regulations that guide or inform the proposal. This includes the Growth Management Act (GMA), the Walla Walla Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (WWVMPO) and Sub-Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SRTPO), Walla Walla's current Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

What impacts did we identify?

The alternatives are generally consistent with the plans and policies. However, it should be noted that Alternatives 2 and 3 include updates to the Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan to accommodate changes necessary to implement these alternatives, such as policies supporting community character, healthy, energy efficiency, housing affordability, transportation improvements, and land use and zoning changes to support mixed use.

What does it mean? What is different between the alternatives?

Alternatives 1 reinforces existing development patterns and policies in the current Comprehensive Plan. Alternative 2 supports population growth within a UGA boundary that is easier to serve with public services and utilities; it also provides more protection for critical areas by removing the 3rd & Langdon area from the UGA, as well as considers infill development. Alternative 3 might better accommodate higher growth through additional multi-family zoning and infill development, which makes good use of existing infrastructure. The Preferred Alternative provides more protection for critical areas by removing the 3rd & Langdon area from the UGA and is consistent with the latest draft of the Walla Walla County Comprehensive Plan, which does not recommend expansion of the UGA into the North Area at this time.

What are some solutions or mitigation for the impacts?

Alternatives 2 and 3 contain changes to plans and policies that prevent these actions from inconsistency with adopted plans and policies. Regular updates to plans, including those for capital facilities and transportation, will ensure future consistency.

With mitigation, what is the ultimate outcome?

With mitigation, the Comprehensive Plan would be consistent with state and regional policy guidance and requirements. No significant unavoidable adverse impacts have been found.

1.6.4. Community Character and Historic Preservation

How did we analyze Community Character and Historic Preservation?

The DEIS compared the existing conditions for Community Character and Historic Preservation and analyzed how they may change in response to increased urban development.

What impacts did we identify?

New growth with bring new development, most likely to occur on vacant and redevelopable lands throughout the City. New development has the potential to alter existing character both in terms of increasing density and by introducing new styles of development. Redevelopment pressures may impact the preservation or adaptive reuse of buildings in historic areas, reducing historic character.

What does it mean? What is different between the alternatives?

All alternatives have the potential to alter community character, including historic preservation. Alternative 3 includes the highest amount of growth and has the most potential for impacts. Alternative 2 would make the North Study Area properties available for new development, which could reduce impacts related to new development in other parts of the City. However, it will change the character of that area from rural to urban.

What are some solutions or mitigation for the impacts?

Policy changes in the Comprehensive Plan in Alternatives 2 and 3 would support historic preservation efforts that could mitigate increased pressure to redevelop in historic districts. The adoption of design guidelines and a Parks and Open Space plan could potentially mitigate or minimize impacts related to

increased density.

With mitigation, what is the ultimate outcome?

As Walla Walla grows, some community character will be unavoidably altered, but mitigation measures can help to mitigate the negative impacts of this outcome.

1.6.5. Transportation and Traffic

How did we analyze Transportation and Traffic?

Traffic counts from the past three years were used as a baseline for a review of how growth under each of the alternatives would impact level of service at key intersections throughout the City and UGA.

What impacts did we identify?

Additional growth will result in a reduced level of service at a handful of intersections throughout the city.

What does it mean? What is different between the alternatives?

Alternative 1 and Alternative 3 would result in four intersections falling below the adopted level of service standard without mitigation: 9th Avenue/Dalles Military Road/Plaza Way; 9th Avenue/Pine Street; Howard Street/Chestnut Street; and 3rd Avenue/Tietan Street. Alternative 2 would affect all the above intersections except 9th Avenue/Pine Street, but it would require an additional feasibility study for the vicinity of US Highway 12/Clinton Street. Alternative 3 would result in the same impacts as Alternative 1, plus impacts to Cottonwood Road/Prospect Avenue. The Preferred Alternative would likely result in the same four intersections falling below adopted level of service standard without mitigation as in Alternative 1 and 3. It is unlikely to result in the additional impacts of Alternative 2 as those are primarily related to expansion of urban land uses into the North Area. Nor is it likely to result in the additional impacts of Alternative 3, which are related to a higher growth assumption.

What are some solutions or mitigation for the impacts?

The City is working on a Transportation Management Plan concurrently with its Comprehensive Plan. That plan will identify concurrency requirements to address mitigation of impacts. Additional measures such as an interchange feasibility study for the US 12, changes in signalization, or lane improvements are anticipated to mitigate impacts.

With mitigation, what is the ultimate outcome?

Adverse impacts are likely to be mitigated through various types of intersection improvements, but growth will bring an unavoidable increase in traffic.

1.6.6. Public Services, Capital Facilities, and Utilities

How did we analyze Public Services, Capital Facilities, and Utilities?

The DEIS uses population projections to estimate future demand for water and wastewater utilities, parks facilities, fire and police protection, and public schools. Estimated needs are compared to current and

future estimates of capacity.

What impacts did we identify?

All alternatives will increase the demand for public services, utilities, and capital facilities. Without mitigation there will be a need for additional police and fire services, public school services, and parks facilities under all the alternatives. There is adequate capacity in the water and wastewater facilities to accommodate future growth under all the alternatives.

What does it mean? What is different between the alternatives?

Alternatives 1 and 3 would use the existing service area for City-provided public services and utilities. Growth will generate localized demands, particularly with the higher growth projected in Alternative 3, but improvements will be located within the existing service area. Alternative 2 and the Preferred Alternative alter the UGA boundaries, which would modify the service area. The 3rd & Langdon area, which is difficult to serve due to critical areas and other constraints, would be removed. Expansion of the service area into the North Area Properties is expected to be more efficient in Alternative 2.

What are some solutions or mitigation for the impacts?

Comprehensive Plan policies require maintaining an adequate level of service for public services and facilities without straining City financial resources. The City also plans to maintain and regularly update functional plans for water, wastewater, capital facilities, and parks that specifically plan for future growth, capital facility needs, operation, and maintenance. Increased tax revenue related to growth may pay for some upgrade facilities and services. The City may also consider impact fees and other financial tools to provide facilities and services.

With mitigation, what is the ultimate outcome?

The City should be able to maintain adequate levels of service with mitigation.

1.7. PRIVATELY INITIATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

In addition to the overall changes to the Comprehensive Plan, Alternatives 2 and 3 include a series of privately initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendments that are under City review. These minor adjustments to the Future Land Use Map are detailed in the table and maps that follow in Exhibit 1-3 and 1.7-2.

Exhibit 1-3. Privately Initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendments

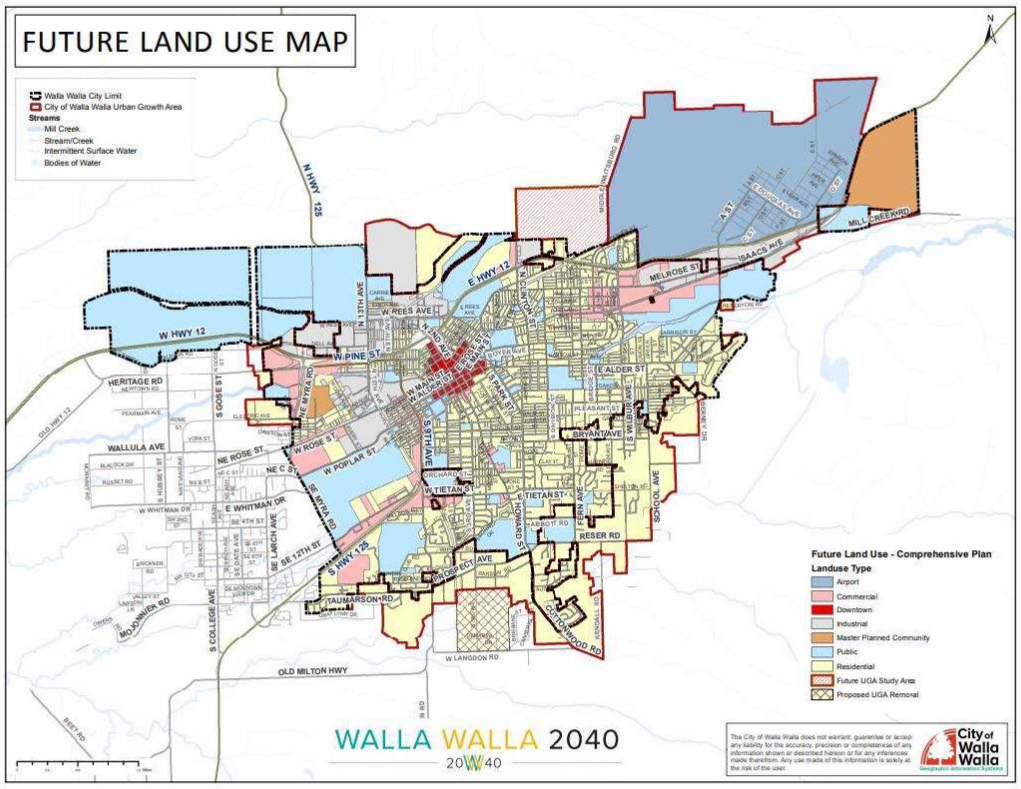
Map Amendment Number	Applicant	Location and Parcel Number	Current Designation	Requested/ Proposed Land Use	Proposed/ Corresponding Zoning
1	Galen Tom	Myra Road and Dell Ave 350724130036, 350724420023, 350724420022, 350724410071	Residential (R-96)	Commercial and Industrial	Highway Commercial and Light Industrial/ Commercial
2	Steven Pao	625 Woodland Ave	Residential (R-96)	Industrial	Light Industrial/ Commercial

		360719330002			
3	Steven Pao c/o Davis Trust	537 Woodland Ave 360719330011	Residential (R-60)	Industrial	Light Industrial/ Commercial
4	Mark Anderson	500 block of Woodland Street 360719330027	Residential (R-60)	Industrial	Light Industrial/ Commercial
5	City of Walla Walla	East of Woodland Ave (400 Block) 360719340032	Residential	Industrial	Light Industrial/ Commercial
6	City of Walla Walla	West of Woodland Ave (300 Block) 360730210012	Residential	Industrial North and Residential South	Light Industrial/ Commercial, South Multi-Family Residential
7	Gary Petersen	North 11th Ave at Cherry Street 360719593802	Residential (R-60)	Industrial	Light Industrial/ Commercial
8	City of Walla Walla	Country Club Road (WW Country Club Driving Range) 360731510115, 360731410067, 360731410061	Residential	Public	Public Reserve
9	City of Walla Walla	8th and Poplar (St. Mary's Parking Lot) 36072952080436	Residential	Public	Public Reserve
10	City of Walla Walla	Downtown	Historic and Downtown Boundary	Remove and Amend Boundary	Varies
11	City of Walla Walla	1400 Block of Lower Waitsburg Road 360716650002, 360716320029	Residential (R-96)	Industrial	Light Industrial/ Commercial
12	Anthony Wenham	Highway US 12 /Clinton Street 360717440036	Residential (R-72)	Industrial	Light Industrial/ Commercial
13	Evans Trust	Lower Waitsburg Road 360717410002, 360717440028	Residential (R-96)	Approx. 15 Acres Commercial adjacent to Hwy 12	15 Acres Highway Commercial; rezone 15 acres to Multi-Family Residential
14	City of Walla Walla	Tietan/Modoc Street (WW Clinic) 360732120027, 360732120010, 360732120009, 360732120014	Residential	Public	Public Reserve
15	City of Walla Walla	1625 E Alder Street (Church)	Residential	Commercial	Highway Commercial

		360722560002			
16	City of Walla Walla	Isaacs Avenue/Melrose Street	Commercial	Industrial	Light Industrial/ Commercial
17	City of Walla Walla	Tausick Way 360722140049	Public	Residential	Multi-family Residential

Source: City of Walla Walla, 2018.

Exhibit 1-4. Land Use Changes Related to Privately Initiated Amendments



Overall, the changes represented by these private amendments have no significant impact and no impact beyond what is studied in Chapter 3 of this DEIS. The table below in Exhibit 1-5 evaluates the potential level of impact of each request.

Exhibit 1-5. Specific Impacts Related to Privately Initiated Amendments

Map Amendment Number	Earth, Water, and Natural Resources[a]	Land Use and Housing	Plans and Policies	Community Character and Historic Preservation	Traffic and Transportation[f]	Public Services, Capital Facilities, and Utilities
1	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
2	○	⊙[b]	○	⊙[d]	○	○
3	○	⊙[b]	○	⊙[d]	○	○
4	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
5	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
6	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
7	○	⊙[b]	○	⊙[e]	○	○
8	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
9	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
10	○	○	○	○	○	○
11	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
12	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
13	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
14	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
15	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
16	○	⊙[b]	○	○	○	○
17	○	⊙[c]	○	○	○	○

Notes:

a. At the policy level there is no anticipated impact, but environmental review is phased and will take place on future development proposals.
b. No current housing units will be lost. This change represents a small loss of residential capacity, but there is adequate capacity Citywide under all alternatives to address the loss.
c. This may result in a small increase in residential capacity, but does not significantly affect citywide capacity.
d. This proposed change affects an area that is currently in transition between residential and industrial character, so the potential character impacts are unknown.
e. This would alter residential character in the area in which the proposal is located.
f. Potential transportation impacts of these changes are included in the Traffic and Transportation analysis

KEY: ○ No additional impact beyond what is studied in the DEIS ⊙ May have a minor impact ● Significant Impact

Source: City of Walla Walla and BERK Consulting, 2018.

1.8. MAJOR ISSUES, SIGNIFICANT AREAS OF CONTROVERSY AND UNCERTAINTY, AND ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

All alternatives result in increased population, housing, and growth that will lead to some unavoidable changes to the environment, land use, housing, transportation, and capital improvements. Prior to development of the FEIS, the following issues are anticipated to be resolved:

- Selection and refinement of future land use and zoning within the ranges studied by the alternatives.
- Refinement of the goals and policies of the Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan.
- Refinements on proposed code changes to implement actions within the range studied by the alternatives.
- Refinements to the growth projections and allocations for Walla Walla County as a whole.
- Consideration of the requests for UGA changes.

Key environmental issues and options facing decision makers include:

- Alternative land use patterns in relation to the 20-year growth estimates and the community's vision for Walla Walla.
- The relationship between the land use patterns and the natural environment, land use compatibility, the availability of housing, and community character.
- The effect of growth on the demand for public services, utilities, parks, and transportation.

2.0 Comments and Responses

The City of Walla Walla received only one comment on the DEIS during the comment period. It was from the Washington State Department of Transportation. However, the City has chosen to include other comments that it received related to issues in the DEIS and provide responses to those comments.

All comments are shown on the pages that follow. Comment letters are numbered one through five (1-5), with individual comments numbered within each letter. After the comment letters is a table of responses from the City of Walla Walla.

Comment 1 – Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Confederated Tribes *of the*
Umatilla Indian Reservation
Department of Natural Resources
Administration

46411 Timíne Way
Pendleton, OR 97801

www.ctuir.org ericquaempts@ctuir.org
Phone 541-276-3165 Fax: 541-276-3095

September 18, 2017

Letter 1

Elizabeth Chamberlain
Development Services Director
City of Walla Walla
55 E. Moore Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Delivered electronically to: echamberlain@wallawallawa.gov

Dear Ms. Chamberlain:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the City of Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan update. We appreciate previous emphasis on incorporating Mill Creek as a vital community asset and the work detailed in both the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Master Plan to revitalize Mill Creek as a "spine of amenities that give special identity to the area" (City of Walla Walla, 2004). In particular, we support the following goals and objectives identified in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan: Goals 1, 3, and 6 and objectives 1-4, 3-2, 6-1, 6-2, 6-3, and 6-4.

The Lower Mill Creek Habitat and Passage Assessment and Strategic Action Plan that was recently completed by the CTUIR in collaboration with a broad group of local representatives provides additional actions and recommendations to improve fish passage, fish habitat, and the vital touchstones characteristic of healthy river systems identified in the CTUIR's *River Vision*[1], while maintaining or improving flood control and facilitating support among key stakeholders. With a plan focusing on multi-use, multi-purpose goals and objectives, many of the recommendations in the Lower Mill Creek Habitat and Passage Assessment and Strategic Action Plan echo and reinforce the City of Walla Walla's desire to embrace the preservation and enhancement of Mill Creek as a natural system and a community amenity. In particular, portions of the Downtown Master Plan suggest concepts very similar to those in the Strategic Action Plan, such as sections of Mill Creek having a "naturalized channel section," additions of pedestrian paths to create a "Mill Creek Walk," and generally incorporating Mill Creek into the City as an amenity rather than an eyesore.

With the above goals and objectives in mind, the CTUIR asks that you consider the following recommended changes and/or additions to the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Continue to emphasize goals and policies identified in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan including Goal 6 (Walla Walla will protect and enhance its natural environment for the safety and enjoyment of this generation and those that follow) and the policies identified in section 2.3.7 Environment and Natural Resources and section 2.3.8 Land Use. 1-1

[1] The *River Vision* touchstones are from the "*Umatilla River Vision: A Process-Based Approach to Umatilla River Restoration to Support Tribal Harvest and Use of First Foods*," which was prepared for the Department of Natural Resources of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and is available online at: http://data.umatilla.nsn.us/fisheries/downloads/CTUIRDNRUmatillaRiverVision100108.pdf.

CTUIR DNR Letter to Elizabeth Chamberlain
Subject: Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan Update
September 18, 2017
Page 2 of 2

2. Develop a Mill Creek Comprehensive Improvement Plan as previously recommended in the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Master Plan. This Improvement Plan should incorporate portions of the Lower Mill Creek Assessment and Strategic Action Plan as a stakeholder-supported path forward for the future of the downtown portion of Mill Creek. 1-2
3. Create a resource protection overlay district along Mill Creek and its distributaries. This district would have a specific plan that encapsulates the long-term management strategy for lower Mill Creek and its distributaries within the City limits. The areas targeted for restoration/infrastructure improvements will be identified within the special district map and all proposed new development or proposed renovation or repair of existing buildings and infrastructure will be required to comply with the special district's plans for stream restoration and ROW expansion. 1-3
4. Increase shoreline buffers, particularly in areas where the buffer is currently zero feet (no buffer). Recommended buffers should be 200 feet on undeveloped properties along Mill Creek, 75 feet on Yellowhawk Creek, and 50 feet on all other creeks. 1-4
5. Create a land use code for non-development that can be used to protect open spaces and prevent new development along Mill Creek and its distributaries. 1-5
6. Adopt more protective restrictions than are currently required for new construction in close proximity to Mill Creek, Yellowhawk Creek, and Garrison Creek, thereby preserving opportunities for floodplain expansion and connectivity. 1-6
7. Develop a plan for managing old and/or condemned structures within or adjacent to the lower Mill Creek ROW. Our recommendation is that these structures be removed entirely or at a minimum, require innovative designs that incorporate and maintain stream corridor features. 1-7
8. Amend critical areas designations to further protect shorelines and floodplains.
9. Support the development of greenways to encourage community connection to Mill Creek. 1-8
10. Emphasize protection rather than mitigation in all aspects of the Comprehensive Plan.

I appreciate your consideration of the above recommendations for the update of the City of Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan. CTUIR staff desire to work closely with your project team in developing the new Plan, specifically in development of goals and objectives that are consistent with the overall goal established in the CTUIR Lower Mill Creek Passage and Habitat Assessment and Strategic Action Plan. In addition, we are working with City of Walla Walla staff on development of a collaborative Mill Creek water management plan that will hopefully have benefits to both municipal and instream flow needs. The CTUIR, with local, state and federal partners, continues to seek restored Mill Creek ecological functions necessary to achieve water quality standards, delist ESA-listed bull trout and steelhead, and restore and sustain the CTUIR's First Foods and our Treaty-secured rights based on them. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the number above or Mike Lambert, Habitat Program Supervisor, at 541-429-7240, if you have questions regarding these comments. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Eric Quaempts
Director, Department of Natural Resources

Treaty June 9, 1855 ~ Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Tribes

Comment 2 – Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

dahp
protect the past. shape the future.

Allyson Brooks Ph.D., Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

February 5, 2018

Letter 2

Ms. Melissa Shumake
City of Walla Walla
55 East Moore Street
Walla Walla, Washington 99362

In future correspondence please refer to:
Project Tracking Code: 2018-02-00877
Re: Walla Walla Comp Plan Update Determination of Significance and Request for Comments

Dear Ms. Shumake:

The Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) is in receipt of the above referenced Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on the Scope of the EIS. In response, we have taken the opportunity to review drafts elements of the Comprehensive Plan Update including the draft Historic Preservation element. As a result of our review we submit the following comments and recommendation:

- Thank you for drafting and including the historic preservation element as part of the Walla Walla 2040 comprehensive plan update. We note and support the goals and policies for historic preservation work in Walla Walla. We also note the Policy Connection paragraph and the Translating Policy into Action matrix as a valuable tool for implementation.
- While the Policy Connection paragraph touches upon several policy implications of historic preservation with other planning issues, upon reviewing the other draft planning elements (Capital Facilities, Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation, Land Use, etc.) we are concerned that the text does not recognize the connections or overlap of historic preservation with these other elements. Historic preservation efforts will affect, and are affected by, progress in achieving other goals and policies in the plan. However, the language in the other planning elements does not appear to recognize the connections. As a result, opportunities could be missed that would otherwise work toward mutually supportive goals, for instance in land use, parks, natural resources, and capital facilities.
- Therefore, we recommend that other planning elements in the comprehensive plan draft be reviewed and revised with language that supports and builds upon relationships with historic preservation goals. One example is Land Use Policy 1.4 that could be changed to read as follows:

  Review new development proposals to ensure they support the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan such as land use, transportation, community character, historic preservation, and sustainability.

2-1

State of Washington • **Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation**
P.O. Box 48343 • Olympia, Washington 98504-8343 • (360) 586-3065
www.dahp.wa.gov

Ms. Melissa Shumake
February 5, 2018
Page Two

These comments are based on the information available at the time of this review and on behalf of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) under the auspices of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Please note that in order to streamline our responses, DAHP requires that all documents related to project reviews be submitted electronically. Correspondence, reports, notices, photos, etc. must now be submitted in PDF or JPG format. For more information about how to submit documents to DAHP please visit: http://www.dahp.wa.gov/programs/shpo-compliance. To assist you in conducting a cultural resource survey and inventory effort, DAHP has developed guidelines including requirements for survey reports. You can view or download a copy from our website:www.dahp.wa.gov.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. If you have any questions, please contact me at 360-586-3073.

Sincerely,

Gregory Griffith
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

C: Patrick Baird, Nez Perce Tribe, THPO
Jon Campbell, Washington State Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Catherine Dickson, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Katherine Ferguson, Cultural Resources, Walla Walla VAMC
Paul Johnson, Growth Management Services, Commerce
Mike Rizzitiello, City of College Place

State of Washington • **Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation**
P.O. Box 48343 • Olympia, Washington 98504-8343 • (360) 586-3065
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Comment 3 – Washington State Department of Transportation – February 1, 2018

Washington State Department of Transportation

South Central Region
2809 Rudkin Road
Union Gap, WA 98903-1648
509-577-1600 / FAX: 509-577-1603
TTY: 1-800-833-6388
www.wsdot.wa.gov

February 1, 2018

City of Walla Walla Development Services
55 East Moore Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Letter 3

Attention: Melissa Shumake, Planner

Subject: City of Walla Walla – Comprehensive Plan Update
Request for Comments on Scope of EIS

We have reviewed the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and supporting information for the City's Comprehensive Plan Update. We support your efforts and have the following comments.

1. US Highway 12 and State Route 125 are part of the National Highway System and pass through the city limits of Walla Walla. US 12 is a Limited Access Partially Control facility and access is limited to the current interchanges and intersections. Access designations and limitations and Level of Service (LOS) deficiencies of these facilities should be included in the EIS and subsequent impact analysis. 3-1

2. The Comprehensive Plan information did not include an updated Transportation Element. A Transportation Element will be essential for our review of the Comprehensive Plan. The Transportation Element will need to include a traffic analysis for both the current and future conditions. The EIS should show details on the proposed land use changes including location and potential increases to densities. The state highways are an integral part of the transportation network in the Walla Walla area and region. The analysis needs to include the state transportation system as part of the study. 3-2

   The traffic analysis should reflect the updated Transportation Element and must include state highways in addition to local systems as part of the transportation inventory. Also needed are freight movement, single occupancy vehicle alternatives, airport, pedestrian, and bicycle components.

   In addition, LOS standards, traffic forecasts for 10-year period, deficiency analysis, consistency determination with adopted transportation planning policies and plans, and a multi-year financial plan are also required. If funding is insufficient for any required improvements, identification of how additional funding will be raised or land use assumptions reassessed to ensure that LOS will be met.

3. The current and future traffic analysis must not include any improvements to the state system without agreement from WSDOT. 3-3

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4. The proposed northern Urban Growth Area (UGA) annexation area is located near the intersection of Lower Waitsburg Road and US 12 and would allow mixed-use developments. Recently, a proposed industrial park development (LWR Industrial Park/Corliss Commercial Development, SPR-15-002) in this vicinity was required to install vehicle movement restrictions at US 12/Lower Waitsburg intersection that limit through traffic across US 12 and also left/right turns from Lower Waitsburg Road and Clinton Street onto US 12. These improvements helped mitigate impacts of that development. However, the proposed 329 acre master planned community and UGA expansion would ultimately generate higher traffic volumes which requires an impact analysis to the existing transportation system. 3-3

   The Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan 2040 (March 2016) identified a future improvement, specifically a grade separated interchange at US 12/Lower Waitsburg/Clinton Street. The DKS Draft Memo Walla Walla Transportation Plan Background Document Review Figure 3 (2/16/2017), indicates a future interchange would be constructed at US 12/Middle Waitsburg Road at Rainier Drive/Wellington Avenue which is currently an undercrossing. These improvements are unfunded.

   Further development of the UGA north of US 12 requires traffic impact analyses to identify potential issues related to the transportation network.

5. The proposed comprehensive plan change from residential to commercial uses near US 12 at Myra Road has the potential to generate increased traffic volumes and should also be evaluated for impacts to the recently improved interchange at this location. 3-4

6. We support the policies and requirements that promote multi-modal, transit, non-motorized and active transportation systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on scope of the EIS for the City's Comprehensive Plan update. We are interested in reviewing and commenting on the completed draft and the EIS, as well as the updated comprehensive plan. If you have any questions, please contact John Gruber at (509) 577-1636.

Sincerely,

Paul Gonseth, P.E.
Planning Engineer

PG: jg/df
cc: Larry Batterton, Area 4 Maintenance Superintendent
Todd Daley, WSDOT SCR Traffic Engineer

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Comment 3A – Washington State Department of Transportation – March 30, 2018

Washington State Department of Transportation

South Central Region
2809 Rudkin Road
Union Gap, WA 98903-1648
509-577-1600 / FAX: 509-577-1603
TTY: 1-800-833-6388
www.wsdot.wa.gov

March 30, 2018

RECEIVED
APR 02 2018

City of Walla Walla Development Services
55 East Moore Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Letter 3 - A

Attention: Elizabeth Chamberlain, Director

Subject: City of Walla Walla – Comprehensive Plan Update

The Washington State Department of Transportation has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Draft Comprehensive Plan Update documents. We understand that the North Area UGA expansion is no longer part of the update but will be part of a future study and periodic update. We look forward to working with you on future studies and updates.

We have no further comments and thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions, please contact John Gruber at (509) 577-1636.

Sincerely,

Paul Gonseth, P.E.
Planning Engineer

PG: jg/df

cc: Larry Batterton, Area 4 Maintenance Superintendent
Todd Daley, WSDOT SCR Traffic Engineer

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Comment 4 – RL McFarland

1

1/31/18

Letter 4

To: Melissa Shumake, Planner, Walla Walla Development Services

From: Richard L. McFarland

Re: Determination of Significance and **Request for Comments** on Scope of EIS Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan Update Environmental Impact Statement

*UGA addition of 329.4 acres referred to as the "north properties".

*UGA removal of 197.8 acres referred to as "3rd and Langdon".

*Public Notice published in the Union-Bulletin 12/26/17.

The Public Notice, under the heading of "**EIS Required**", states the following:

"The lead agency has identified the following areas for discussion in the EIS: earth, water and natural resources, plants and animals, relationship to plans, policies and regulations, transportation and traffic, and public services and utilities."

To begin:

Under the heading of "**Description of Proposal**", the public is told that the "*Zoning for the north properties would allow for mixed-use development*.

Without having a better understanding of what "*mixed use development*" specifically means, it is impossible to directly address issues related to what could be built and for what use and under what specific conditions, regulations and/or exceptions along with what combination of necessary zoning it would involve.

Therefore, I can only address the obvious "first step" issues that any development on the "northern properties" will encounter.

The term "*relationship to plans*" (per the Public Notice) suggests a very general theme. Consequently, I am going to offer input that I think fits this "request for comment" to make sure it is in the public record and available for reference, consideration and further research.

Input:

Why is the City of Walla Walla really applying to add land from the County of Walla Walla into the City of Walla Walla's UGA? What is the Big Picture?

It is my understanding that under the guidelines of the Growth Management Act (GMA) a city performs a "capacity study" that shows, among many statistics found in the documentation of a city's participation in and with the GMA, that a city either has-or-does- not-have sufficient land(s) defined by a city's UGA boundaries to allow for future growth.

Does the city of Walla Walla have on file an up-to-date "capacity study" to help in documenting their application for adding more land "into" their UGA?

4-1

In line with this, is their a <u>required</u> "direct relationship" between the release of UGA acreage on the south side (3rd and Langdon") and the addition of the "north properties" acreage?

I have looked around Washington State with regards to the relationship cities have with their UGA needs and existing boundaries and found that if and when a city shows an interest in expanding their UGA needs *unnecessarily*; public and private concerns (city and county) have spoken up and successfully addressed the

fact that UGA boundaries do not need to be extended simply because city management wants to.

In the Walla Walla application, it appears to me the boundaries do not need to be extended *(County Community Development has come to this conclusion)* consequently the "why" question falls under a bright spotlight.

When an application is made by an individual or individuals to do something/anything related to "development" (as suggested by the term "mixed-use development'), a primary question automatically is brought to the table - "who benefits". 4-1

With the city's application, and with no specific development project information being provided, the question of "who benefits" becomes very gray. Consequently, the question of "who benefits" must be replaced by "who *eventually will* benefit"?

Considering the question "who eventually will benefit"; logic directs that question be directed first towards adjacent land owners for further study and research.

Next Input:

In further studying the land(s) contained with the 329.4 acres of "Prime" farm land one finds there to be either (3) or (4) parcels of land. 4-2

One parcel contains acreage managed on behalf of the American Taxpayers by the Department of Natural Resources. This parcel is known as a "School Trust parcel".

4

(2) or (3) other parcels are owned, as defined by the terms of either one or two different trusts, by members of the Angell family.

I say there are (2) or (3) other parcels in the Angell family name as I found that by checking on their ownership (related to the "north properties" parcels) via the Walla Walla County Assessor's online "property records search", if one accesses this information from a personal home computer, the "property records search" site indicates there are (3) parcels (listed below) showing under the Angell name.

However, if one goes into the Walla Walla County Assessor's office directly and asks them to look up the same information, (the Angell family parcels contained within the "north properties" group) their information shows there are only (2) parcels listed and the last time I checked there was an indicator showing the Angell parcels at this location had recently been adjusted. 4-2

So, what does this mean? For an application by the City of Walla Walla to be complete doesn't the information regarding property parcel numbers have to be accurate, compatible and fully up-to-date?

42733

ANGELL JAMES L AND JAMES L & MARY ANGELL LIFE ESTATE & AMANDA ANGELL

Land Use Code 83

Legal Description: 16-7-36 TAX 29

Parcel Number: 360716120018

5537

ANGELL RESIDUARY CREDIT SHELTER TRUST

Land Use Code 81

5

Legal Description: 16-7-36 TAX 30 LESS CO RD

Parcel Number: 360716110019

42734

ANGELL JAMES L AND JAMES L & MARY ANGELL LIFE ESTATE & AMANDA ANGELL

Land Use Code 83

Legal Description: 16-7-36 TAX 31

Parcel Number: 360716120020

Next input:

It makes absolutely no sense for the city of Walla Walla to include the "School Trust Land parcel" in their UGA plans as stated.

5540

DNR

Land Use Code 67

Legal Description: 16-7-36 NW1/4

Parcel Number: 360716210001

4-3

The School Trust Land concept dates back to 1889 in Washington State.

Federally granted state trust lands support seven specific trusts, each with its own lands:

**Common School trust – supports construction of public kindergarten through 12th -grade public schools statewide*

**University trust – supports University of Washington*

6

**Normal School trust – supports 4 state universities (Western, Central, and Eastern Washington – former teacher colleges, and The Evergreen State College)*
**Agricultural School trust – supports Washington State University*

**Scientific School trust – also supports Washington State University*

**Capitol Building trust – supports state buildings at the Capitol in Olympia*

** Charitable, Educational, Penal and Reformatory Institutions (CEP&RI) trust – supports institutions managed by the state Departments of Corrections and Social and Health Services*

I want to focus on one of the seven points listed above, "*Common School trust*".

Growth is inevitable (*eventually*) and with growth comes the need for more schools. Why on earth would the City of Walla Walla attempt to encourage the use of a pre-existing "School Trust Land parcel" for a "mixed-use development" project as is suggested in their application?

4-3

The "School Trust Land parcel" should be left intact under the auspices of the DNR and left in agricultural production (income producing) until such time it is needed for a future school site north of Highway 12 or at such time it is needed for a protected Green Space/Park/Conservation Reserve should reasonable access by farm machinery to the property be limited by non-agricultural development of the surrounding privately-owned properties.

If the City of Walla Walla chooses not to help protect this parcel for school income or future school use then they should look very closely at what has to take place should they seek to assist in its becoming "commercially developable".

By the very definition of "Prime" agricultural land – which the "School Trust Land parcel" and the adjacent Angell family property parcels are (PA-40), conversion of

7

the "Best of the Best" (premium soil producing the highest of yields) is not something one does simply because one wants to.

No, to apply to take "Prime" agricultural land (Primary Agricultural/PA) out of production or potential production, one must approach such a request along the lines of a fiduciary responsibility. The application has to conform with higher standards than a normal land zoning change application.

4-3

Next Input:

Referring back to this as shared in the opening of this letter:

*"The lead agency has identified the following areas for discussion in the EIS: earth, water and natural resources, plants and animals, relationship to plans, policies and regulations, **transportation and traffic**, and public services and utilities."*

I have highlighted "transportation and traffic' for a very important reason.

In the City of Walla Walla's application to the County of Walla Walla, requesting the county approve the removal of specific county lands from full oversight of the county and placing those specific county lands within the city's oversight UGA zone, the city states the following regarding the "north properties":

4-4

"The existing and future development in this area has already led to Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) changing the configuration of the intersection at Lower Waitsburg Road/Clinton and Highway 12 and WSDOT is planning for further changes to Highway 12/Clinton Intersection without considering the proposed addition to the UGA."

Hold on a minute!

Since December of 2014 I have been a participant in multiple development applications (of varying types and formats) located directly adjacent to the aforementioned Lower Waitsburg Road/Clinton and Highway 12 intersection; specifically, the Wenham, Evans, Bouchon Park Phase 1, Bouchon Park Phase 2 as well as (2) development applications (McDonald and the subsequent Hayden Homes ownership plat plan amendments) very nearby (approximately 2600' east on Middle Waitsburg Road).

When the City of Walla Walla states "*WSDOT is planning for further changes to Highway 12/Clinton intersection without considering the proposed addition to the UGA*" a great deal of pertinent reference/background material is missing.

At the time(s) of the (2) separate applications to develop submitted by the owner/developer of Bouchon Park, there were no WSDOT plans "in place" for changes to the Lower Waitsburg Road/Clinton and Highway 12 intersection. It has been known for many years that the intersection was in need of an overpass/underpass and that the intersection was dangerous, however there was no direct relationship in place between "need" and "real-time planning". 4-4

Subsequent to the first Bouchon Park application for development (Phase 1), **and subsequent** to the City of Walla Walla's recommendation to approve (per Development Services) that application, WSDOT issued a formal response (on file with Development Services) stating that Bouchon Park (Phase 1) would not receive its final permits for operation until the Bouchon Park owner/developer had paid for *specific Bouchon Park related* updates to the Lower Waitsburg Road/Clinton and Highway 12 intersection as defined by and installed by WSDOT.

In fact, since the City of Walla Walla had recommended to approve the Bouchon Park permit (without any significant upgrades to the Lower Waitsburg Road/Clinton/Highway 12 intersection) prior to receiving the WSDOT letter, the

City of Walla Walla had to go back and amend their approval of the Bouchon Park application to include and require what WSDOT required.

Furthermore, WSDOT specified that at such time a Bouchon Park Phase 2 development was built, *there would be further additional changes* to the Lower Waitsburg Road/Clinton and Highway 12 intersection and again these WSDOT defined changes would be paid for by the Bouchon Park owner/developer.

So, for the City of Walla Walla to officially state *"WSDOT is planning for further changes to Highway 12/Clinton Intersection without considering the proposed addition to the UGA"* – as I read it – is to imply that the "further changes" planned by WSDOT would serve "future development" (which could mean future development on property defined by an "expanded" UGA).

Nothing could be farther from the truth! 4-4

The "WSDOT planned further changes to Highway 12/Clinton Intersection" are specifically based on the official Traffic Study submitted for the Bouchon Park Phase 1 and Phase 2 development applications.

When the City of Walla Walla states "*without considering the proposed addition to the UGA*", I read that to say the City of Walla Walla is stating that WSDOT is thinking ahead (traffic handling wise) for future yet-to-be-proposed development.

No.

Those "planned needs" are not based on serving any development ***not yet on the books*** pertaining to nearby properties regardless of whether they are inside the

existing UGA boundary north of Highway 12 and served by Lower Waitsburg Road and Middle Waitsburg Road or outside of that existing UGA boundary.

The "planned needs" as defined by WSDOT for that location pertain directly to the Phase 1 and Phase 2 permits related to the Bouchon Park development and that is all. Period.

The City of Walla Walla, in their UGA application to Walla Walla County goes on to state:

"The City's Transportation Plan, which is being overhauled as part of this major update, has identified US Highway 12/Clinton intersection as an improvement project."

4-4

Wait a minute!

That official statement, as inserted into this application, makes it sound like the City of Walla Walla has taken a lead position in upgrading the US Highway 12/Clinton Intersection.

Nothing could be further from reality.

While that intersection has long been acknowledged as being under-designed and over-worked, and WSDOT has preliminary plans for an overpass at that location, those plans, prior to the Bouchon Park Phase 1 and Phase 2 applications, were simply plans for "sometime in the future" with no priority or funding attached to it whatsoever.

11

Thanks to (former) County Commissioner Perry Dozier; at first sight of the scale of the Bouchon Park Phase 1 initial site grading (when giant equipment was delivered onsite for that purpose) in early November of 2105, he went to the Port of Walla Walla and thanks to the Port's relationship with WSDOT, the County and the Port took the first "real time" steps that ultimately shifted the possibility of an overpass at that intersection from "sometime in the future" to a "legislative priority".

4-4

Please note that the City of Walla Walla was "late to the game", (their words as mentioned in the Union-Bulletin subsequent to the County and Port's significant homework) vis-à-vis the importance of actually going forward with safety design upgrades to that intersection.

Next Input:

Now as to "*affordable housing development*" (per the City of Walla Walla's application):

"Exhibit B delves into the city's argument for why this area should be added to the UGA and more deeply, but the main arguments can be summarized as: low cost of providing urban utilities, services, and transportation, allowing for affordable housing development, proximity to urban centers, proximity to increased development pressures, and a large County-wide supply of agricultural resource lands which are not immediately adjacent to UGA boundaries."

4-5

This UGA application does not relate to affordable housing development whatsoever. Hayden homes – known for building homes in the "more affordable" range is currently developing Blue Mountain Estates – directly adjacent to School Trust Land parcel and the Angell properties. Yet…the new Hayden homes at this location currently are priced between $325,126 (MLS # 117779) and $362,264 (MLS# 117770).

If one considers that Hayden Homes builds new homes in the "lower price ranges" *yet their properties adjacent to the "north properties" are currently listed between $325k and $363K*...logic dictates if more new urban sized lots are developed in subsequent new subdivisions within the proposed adjacent UGA expansion, those homes, being built on the best-of-the-best Prime Agricultural land(s) - with world class mountain views thanks to the fact that there are no preexisting structures to block views - and nearby expanding world class vineyards, those homes would NOT be priced under $400k.

If the lands within the proposed UGA addition were to be developed in the near future, it's guaranteed that any developer with a financial brain is going to build homes based on *location-location-location* and *view-view-view*. New homes built in that location would most assuredly not be priced in the low-to-mid $200,000 range (which by all local statistical accounts is where the current local "median" home price exists). 4-5

A recent real estate article in the Union-Bulletin included information from the local real estate community indicating that homes in the $200k range and under were snapped up immediately (suggesting what would be considered affordable in this area) while homes in the $400k range and up tend to "sit on the market" for a while.

I recommend the City of Walla Walla refrain from expanding their UGA unnecessarily northward at this time and focus on supporting the development of and/or the repurposing of properties already contained within the existing City Limits and existing UGA.

RL McFarland

3731 Middle Waitsburg Road, Walla Walla, WA 99362

Comment 5 – Steven Pao

Elizabeth Chamberlain
City of Walla Walla
Development Services Department
55 E. Moore St.
Walla Walla, WA. 99362

January 3, 2018

RECEIVED
JAN 04 2018

Steven Pao
334 Woodland Ave.
Walla Walla, WA. 99362
(509) 529-3471

Letter 5

Dear Ms. Chamberlain.

This letter is in regard to the City of Walla Walla's Comprehensive Plan update. It was stated that the city plans to rezone the current residentially zoned housing (primarily in the 300-500 block area) of Woodland Ave. to industrial. My concern for this proposed rezone is the cities' noise ordinance.

Currently the maximum noise allowed from an industrial zone to a residential zone is 60 db. However, the maximum noise allowed from an industrial zone to another industrial zone is 70 db. A ten decibel increase in sound is significant. I am concerned that this would then allow an industrial facility to emit more noise to the local houses that the homeowners would then have to endure without any recourse.

5-1

We have had problems in the past in an identical matter where Snow Distribution on Abadie St. (zoned industrial or commercial) would have as many as twelve diesel refrigeration units running all night which exceeded the residential noise limits. The nearby Walla Walla Foundry often operates two shifts, starting at 5:00 a.m. and operating until 10:00 p.m., and is often noisy. Especially with the operation of exhaust fans, (which whine like jet engines) sometimes 24 hours a day. (I am not formally complaining about the foundry, just pointing out facts. We, so far, have had a good relationship with the foundry.)

If the city proceeds with the rezoning of the residential housing to industrial, what guarantees would be in place to protect the homeowners from additional noise?

Thank you for your time in addressing my concerns in this matter.

Sincerely,

Steven Pao

Steven Pao

Exhibit 2-1 Responses to Comments

Comment Number	Response
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation	
1-1	Comment is noted. The Walla Walla 2040 plan carried forward the goals and policies from the *2008 Walla Walla Urban Area Comprehensive Plan* identified in the CTUIR letter. Goal 1 states that "Water, air, and soil resources are protected in Walla Walla" and ENR Policy 1.7 address this comment.
1-2	ENR Policy 1.10 states *"Develop a Mill Creek Corridor Plan with a focus on the opportunity to "daylight" Mill Creek through the downtown."* City will add an implementation item to the Environment and Natural Resources Element to address a Mill Creek Corridor Plan. Comment addressed.
1-3	Comment noted. The City's Shoreline Management Plan (SMP), recently updated in 2016 pursuant to the Shoreline Management Act (SMA), regulates land within 200 feet of Mill Creek which acts similar to an overlay district along Mill Creek within the city limits. The City's SMP address development within 200 feet of Mill Creek.
1-4	Comment noted. The City's SMP was recently updated in 2016 pursuant to the SMA. Streams were analyzed to determine if they fell within the threshold of shoreline jurisdiction (*see the Shoreline Analysis Report for Shorelines in Walla Walla County and the Cities of Walla Walla, Prescott, and Waitsburg, dated September 2014*). For the City of Walla Walla, Mill Creek is considered a shoreline of the state. Yellowhawk Creek within the city limits did not meet the cfs threshold for shoreline jurisdiction. The SMP calls for a 35 feet buffer from Mill Creek with an additional five foot building setback from the buffer for a total of 40 feet. Comments were addressed through the City's SMP update effort.
1-5	Comment noted. The City of Walla Walla's Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) governs development when critical areas and buffers are present on properties.
1-6	Comment noted. The City's CAO was developed with Best Available Science in 2008. When the City updated its SMP, a review of the CAO was conducted and applicable amendments made to address any changes in state law. The City also conducted a review of the CAO as part of the periodic update and incorporated the CAO amendments from the SMP update process to apply city-wide.
1-7	Comment noted. Policy H-2.2 addresses property maintenance standards, although more specific to housing, could apply to other structures. Under the implementation action table, the City has identified the need to develop minimum property maintenance standards and code compliance program.
1-8	Comments noted. Critical areas have been addressed under comments 1-5 and 1-6. The comprehensive plan includes policies to support trail development along the Mill Creek Corridor. See PR Policy 1.6. City will add another policy regarding the Blue Mountain Region Trails Plan.
Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation	
2-1	The plan has been amended to include historic preservation in LU Policy 1.4 as well as making sure the Policy Connection paragraphs in the other elements reference Historic Preservation where appropriate.
Washington State Department of Transportation - February 1, 2018 Letter	
3-1	Analysis of US Highway 12 and State Route 125 are referenced in the City's Transportation Plan. The City utilized information from the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization 2040 plan for these facilities including traffic counts.

3-2	Comment noted. The Walla Walla 2040 Plan includes a transportation element meeting the requirements of RCW 30.70A. When WSDOT provided their comment letter on February 1, 2018 the draft transportation plan had not been completed.
3-3	The City's proposed North Urban Growth Area (UGA) Addition application to Walla Walla County was not moved forward to the County's final docket. The City has identified the North UGA as a future study area and is not included in the City's UGA.
3-4	The draft EIS looked at the potential increase in commercial and residential development within the Myra Road corridor. The analysis showed that the City's transportation network did not drop below a Level of Service standard "D" within the 20-year planning horizon.
Washington State Department of Transportation - March 30, 2018 Letter	
3A-1	Comment noted.
RL McFarland Comment Letter	
4-1	The City of Walla Walla completed a land capacity analysis that has been incorporated into the comprehensive plan update. Applying for the North UGA addition to Walla Walla County is related to a corresponding application the City submitted to Walla Walla County for removal of 198 acres from the UGA. However, Walla Walla County did not move forward the North UGA addition application to the final docket. Therefore this comment is no longer applicable.
4-2	Comment noted. Property ownership was obtained from the Parcel Records the City receives from Walla Walla County.
4-3	Comment noted.
4-4	Comment noted. The City's North UGA addition application was not moved forward to Walla Walla County's final docket. Therefore, the City has revised its draft comprehensive plan to show the North UGA as a future study area. The comments provided regarding "Bouchon Park" are not applicable to the draft comprehensive plan as "Bouchon Park" is an approved site development project in compliance with the City's development standards (Phase 1 approved June 1, 2015 and Phase 2 approved February 16, 2016). The transportation mitigation identified in the City's issued Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (May 22, 2015) for Phase 1 and Phase 2 issued January 19, 2016 for the project was a result of the comments provided by the Washington State Department of Transportation to the City as part of Notice of Application comment period. In regards to US 12 and the interchanges along the corridor, the City has identified in its draft transportation plan the need for a interchange corridor study along US 12 from the interchange at 2nd Avenue to the interchange at Wilbur Avenue.
4-5	Comment noted.
Steven Pao Comment Letter	
5-1	The City's noise ordinance addresses noise impacts for non-residential zoned property when the receiving property is residential. See Walla Walla Municipal Code (WWMC) Chapter 8.13. Mr. Pao has also applied for a land use change of his property from Residential to Industrial. If approved, would permit Mr. Pao to apply for a potential rezone to Industrial and therefore could allow higher intensity uses on his own property similar to the request Mr. Pao is concerned about according to his comment letter.

Appendix VII. Engagement Report

Stakeholder Interviews

Introduction

As part of the regular update to the 2026 Comprehensive Plan, orientation interviews were conducted from January 28 to February 6, 2025. The interviews provided valuable insights from key stakeholders to inform the planning process. 20 stakeholders participated, representing a broad range of organizations, decision-making bodies, and community interests. Their input offers a balanced view of the opportunities, as well as challenges the community will most likely encounter in planning for the future. The topics covered various issues such as the creation of infrastructure, housing affordability, economic growth, active transportation, culture/ identity, and public facilities. The stakeholders also shared their opinions on policy priorities, community engagement strategies, and long-term visions that should be incorporated into the comprehensive plan update. The data gathered from these interviews will inform later phases of the planning process to ensure that the comprehensive plan will be an expression of the needs and desires of Walla Walla's residents and institutions.

Appendix VII Table 1. List of Interviewees

Organization	Title	Date of Interview
Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce	Executive Director	30-Jan
City of Walla Walla	Mayor	4-Feb
Walla Walla Public Schools	Superintendent	28-Jan
Walla Walla Community Council	Executive Director	29-Jan
Walla Walla Community College	President	28-Jan
Blue Mountain Action Council	Executive Director	29-Jan
Providence St Mary Medical Center	Senior Manager, Community Health Investment	30-Jan
Port of Walla Walla	Executive Director	6-Feb
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee	Chair	28-Jan
City of Walla Walla	Councilmember	29-Jan
Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce	Executive Director	30-Jan
City of Walla Walla	Councilmember	28-Jan
Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless	Executive Director	29-Jan
City of Walla Walla	Mayor Pro Tempore	30-Jan

Tri-State Steelheaders	Executive Director	29-Jan
Historic Preservation Commission	Chair	28-Jan
Walla Walla Realtors Association	President	4-Feb
Tarragon Northwest	President	4-Feb
Valley Transit	General Manager	28-Jan
Washington Trust for Historic Preservation	Chair	28-Jan
Walla Walla Immigrant Rights Coalition	Executive Director	6-Feb

Housing Key Takeaways

The feedback from interviewees showed that the most urgent concern in Walla Walla is housing. Participants felt that there is a dire shortage of housing, including student rentals, workforce housing, and affordable housing. Affordable housing is of particular concern to college graduates, first-time buyers, and low-income residents. Home prices and rent hikes have led to people living in inappropriate circumstances, including garages and cars. Homelessness prevention services are also increasingly needed, with special needs for pet-friendly shelters and services to the Spanish-speaking community.

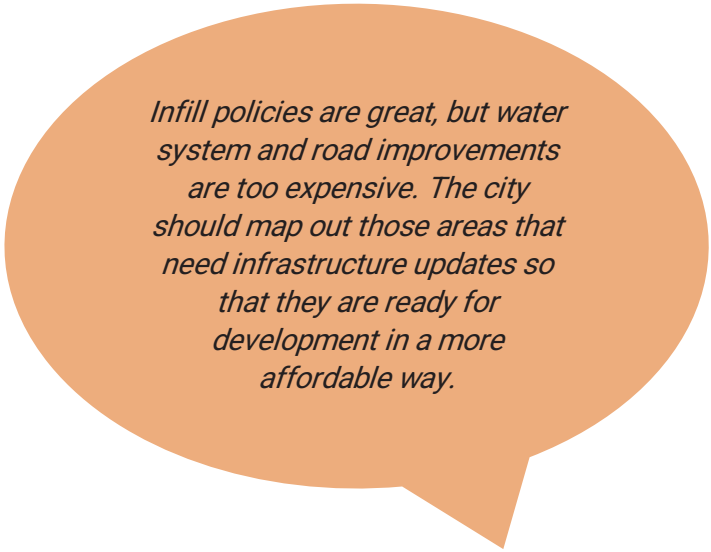
We don't have enough housing because we don't have a strong workforce; We can't attract the workforce because we don't have housing.

Challenges and Opportunities

- Housing is needed to attract more workforce.
- While Walla Walla has made improvements related to housing affordability and availability, relative to other towns, it is still not meeting the entire housing needs. The city has promoted higher density but has a strong Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) mentality among residents that generates mixed responses.
- Marketing and communication of the benefits of density and infill in the city has not been successful, and this has generated resistance from the population. Some view city policies as deterrents to growth, particularly developments involving annexation.
- There is a need for multi-family housing within city limits, but some believe it is discouraged by development policies and high infrastructure costs. Others suggest combining multi-family housing within historic districts to balance growth with the preservation of Walla Walla's character.
- Regulatory and zoning barriers also contribute to the housing crisis. Fewer building permits are being granted, and the high cost of water and street improvements make construction expensive.
- Another concern raised was the increasing gap in housing affordability, which makes it difficult for young and first-time families to enter the market. Housing costs have increased faster than wages, and this has forced many workers to live outside Walla Walla. Retirees who relocate from California and Seattle often pay cash for higher-end

homes, which further drives up prices. This process makes it difficult for many of the younger citizens to afford decent housing.

- Developers prefer to build single-family homes on large lots, but these are not always affordable, nor do they always meet demands. Annexing new land for housing is complicated by the expense of infrastructure.
- There is a need for more specific definitions and policies that relate to affordable housing.
- Other stakeholders who were interviewed feel that adding tax incentives and streamlining the permit process would be more effective in supporting affordable housing growth, particularly middle housing, and starter houses.
- Also on the horizon is the growing call for policies to regulate short-term rentals like Airbnb's to prevent "residential deserts" and keep long-term housing within reach. Loosening up multi-family zoning and encouraging garden-style developments would relieve the pressure. There is a call for additional permanent supportive housing (PSH) to aid the homeless. Walla Walla Housing Authority is currently constructing a 55-unit PSH facility.
- Infrastructure improvements would bring new development opportunities, particularly along the roads.
- Greater cooperation among developers, city government officials, and industries is needed to address the housing shortage effectively.



Transportation Key Takeaways

Transportation comments during the orientation interview both indicate positive trends and ongoing challenges within the region. Valley Transit was viewed as doing well with strong efforts to improve roads and increase public transport. Participants felt that the major improvements to infrastructure and completion of U.S. 12 to facilitate access to the Tri-Cities should improve the flow of vehicles. Air travel opportunities remain limited to two flights per day in and out of Walla Walla. Community members would prefer to see additional flights or another airline to increase travel opportunities because the closest alternate airport at Pasco is 50 miles away. Attempts to continue the service of Alaska Airlines in Walla Walla have been made, with community stakeholders playing a large role in continuing service.

Would love to see more daily flights to/from other major airports.

Traffic calming needed in high-speed areas like 9th Street

Challenges and Opportunities

- Availability of healthcare is also a major transport concern, as residents who need specialist healthcare services need to travel to the Tri-Cities or the City of Spokane. While organizations like People for People aid in the provision of transport, existing bus services, such as the one from Walla Walla to the Tri-Cities are not efficient and could take the entire day to make the return journey.
- There was support for extending infrastructure, such as the Myra Road extension, to accommodate growth while preserving agricultural lands and scenic views.
- Several of the participants emphasized the need for better public transport to eliminate the use of automobiles and address traffic. Specific needs include traffic calming in high-speed areas like 9th Avenue and more pedestrianized street closures within the downtown area. There is also a need for safer bike and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Feedback from some of the interviewees showed that the move towards sustainable transport is appreciated, and some public transport agencies are already investing in electric buses. However, Walla Walla still does not have charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.
- While roads have seen significant improvement, certain areas still need to be worked on, particularly as the city seeks to modernize infrastructure systems that are over a century old.

Economic Development Key Takeaways

Recruitment and retainment of the workforce needs to be the top priority.

The economic development feedback from the orientation interviews highlights the strengths and challenges of the economy of Walla Walla. Participants felt that while the region wasn't suffering from high unemployment, it still did not have the workforce to sustain large-scale manufacturing or industry employment. The economy is built on small businesses, entrepreneurship, and recruiting professionals to live in the region to take advantage of the high quality of life, which was seen as a key strategy for success.

- Participants believed that the economy needs family-wage jobs to sustain economic stability, but the employment that is offered, particularly in retail and tourism industries, does not meet that threshold. The wine industry has been the economic

force that has driven economic growth, redeveloped downtown, and helped to provide tourism opportunities. However, over-reliance on the industry is of concern. Diversification is needed to sustain the economy, particularly with seasonal challenges like inclement weather that affects agriculture and tourism.

Attracting new businesses and jobs is key to making Walla Walla more self-sustaining.

- A major barrier to economic growth is housing, making it difficult to attract and retain workers. While Walla Walla is gaining higher-income residents, young professionals and families are constrained by the issues of employment and affordability. Most college-educated workers want to stay in the area but leave due to the lack of employment opportunities. There are also employment shortages in the middle range, with a large gap between the low- and high-income levels.
- Concern that there is a shortage of skilled tradespeople, healthcare professionals, and middle management, and recruitment and retention of workers are issues.
- Economic growth is also impacted by infrastructure. More public transportation is required, along with more retail opportunities to keep residents from shopping in the Tri-Cities, and more co-working spaces to attract remote workers and tech professionals to the district. Downtown is described as quaint and tourist-oriented but is considered to be parking-constrained.
- Childcare is also a significant barrier, with not nearly enough affordable options to enable parents to fully participate in the workforce. A modification of the rules on in-home daycare businesses would mitigate this barrier.
- The Port of Walla Walla is an economic driver, but participants felt the City could collaborate with the Port and Chamber of Commerce to address business recruitment and local needs.
- Energy production is looming on the horizon as a growth industry, and the possibility exists to utilize inexpensive energy to attract Western Washington businesses.

Facilities Key Takeaways

The comments on facilities from the orientation interview reflect both the strengths and challenges of Walla Walla's community services and infrastructure. Walla Walla has a high level of support from the public for the schools that are served by excellent, well-maintained facilities.

- Whitman College and the community college contribute to the vitality of the area, providing educational opportunities and community engagement.
- Recreation facilities such as the YMCA, the gyms, the parks, and the art programs are in good health, and the airport is becoming increasingly busy, although flights to more destinations would be desired.
- Healthcare access is of concern. The town now only has one remaining hospital after another facility closed in 2018, and the stability of Providence St. Mary Medical Center the delivery of adequate medical services are questioned.
- Physicians are hard to hire, and many residents are required to travel to the Tri-Cities to access specialized services such as dermatology. Healthcare delivery in Walla Walla is described as unstable. There is also a recognized need within the City for a detox center to treat residents struggling with addiction.
- Other infrastructure concerns include insufficient wastewater treatment capacity, which could pose a challenge in attracting new businesses.
- While the City facilities are generally in good shape, the ability to sustain and build on essential services, particularly healthcare, is a concern to citizens.
- Coordination among the sectors could be required to enable facility development, such as the creation of art and community space, and the more pressing need to enhance access to healthcare in Walla Walla.

Parks and Recreation Key Takeaways

Walla Walla's parks system is both positively and critically reviewed. The city's park system is well developed, yet primarily sport-focused, resulting in a lack of areas of nature to observe wildlife and enjoy passive recreation. Recent additions, however, such as Heritage Square, which opened in early 2024, and Walawála Plaza, have been well-received, and public opinion is highly in favor of continued investment in parks and open space.

- The key improvements that were suggested by interviewees include better lighting in parks to provide greater safety.
- Other improvements suggested include the maintenance of walking paths and facilities well-interconnected to provide accessibility and the installation of a splash pad to provide additional family-friendly recreation. Such improvements would help to balance the parks system and be inclusive to address a wider range of community needs.

Culture and Identity Key Takeaways

The conversation about culture and identity in Walla Walla during the interview was centered on rich history, shifting demographics, and the need for increased representation. Walla Walla is culturally rich, yet concerns were raised regarding the way its history is represented. Additionally, public art and cultural icons in downtown Walla Walla do not necessarily reflect the full cultural history because there is little representation of the area's Hispanic, Native American, and migrant groups.

"Walla Walla has a plethora of art opportunities. It is a very talented community – that should be recognized and celebrated."

- The Hispanic population has grown immensely, with nearly one-quarter of the population. Solutions include greater interaction with the Latino population, having translators attend public hearings, and ensuring that their voices are heard when decisions are being made.
- Historic preservation remains a priority, and the wine and wheat industries remain the defining features of Walla Walla. The City is built as a tourist hub centered on wine, with concerns that it is becoming a monoculture that is obscuring its agricultural and tribal history. Many feel that more needs to be done to honor the region's tribal history, including placing educational signs in public areas and providing a stronger voice to the stories of migrants and Latinx populations.
- The city has cultural strengths. The Walla Walla Creative District fosters artistic innovation and multicultural events, and the library has received praise for its multicultural programming. Going forward, it will be important to make sure that Walla Walla's cultural identity reflects its multicultural population while still preserving its historic character in a way that will create a more representative, stronger future.

General Takeaways

This section represents general takeaways from the Walla Walla stakeholder interviews. These comments reflect a community that is collaborative, tightly knit, and deeply invested in preserving its quality of life while facing significant challenges. While the city is engaged in regional efforts and boasts a healthy volunteer population, demographic issues include an aging population, low birth rates, and dwindling students in the school system.

- Participants noted economic disparities with low-income areas having no internet access and a growing need for multicultural and bilingual providers. Housing affordability and the lack of availability of childcare and early education facilities are other issues confronting new families.
- Some felt growth has been sporadic, partly because of a culture of resistance to change on the part of long-term residents, particularly in agricultural areas, where maintaining productive land is paramount.
- Water preservation is an emerging issue, with creeks drying up and watershed management problems impacting wildlife.
- The city has developed culturally and recreationally, with restaurants, arts, and outdoor recreation improved, but industrial and economic development remains a challenge.

- Though the local economy has been buffered from major downturns due to its foundation in federal employment, there are still concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of industries, particularly tourism and higher education.
- Another concern centered on the lack of coordination among organizations within Walla Walla. Better outreach, involvement of respected community leaders, and greater ease of access to public information are some of the recommendations to address this lack of coordination. Walla Walla can address these issues as part of its collaborative nature so that it has a sustainable and inclusive future.

Written Comments

The city received several written comments from community members throughout 2025 as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process. These comments reflected interest in staying informed and involved, while also raising ideas and concerns related to housing, redevelopment, downtown parking, economic development, noise, air quality, and overall quality of life. Together, they offered helpful input on both community priorities and issues residents would like the plan to address.

City-Led Presentations

City staff led a series of presentations and briefings throughout the planning process to share updates, gather input, and keep decision-makers and the community informed. Early efforts focused on project kickoff and coordination with the Planning Commission and City Council, followed by regular workshops and a joint work session to review progress and draft materials.

Additional presentations were conducted with community groups, local organizations, and partner agencies, including service clubs, the development community, schools, and regional stakeholders. Targeted coordination included outreach to tribal governments, state agencies, and local organizations to share drafts and invite feedback.

Overall, these city-led efforts helped maintain consistent communication, expand participation, and ensure the plan reflects a wide range of perspectives.

Below are the groups that were presented to and shared input:

- Planning Commission
- City Council Orientation Interviews
- SEATech Skills Center
- Return to the River
- West Ward Town Hall
- Windermere
- City Leadership Team
- Hayden Homes
- Rotary Club of Walla Walla
- Walla Walla Sunrise Rotary
- Walla Walla High School Latino Club
- Walla Walla Senior Center
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of the Coville Reservation
- The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Reservation
- Valley Transit

Open House Engagement Summary

Introduction

Event: City of Walla Walla Comp Plan Update: Open House

Date/Time: Thursday, July 10, 2025, from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Location: Walla Walla Public Library
238 E. Alder St.
Walla Walla, WA 99362

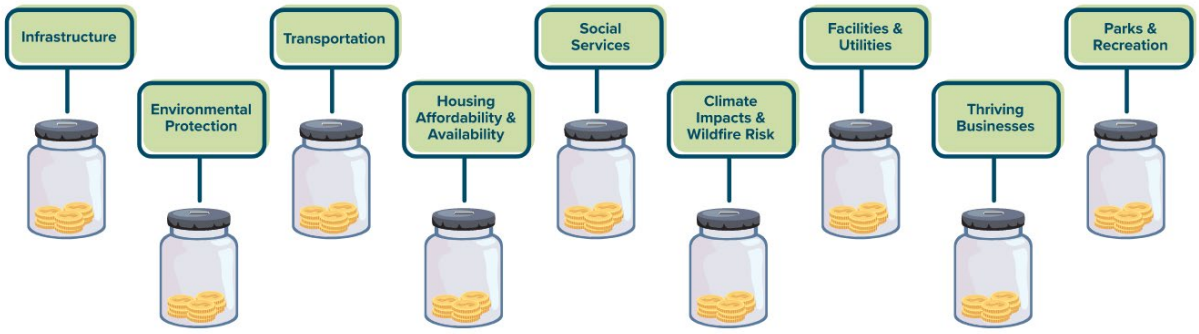


The City of Walla Walla held an open house on Thursday, July 10, 2025, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Walla Walla Public Library, to share the comprehensive plan periodic update process with the community. The event provided an opportunity for the public to learn how the comprehensive plan guides decisions on growth, housing, transportation, land use, and other critical issues for the next 20 years. Survey and event flyers were made available in both English and Spanish to ease participation barriers and ensure broad participation from the community.

Attendees had the chance to watch a presentation about the update process and learn more about the timeline and opportunities for future involvement. This event was an important early opportunity to gather public feedback about community priorities. Participants were encouraged to share their ideas, concerns, and hopes for the future of Walla Walla. Three engagement activities were available to help collect input and better understand the values and vision of residents.

Activities

Activity One: Penny Poll – Community Priorities



Attendees participated in a "penny poll" to express what they value most for the future of Walla Walla. Nine jars were labeled with different aspects of the community, and each person was given three pennies to allocate toward the areas they felt were most important to focus on throughout the comprehensive plan update. This interactive activity gave residents a simple and visual way to prioritize local issues and opportunities. The distribution of pennies helped highlight which topics matter most to the community and will inform how the comprehensive plan update reflects local needs and aspirations.

The categories included: Social Service, Climate Impacts and Wildfire Risks, Thriving Businesses, Infrastructure, Parks and Recreation, Environmental Protection, Facilities and Utilities, Transportation, and Affordable Housing and Housing Availability.

Community Priorities (Based on Number of Coins)

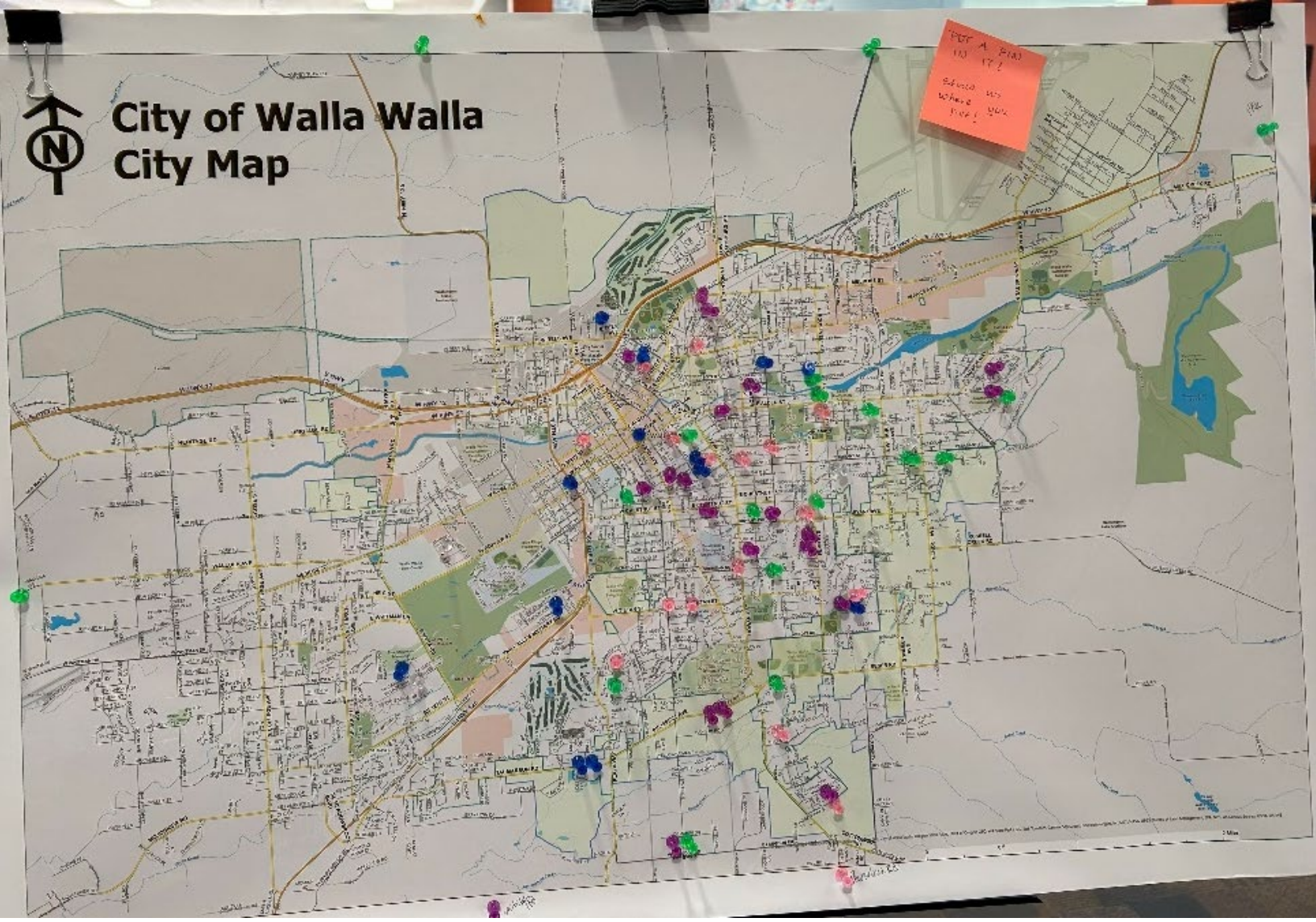
1) **Affordable Housing & Availability:** 62 coins
    a. *Note: Concern about skyrocketing housing prices; question raised about whether real estate speculation is contributing.*
2) **Social Services:** 34 coins
3) **Thriving Businesses:** 28 coins
    a. *Note: Suggestion to repurpose an old business building for indoor recreational activities across all age groups (e.g., pétanque, cornhole, pickleball, bowling).*
4) **Environmental Protection:** 25 coins
5) **Climate Impacts and Wildfire Risks:** 23 coins
6) **Parks and Recreation:** 23 coins
7) **Infrastructure:** 20 coins
8) **Transportation:** 17 coins
9) **Facilities and Utilities:** 8 coins

There was a total of **243 votes cast,** which means there were about **81 participants in 2 hours**.

The penny poll results from the July 10 Open House show that affordable housing is the community's top concern by a significant margin. Residents expressed frustration over rapidly rising housing prices and questioned whether real estate speculation is contributing to the trend. Social services, thriving businesses, and environmental protection also ranked highly, reflecting strong interest in community well-being and long-term resilience. One suggestion called for repurposing an old business building into an indoor recreational space for all ages. Additional feedback included concern for animal welfare and a desire for inclusive, accessible community services and infrastructure.







Activity Two: Community Map Displays

Along the perimeter of the event space, a series of large-format maps displayed key information about the Walla Walla community. Topics included economic activity areas, zoning, the comprehensive land use map, wetlands and surface water, the water distribution system, tree canopy and urban heat severity, the transportation plan, community facilities, and street classifications. Participants were encouraged to engage directly with the maps by adding sticky notes with comments, questions, and ideas. One particularly popular feature was located at the welcome table alongside snacks and the event sign-in sheet, which invited attendees to “Put a pin in it!” by placing a marker on a city map to show where they live and helped to visualize the geographic distribution of community input. Participants indicated they lived throughout Walla Walla, with representation from all parts of the city. There was a slightly higher concentration of participants from the downtown area and nearby neighborhoods.

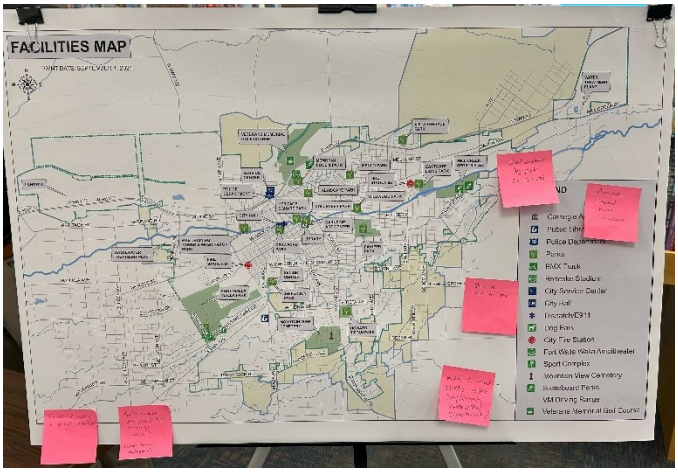
Engagement at this station was strong, with many thoughtful sticky notes submitted by the end of the event. All feedback gathered from the map displays has been collected and organized by topic. These comments are included at the end of this summary document to inform the Comprehensive Plan update and ensure that community voices are reflected in each thematic area.



Capital Facilities

“Sports Complex a great addition!”

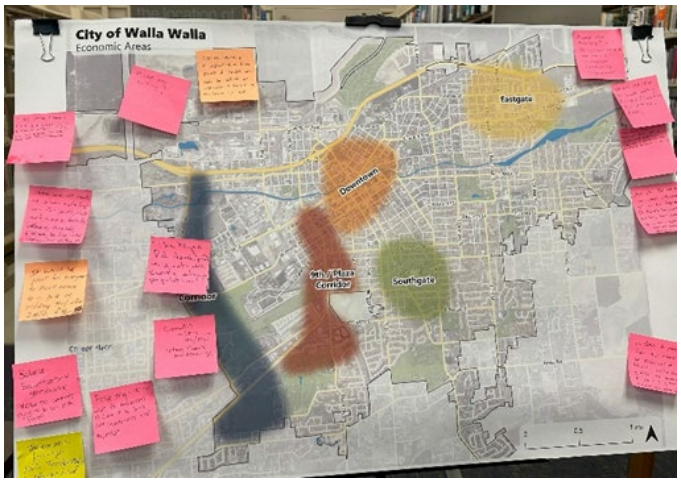
Community members expressed appreciation for existing investments, especially the sports complex, and proposed new capital projects to enhance services and amenities. Suggestions included developing an events center in partnership with the county, adding another park on the east side of the city, establishing a municipal animal impound facility, and ensuring water system infrastructure is accurately represented on maps.



Economic Development

*“Balance: Beautification & gentrification. *Allow the community there to be part of the process.”*

Participants emphasized the importance of diversifying Walla Walla’s economy beyond tourism and hospitality, supporting local businesses, and increasing access to services. Concerns about car dependency, mixed-use zoning, equitable development, and shelter for unhoused residents surfaced throughout. Many comments highlighted the need for walkable neighborhoods, indoor recreation spaces, and leveraging underutilized buildings for community benefit.



Environment / Shoreline / Climate Element

"No more development south of town."

Comments focused on urban tree canopy, equitable greening efforts, and questions around environmental planning tools like the Shoreline Master Program. Residents supported public-private partnerships for tree planting and expressed interest in integrating recreational and environmental enhancements, such as adding food trucks or sports areas at key sites. Some called for clarification on stream setback policies and Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundaries.



Housing

"Use empty buildings for affordable housing."

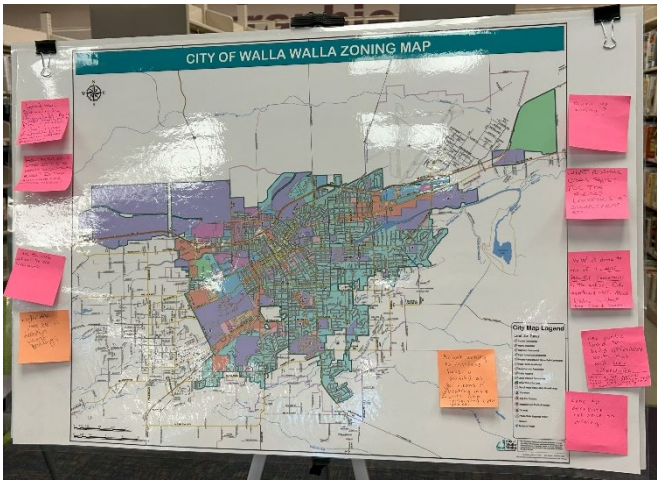
Housing concerns expressed by participants were wide-ranging and indicated a sense of urgency. Community members called for more affordable housing, especially for workers, seniors, and the unhoused. They suggested density increases, protections against corporate ownership, the use of public or vacant buildings, and a diversity of housing types to accommodate residents. There were also questions about who is driving new development and whether it reflects local income levels. Several participants stressed the importance of planning for infrastructure alongside housing growth.



Land Use

"Zone to decrease reliance on driving."

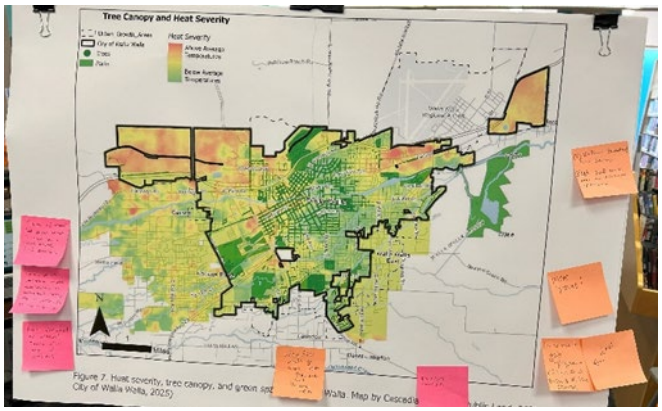
Land use comments showed concern about sprawl, equity, and planning transparency. Suggestions included expanding the UGA responsibly, preventing southside overdevelopment, encouraging infill, and considering land use impacts on transportation and affordability. Several comments advocated for mixed-use zoning, adaptive reuse of vacant buildings, and the use of public land for permanent affordable housing



Parks and Recreation

"More parks!"

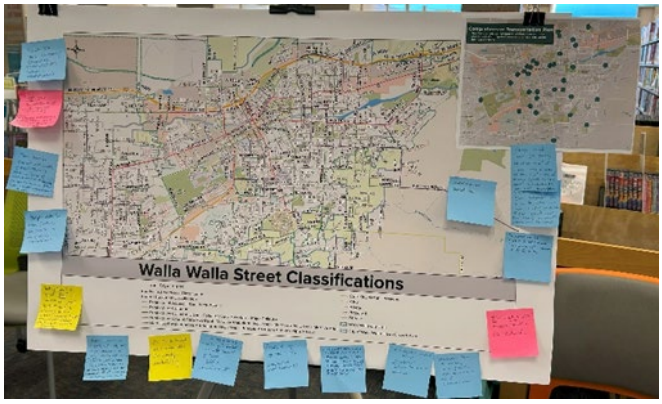
Feedback in this category is centered on the need for more parks and inclusive recreation opportunities, particularly for teens who are not drawn to traditional sports. Several participants voiced support for improving access to parks and trails, ideally within walking distance from neighborhoods, as a basic amenity for all residents.



Transportation

"Love the roundabouts at high traffic areas."

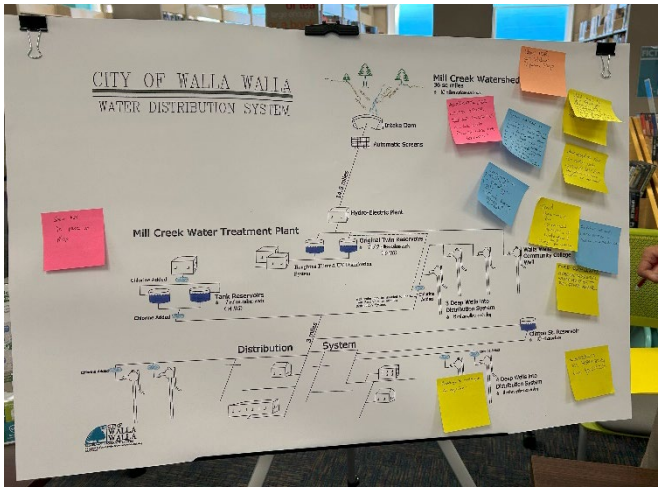
Transportation feedback reflected concerns about safety, access, and system efficiency. Suggestions included more sidewalks, roundabouts, bus and Dial-a-Ride service improvements, and better education on how to use traffic circles. Speeding, poor striping, and intersection design were also cited as community priorities. Equity was a recurring theme, with comments highlighting gaps in service for lower-income areas and calling for more trees and infrastructure investment across all neighborhoods.



Utilities

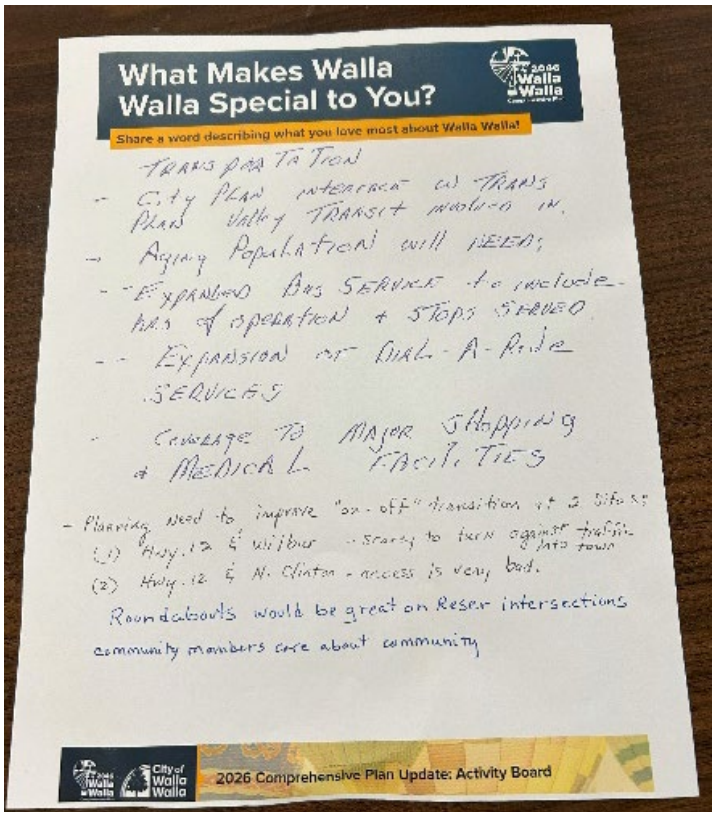
So proud of our water system & replenishing the aquifer."

Residents voiced strong support for the local water system and aquifer recharge efforts, with several expressing pride in existing projects. Suggestions included reducing residential water pressure, investing in system resilience, and planning for long-term water availability. There were also calls to preserve farmland, avoid waste, and ensure utility infrastructure keeps pace with development.



Activity Three: What Makes Walla Walla Special to You?

In addition to the interactive displays and penny poll, participants were invited to provide open-ended feedback by responding to the prompt: “Share a word describing what you love most about Walla Walla!” While some shared simple reflections, many used this opportunity to ask questions, offer specific suggestions, or highlight aspects of the community they value.



Responses were grouped by topic, with the full list provided at the end of this summary to help guide future planning decisions. The three main themes that emerged are:

Top 3 Themes

1) **Expand affordable and diverse housing** by increasing supply, protecting existing affordable options, and offering choices that meet the needs of different income levels and life stages.
2) **Encourage mixed-use development** that blends housing with retail or services while maintaining neighborhood character.
3) **Improve transportation access and safety** through expanded transit service, safer highway connections, and better intersection design.

Summary of Public Comments

Below are the full narrative responses received on sticky notes associated with the map display activity.

Capital Facilities

- Sports complex a great addition!
- Need a true events center city/ county partnership opportunity?
- Show ASR wells on the map
- Municipal impound facility for animals
- Need another Dos park on the east side

Economic Development

- Economic diversity is imperative to future growth and success. We won’t be reliant on hospitality & tourism to the level we are.

- This map shows why Walla Walla is a car-centric city. Not walkable to take care of daily needs.
- Where can we create an indoor activities area for youth, adults, and seniors? Activities: petanque, corn hole, pickleball, bowling, roller skating, ice skating, etc.
- Growth along Myra? Where should new homes go?
- Balance: Beautification + gentrification. Allow the community there to be a part of the process.
- Prospecting- Do not wait for businesses to come to us. Seek out opportunities and expansion.
- Mixed-use zoning? Decrease reliance on cars and increase community engagement.
- Do not continue to build south of Prospect/ Taumarson, move it to the east!
- This fails the popsicle test. That is can a child walk to a store, buy a popsicle, and go home before it melts?
- How can the town be more interconnected on the large scale. *(comment cut off in picture)*
- Is there a point when the goal of economic/biz district shifts from growth to maintaining or perhaps for-profit to growing... *(comment cut off in picture)*
- Include heat mitigation and non-car transportation in any expansion/ design.
- Indoor shelters. More shelters
- Tax breaks for small developers/less than 6 units *("seconded" by another participant)*
- Schools? New for
- health or people is important in planning
- Want everyone involved.
- Empty building, why? Shelters! (see Canada)
- I have questions about a large vacant building. Is it possible to make them into homeless centers? They would be covered, heated, cooled, a place to give support.
- I feel all of these concerns would include a togetherness-based community
- Why not have the ability to mix retail and housing? For example, a multi-story building with retail on the ground level. The only place I have seen that is on Rose where there is Mama Momacelli Bakery.
- I like that the added unit is in good proportion with the house. Sometimes the added unit... *(comment cut off in picture)*

Environment/Shoreline/Climate Element

- Increase canopy.
- Enhanced golf program at vets and events of the course. *("seconded" by another participant)*
- Why does clala go into UGA on the east and the South UGA
- public - private partnerships to plant trees/vegetation on business-owned property, esp. if the public right of way is lacking.
- Engage with home/landowners to partner to plant trees on private property. Avoid gentrification.
- Indoor basketball, Ice skating. Add a food truck area to Mill Creek Sportsplex. *(Comment was on the board at the environmental table)*
- What is the Shoreline master program?
- Why is the YellowhaWk creek setback 50' and every other stream (Mill Creek included) 35'?

Housing

- Housing: more development south N.E. Middle housing has ownership problems. Corporations own. Less autonomy. More multi-family housing
- More housing density- enough affordable housing for all who work here.
- More housing units overall, including for the working, poor, and the homeless.
- Affordable housing developed on with a long-term plan to keep housing affordable
- Multi-family housing in all neighborhoods tastefully developed!!
- More places for the homeless
- What's being planned to address rising rents? Is there a cap + incentives to achieve this?
- What protections exist to keep housing (esp affordable) locally owned? STRs, LTRs, corporate owners, etc.
- If extended affordable housing, where would go. (Comment was on the east side of the map)
- Use empty buildings for affordable housing
- Groups of 6? Tiny houses for seniors reduce loneliness. Centralized kitchen and conference room. Increase/maintain independence after downsizing family home.
- What's the plan for this planned community? *(comment was pointing at the map near Pine & Myra)*
- Who is buying the new housing in the developments when the median income is 58,000 and these new homes start around 350,000. Investors? Equity firms? Do we really need more housing developments?
- We need affordable housing so people (customers)(workers) can afford to live and purchase here. And have great lives!
- Affordable housing
- Protect manufactured home parks
- Townhouse style middle-income
- Single-level townhouse style low-income seniors
- We need affordable housing for all residents. Solve the scarcity problem.
- more multifamily units, including in existing neighborhoods
- We need more affordable housing + make sure intro.. Is built out to support new development. (roads, sewers..) *(comment cut off)*

Land Use

- Add Kendall Rd to the UGA. That is what should have been done 10 years ago.
- No more development south of town.
- Watershed and logging- where are we at with this? We would love a town hall-type opportunity.
- Who will provide affordable housing- the part industrial development.
- Mixed-use zoning?
- Land use planning is important. As is new housing priorities. Please consider "like" types of dwellings in an area whenever possible!
- How much open land exists in heavy industrial zones? Is it adequate for future needs?
- This zoning leads to car dependency
- Upper story development in downtown vacant buildings.
- Adjust zoning to increase housing density as a means of creating more affordable units and preserving open space.

- zone to decrease reliance on driving.
- Use public land to build affordable units that will stay affordable. Parking lot across from the post office that never has more than 3 cars in it?
- Walla Walla is home to one of the most beautiful cemeteries in the nation! City maintained well. Much history in that tree-shaded place.
- What possible uses exist for the former landfill site? Solar farm? Etc..
- Mixed zoning use
- How often is the UGA expanded/updated?

Parks and Recreation

- Park space designed to engage teens? (other than the skate park)
- more parks!
- Park designed to attract teens who are not athletes
- It would be great for everyone to have access to a park or walking trail within 3 miles of their home.

Transportation

- Aging population will need: Expanded bus service to include hrs of operation + stops served. Expansion of Dial - A- Ride services. Coverage to major shopping + medical facilities
- Planning needs to improve "on-off" transitions at 2 sites: 1) Hwy 12 & Wilber - scary to turn against traffic into town. 2) Hwy 12 & N. Clinton - Access very bad
- Roundabouts would be great on Reser intersections, community members care about the community.
- City Plan interface with the Trans Plan Valley Transit is involved in.
- South 3rd and Orchard/Cherokee intersection needs a roundabout.
- Love the roundabouts at high-traffic areas.
- Please prioritize sidewalks on every residential street.
- More trees in commercial areas, please. This is also an issue of environmental equity as lower-income folks live in more commercial areas
- People seem to need further education on navigating roundabouts.
- Valley transit is great, BUT it would be great to NOT have to always go through the transit center, transferring through there makes trips unnecessarily lengthy.
- Public transit is a gap, especially off major arteries/in more residential areas. Type diversity could increase (bus, dial a ride, etc.) Are there opportunities to ID community priorities for new stops?
- All streets should have sidewalks for safety & walkability.
- We are growing. Traffic gets backed up at Howard & Reser - add a roundabout.
- People driving too fast in the city. Wellington Ave + Middle Waitsburg Rd.
- Install flashing walk at Penrose and Isaacs. Provide regular info to the public about traffic circles. (How to Use!) Budget for residential street paving.
- Sidewalks needed along Blue St. Between Francis + Melrose.
- People are driving too fast - dangerous, need cameras.
- Bike routes with slower traffic. (see Portland)
- Developer should have paid for crossing (over Pan or ??) highway 12 at Division
- Sidewalks on School Ave

- Strips around town got poorly re-striped the last few weeks, and the hard work and money spent on the roads and sidewalks just went down the drain with the poor judgement on a couple who ran the striping machine. Please spend our tax money on quality people and machines.
- The Myra Rd development is great - will service a large population !!
- transportation: encourage public transportation to be efficient locally.
- Road designs have made WW less ambient and relaxed (poplar, rose)

Utilities

- Show ASR in procos on map
- Thank you for recharging the aquifer!
- education on watershed/fire tactics
- Forget green lawns! Decrease residential water pressure to the national average.
- So proud of our water system + replenishing the aquifer.
- Find reserves for concerned groups, ie. Watershed & forest practices.
- The house on 857 Wellington - ponding- check during a heavy rain event.
- Awesome job with your IRRP projects nice job plugging the leaks!
- System resilience as a priority for water is important + should continue as a focus. Forest mgmt in the west requires fire + the extent to which it can be introduced intentionally is preferred collab w/ CTUIR, Landowners, + anyone at highest risk of impact.
- We need to close the entire water system to loss & have the option for new water at the end. *(comment cut off)*
- Don't want to see any more farmland converted to housing. Who is buying the new houses?
- Show ASR on the water system map.

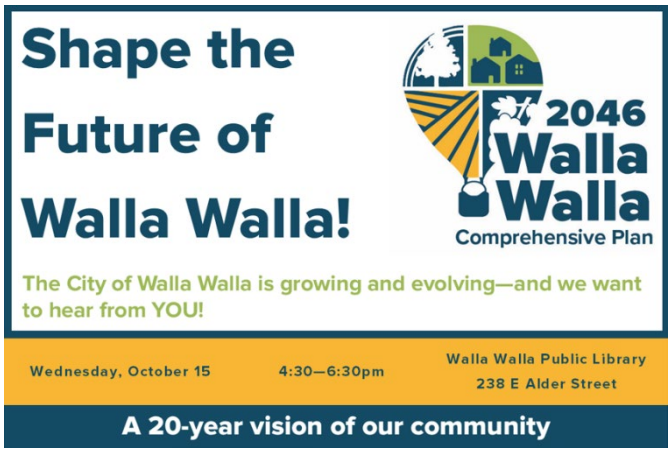
Fall Open House Engagement Summary

Introduction

Event: City of Walla Walla Comp Plan Update: Fall Open House

Date/Time: Wednesday, Oct. 15, 2025, from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Location: Walla Walla Public Library 238 E. Alder St. Walla Walla, WA 99362



The City of Walla Walla held an open house on Wednesday, October 15, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Walla Walla Public Library, to share the comprehensive plan periodic update process with the community. The event provided an opportunity for the public to learn how the comprehensive plan guides decisions on growth, housing, transportation, land use, and other critical issues for the next 20 years. All event materials were made available in both English and

Spanish to ease participation barriers and ensure broad participation from the community.

Attendees had the chance to hear a presentation about the update process and learn more about the timeline and opportunities for future involvement. This event was an important early opportunity to gather public feedback about community priorities. Participants were encouraged to share their ideas, concerns, and hopes for the future of Walla Walla. Three engagement activities were available to help collect input and better understand the values and vision of residents.

Community Priorities

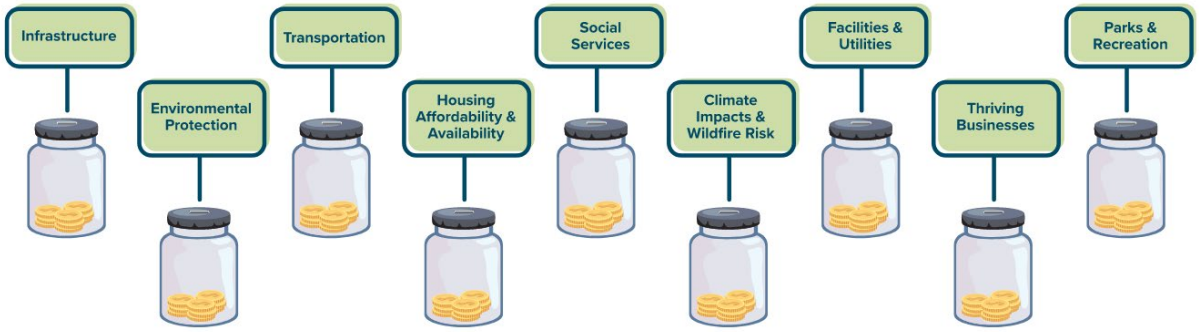
Community feedback from the Fall Open House revealed clear priorities. When both the penny poll results and written comments were considered together, housing affordability, transportation access, and parks and recreation emerged as the top three themes. These priorities highlight a shared community focus on improving affordability, mobility, and overall quality of life in Walla Walla.

Overall Top Three Themes:

1. Housing Affordability and Availability
2. Transportation Access and Safety
3. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Activities

Activity One: Penny Poll – Community Priorities



Attendees participated in a "penny poll" to express what they value most for the future of Walla Walla. Nine jars were labeled with different aspects of the community, and each participant was given nine pennies to allocate toward the areas they felt were most important to focus on throughout the comprehensive plan update. This interactive activity gave residents a simple and visual way to prioritize local issues and opportunities. The distribution of pennies helped highlight which topics matter most to the community and will inform how the comprehensive plan update reflects local needs and aspirations.

Community Priorities (Based on Number of Coins)

1. **Housing Affordability and Availability –** 25 coins
2. **Parks and Recreation –** 20 coins
3. **Climate Impacts and Wildfire Risks –** 19 coins
4. **Environmental Protection –** 18 coins
5. **Social Services –** 14 coins
6. **Transportation –** 13 coins
7. **Facilities and Utilities –** 13 coins
8. **Thriving Businesses –** 13 coins
9. **Infrastructure –** 12 coins

A total of **147 coins** were distributed during the activity, suggesting participation from **approximately 16 residents** over the course of the event.

The penny poll results show that housing affordability remains a leading community concern, with residents emphasizing the importance of accessible, attainable housing for all income levels. Parks, recreation, and environmental topics also ranked highly, highlighting the value residents place on outdoor spaces, natural resources, and climate resilience. The close grouping of several mid-ranking categories suggests that participants see many community needs as interconnected rather than isolated.





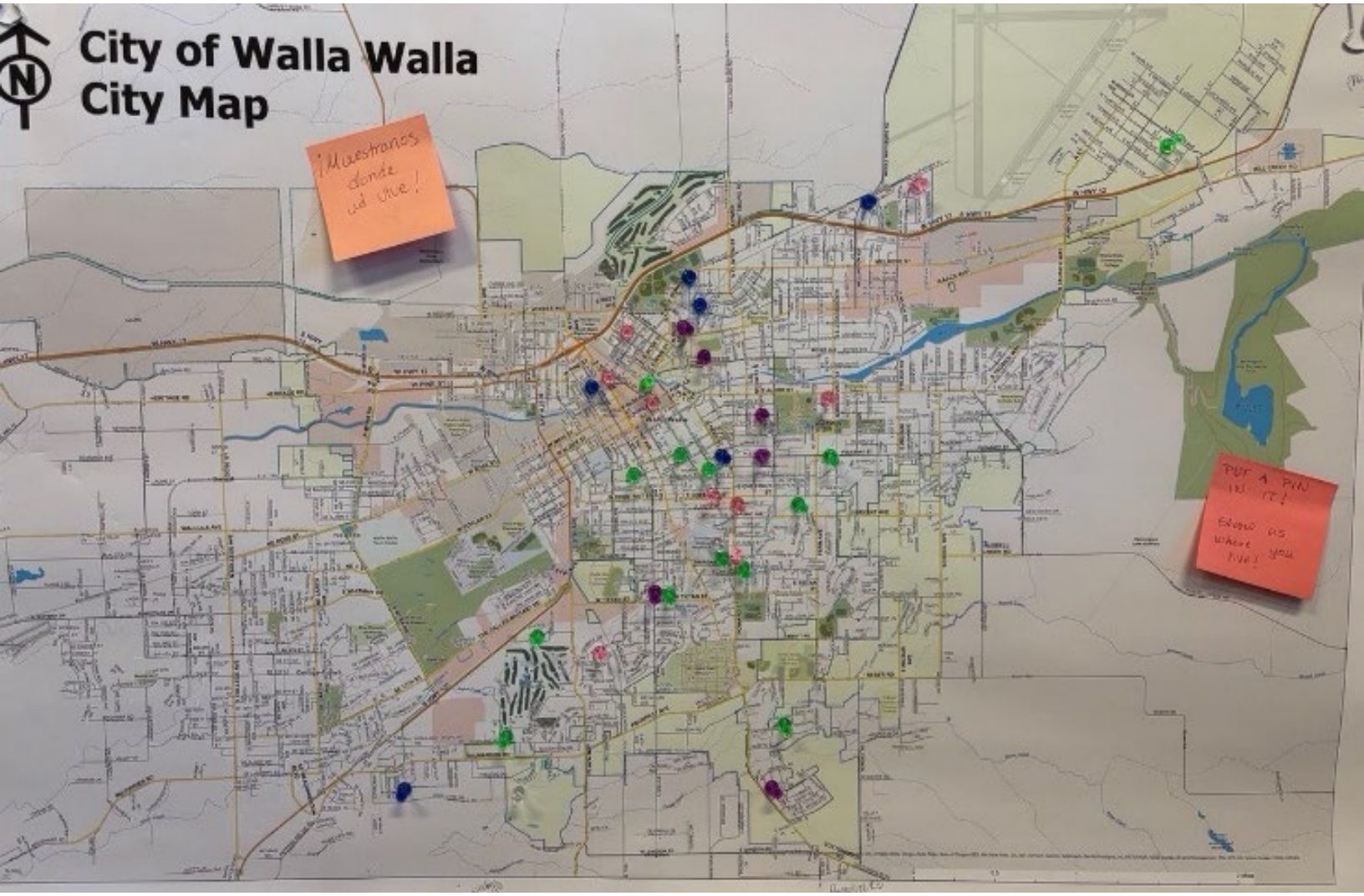


Activity Two: Community Map Displays

Along the perimeter of the event space, a series of large-format maps displayed key information about the Walla Walla community. Topics included economic activity areas, zoning, the comprehensive land use map, wetlands and surface water, the water distribution system, tree canopy and urban heat severity, the transportation plan, community facilities, and street classifications. Participants were encouraged to engage directly with the maps by adding sticky notes with comments, questions, and ideas. One particularly popular feature invited attendees to “Put a pin in it!” by placing a marker on a city map to show where they live, helping to visualize the geographic distribution of community input. Participants indicated they lived throughout Walla Walla, with representation from all parts of the city. There was a slightly higher concentration of participants from the downtown area and nearby neighborhoods.

Engagement at this station was strong, with many thoughtful sticky notes submitted by the end of the event. All feedback gathered from the map displays has been collected and organized by topic. These comments are included at the end of this summary document to inform the Comprehensive Plan update and ensure that community voices are reflected in each thematic area.

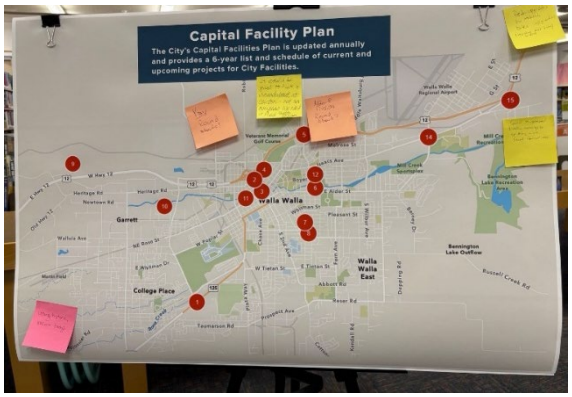
Map Display Feedback



At the open house event, community members shared their input through sticky notes placed on maps and displays, interactive stations, and open-ended prompts. All comments were reviewed and grouped by topic to reflect the full range of community perspectives. A summary of feedback, sorted by comprehensive plan category, is provided below.

Capital Facilities

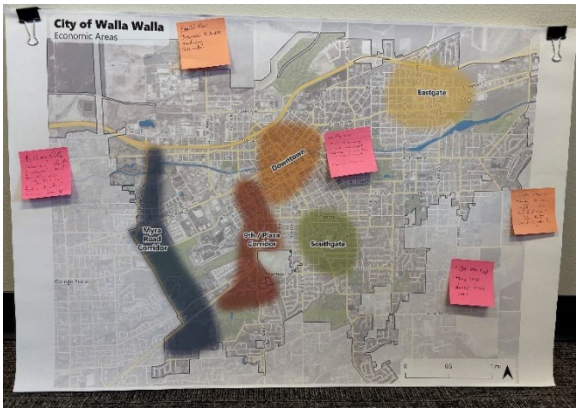
"Look into 'the end of the lines' success portal idea with a prototype incubator village!"



Community members emphasized the need for affordable and flexible housing options, with many suggesting small-scale, community-oriented solutions such as tiny home villages and modular units. There was also interest in creating spaces that combine housing, entrepreneurship, and neighborhood amenities, including ideas for year-round food truck pods and incubator-style villages. Several comments highlighted the value of improving the East Isaacs corridor to attract visitors and support local businesses.

Economic Development

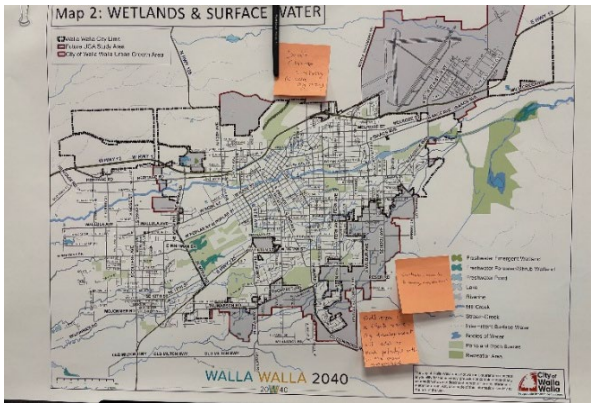
"Can there be a vacancy tax to encourage renting store fronts?"



Feedback focused on supporting both community well-being and local business vitality. Participants suggested initiatives that combine economic opportunity with social impact, such as mentoring programs for unhoused residents and strategies to reduce downtown vacancies. There was also interest in aligning agricultural and tourism efforts to showcase local products and heritage.

Environment/ Shoreline/Climate Element

"The South area is a flood zone - any development will add to flood potential within the entire watershed."

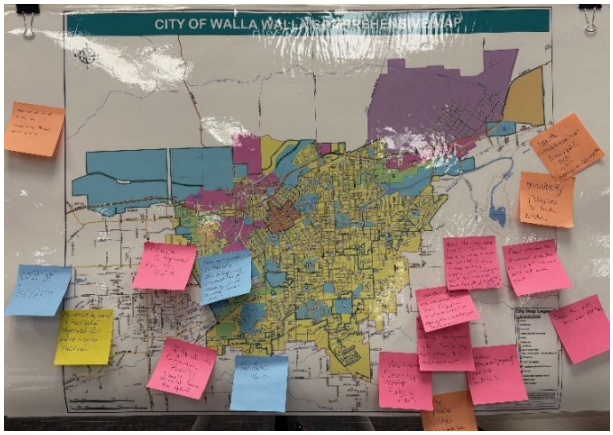


Participants expressed a strong interest in protecting floodplains, maintaining agricultural areas, and supporting environmentally sustainable practices. Several comments focused on reducing pollution, electrifying lawn equipment, and respecting watershed boundaries to minimize development impacts. Attendees also marked agreement with Climate Resilience policies that promote low-impact development, water efficiency, and habitat protection, indicating broad support for conservation and climate adaptation priorities.

Housing

"It would be great to have city-approved ADU plans anyone could use."

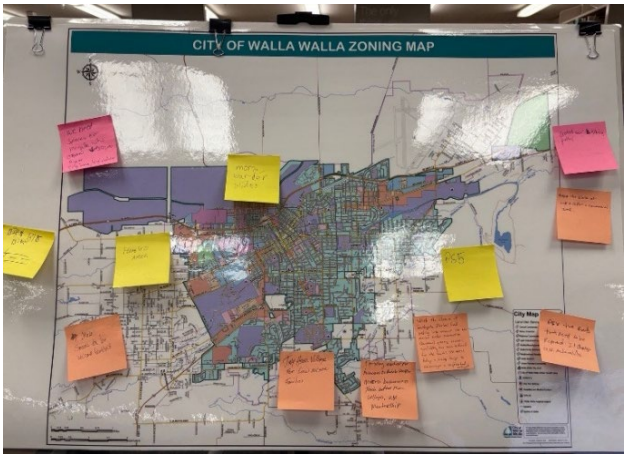
Comments centered on housing affordability, future growth areas, and the need for practical solutions to meet demand. Participants raised questions about how development in the South-Southeast area will align with infrastructure planning and expressed concern about the rising cost of housing. There was also interest in making it easier for residents to add accessory dwelling units (ADUs) through pre-approved design plans.



Land Use

"Please remove the Cottonwood area from the UGA! We need infill, not urban sprawl."

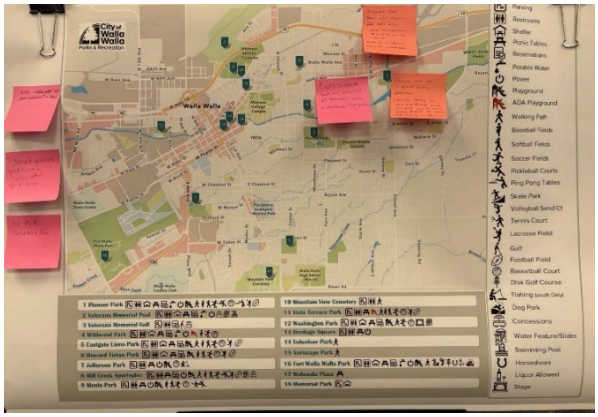
Participants voiced a strong preference for focusing growth within existing urban areas rather than expanding outward. Many comments called for removing the Cottonwood area from the Urban Growth Area (UGA) and prioritizing infill development, neighborhood-scale amenities, and mixed uses. Others raised issues of grocery access in South Walla Walla and the need for land use policies that support affordable housing and local employment opportunities.



Parks and Recreation

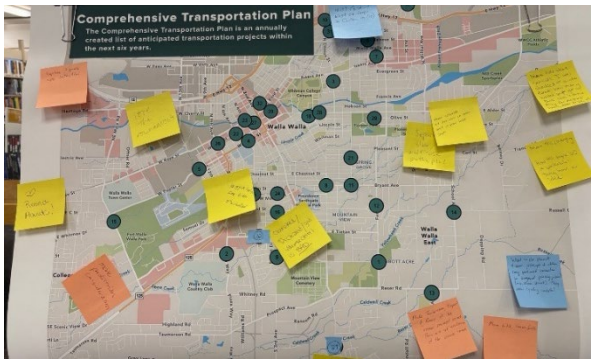
"Make Cottonwood Rd development a park!"

Feedback reflected broad community enthusiasm for recreation opportunities and open space. Many participants suggested creating new parks, trails, and bike facilities, with multiple comments supporting a park at the Cottonwood site and stronger trail connections along Mill Creek. Ideas also included developing cycling and mountain biking features, protecting existing hiking paths, and expanding amenities such as ice rinks and water slides to serve residents of all ages.



Transportation

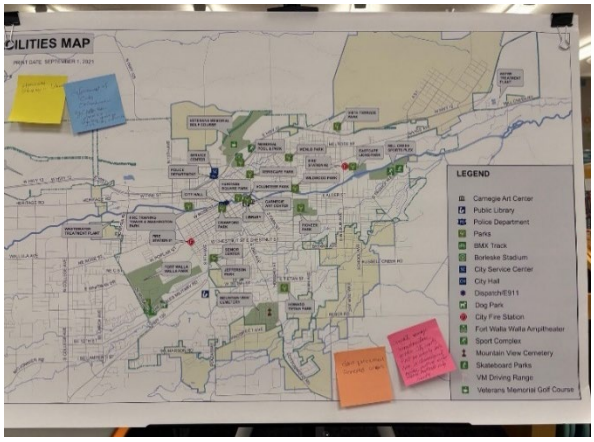
"Ped upgrades to match bike upgrades (upgrading bad sidewalks)."



Community members shared a mix of practical concerns and forward-looking ideas about the city's transportation network. Many comments focused on the need to repair existing roads and ensure new development aligns with infrastructure improvements. Roundabouts received strong support, along with calls for more bike lanes, pedestrian upgrades, and improved connections for public transit and rideshare services. Participants also highlighted the importance of traffic calming, EV charging, and better safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

Utilities

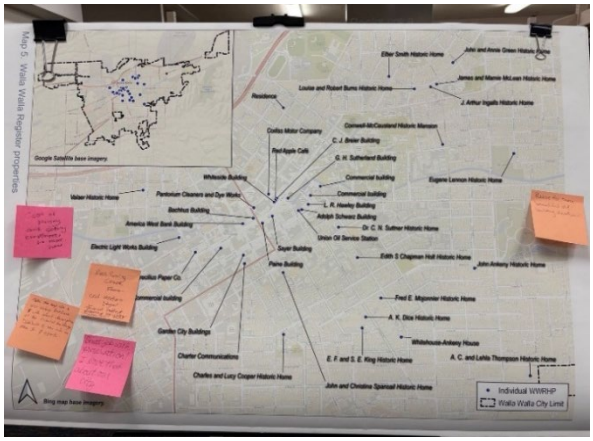
"Complete sewage infrastructure within City limits first so empty lots can be developed before putting infrastructure outside city limits."



Participants emphasized the importance of focusing infrastructure investments within city limits before extending service to surrounding areas. Several comments highlighted the need to complete sewer and water systems that would enable infill development and better use of existing vacant lots. The feedback reflected a broader desire to manage growth efficiently while maintaining reliable public utilities.

Historic Preservation

"Make this map into a WW history brochure & with short descriptions of the historical buildings."



Community members expressed pride in Walla Walla's historic character and encouraged continued preservation and reuse of existing structures. Several participants proposed creating educational materials to share the city's history, such as brochures and maps highlighting notable buildings. Others emphasized the importance of restoring and occupying vacant historic properties to maintain downtown vitality and celebrate the city's heritage.

Other

Targeting marked for businesses to rehab people. Mixed businesses teach better than colleges. Use mentorship."

These comments did not align with a single topic area but reflected a variety of individual perspectives and observations. Several participants discussed enforcement of local ordinances, while others emphasized the role of businesses in providing rehabilitation and job training opportunities. Feedback also reflected individual interest in city economic development efforts.



Summary of Public Comments

Below are the full narrative responses received on sticky notes associated with the map display activity.

Capital Facilities

- We need spaces for people who (make less than $50k?) a year tiny home/ RU/ modular
- Tiny home village - the end of the line
- Year-round food truck pod! Maybe using the Farmer's market pavilion
- Tiny house villages
- Look into "the end of the lines" success portal idea with a prototype incubator village
- Tiny house village for low-income families
- Beautify East Isaacs to encourage visitation and support businesses like Bike Barn, Livit, Green Lantern, etc. Lampposts, trees, etc

Economic Development

- Mentoring programs to teach the homeless
- Can there be a vacancy tax to encourage renting storefronts?
- Ross Spring Creek Farm- Old Milton Highway should reflect produce neighborhood tourism.

Environment/Shoreline/Climate Element

- Don't change anything no more ag. Areas
- The South area is a flood zone - any development will add to flood potential within the entire watershed
- Eliminate gas "so-called" leaf blowers. Reduce pollution and noise!
- Mandate electrifying all lawn equipment. No more 2-stroke engines.
- Grass is great, but its excessive at times - cost + carbon footprint
- Flood areas need to be respected. Don't develop in the water-sheds.
- No developments on South side w/o traffic improvement + aquifer recharge studies
- **1 checkmark next to CR 3.5** – Encourage new development and retrofits to pursue green building standards and explore incentives that prioritize low-impact development, sustainable design, climate-conscious materials, and environmentally friendly landscaping, especially for climate-impacted multifamily and low-income housing communities.
- **1 checkmark next to CR 3.6** – Continue efforts to enhance water use efficiency and upgrade water and wastewater infrastructure to better adapt to future climate conditions.
- **1 checkmark next to CR 4.1** – Prioritize the protection and restoration of critical habitats such as floodplains, wetlands, and riparian ecosystems and other critical areas to reduce the severity of climate impacts, support long-term ecosystem health, and improve climate adaptability.
- **1 checkmark next to CR 4.**5 – Promote local and regional conservation, open space, and land management planning efforts that explicitly consider and address climate change risks

Historic Preservation

- Make this map into a WW history brochure & with short descriptions of the historical buildings.
- Distribute @ WW info on Main St. & airport.
- Great job with preservation! I love that about our city.
- Please fill those beautiful old buildings downtown!
- Using historic, vacant buildings

Housing

- How do you see housing in the South-South East move to SR 125 & US 12 in the future? Where will improvement be needed? Are they tied to Capital Facilities and STIP?
- Cost of housing and selling employees to move here
- Cost of housing
- It would be great to have city-approved ADU plans anyone could use

Land Use

- Make the block at 228 E Poplar a commercial zone.
- With the closure of Southgate market (and taking into account the new market under construction Downtown), grocery access & availability has been reduced for the South & SW areas. Perhaps a zoning change to encourage a neighborhood market?
- Please remove the Cottonwood area from the UGA! We need infill, not urban sprawl.
- Remove Cottonwood from the U6
- I think the Cottonwood property should be removed from the UGA.
- Can we work to develop the neighborhood properties for housing, parks, (illegible), etc.
- Remove Cottonwood property from UGA. Build North.
- Don't piecemeal annexed areas
- Homeless area
- More space for low-income families
- Establish new businesses to the area of manufacturing. Intermodel.
- I'd like to see more infill to come- consolidation- we don't need sprawl.

Parks and Recreation

- Make Cottonwood Rd development a park
- Don't pave parking lot at Fort WW
- Ice rink sounded fun
- Promote WW as a gravel cycling destination
- Augment BMX park with mountain bike skills area: drop line progression; skinnies for balance; rock roll. Dutwie Hill in Issaquah, Family Man in Hood River
- Railway starting on Main and Palouse would be a great rails to trails, jumping off point to the North side cycling routes
- Buy unused parking lots and turn them into pocket parks
- Develop trails, public areas along Mill Creek
- No Cottonwood development make a park
- More warder (water?) slides

- Protect our hiking paths
- Big bike (with drawing of a bike on a road)

Transportation

- FIX the roads that need to be repaired. It damages our automobiles
- Improve transportation routes prior to allowing development rather than a long time after the development
- Repair our road, they cause damage to our cars
- Make Tamarason, Prospect & Reeser all the same named road. They are all sections of the same road.
- Yay roundabouts!
- It would be great to have a roundabout at Clinton - not an overpass. We need it fixed faster, cheaper.
- Alder & Division Round about?
- Ped upgrades to match bike upgrades (upgrading bad sidewalks)
- Speed mitigation/ traffic calming to go along with speed reductions
- Reduce signals w/o detection
- (heart) Roundabouts!
- Love the roundabouts
- More pedestrian consideration
- Trigger light for bikes 9th & Chestnut
- Cherokee/ Orchard/ 3rd intersection is BAD
- Must construct West onramp on Clinton to (12)
- Bike lane Cottonwood Rd
- More rideshare services. I was shocked at a wine event how many wasted people got in their cars & drove. Also for airport runs, older people, etc
- Ensure sidewalks are available in areas where we have bike lanes
- Separated bike/ multi-use paths, pls!
- More EV charging. Also tell people W2 is walkable! They have no idea!
- What to do about 4-door pickups + other long personal vehicles in diagonal parking places (e.g. Main Street). They make cycling unsafe!
- More bike lanes/ paths

Utilities

- Complete sewage infrastructure within City limits first, so empty lots can be developed before putting infrastructure outside city limits.

Other

- Homeless sleeping in the library
- PS5
- Rodney Outlaw cares about economic development. for the city- the part is for individual econ. develop.
- Enforcement of City Ordinance, e.g., Chalk man, homeless, smoking & drugs on city sidewalk
- Targeting marked for businesses to rehab people. Mixed businesses teach better than colleges. Use mentorship



Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan Survey and Mini Poll Results

Public Outreach Survey

The Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan Survey was open for 168 days and received 281 complete responses and 185 partial responses. Most respondents (71.9%) live in Walla Walla, with 42.7% residing in the West Ward and 28.6% in the Central Ward. Most participants (88.2%) live in single-family homes, and 85.1% are homeowners. All age groups were represented, with respondents aged 60-69 comprising the largest share (24.3%) and those aged 20-29 the smallest (6.5%). Most participants (76.5%) do not have dependent children living at home. Survey respondents were predominantly Caucasian/White (92.1%), with fewer than 5% identifying with other racial or ethnic groups. Nearly all respondents (95.7%) primarily speak English at home, while 3.5% most often speak Spanish.

Mini-Polls

To increase participation, a series of mini polls were also conducted in January and February 2026. Four mini polls—focused on community vision, community character, economic development, and housing—were released sequentially and remained open for one week each. Each poll received between 200 and 300 responses, for a total of 1,127 responses.

The data presented below reflects the combined results from the full survey and the mini polls. These results provide a comprehensive snapshot of community perspectives and will directly inform the direction of the Comprehensive Plan update.





Key Takeaways

Community Character

- The pace of life (23.4%), community identity (19.8%), and access to nature and green spaces (19.7%) are most important to respondents.
    - Write-ins emphasized affordability, public safety, parks and trails, a vibrant downtown, and maintaining a high quality of life while managing growth and preserving community character.
- Increased demand for services (19.4%), housing affordability (17.0%), and traffic congestion (16.2%) are the top growth concerns, followed by environmental impacts and loss of small-town character (15.5%).
    - Write-ins highlighted rising costs and taxes, loss of farmland, crime and homelessness, healthcare access, and concerns about both unmanaged growth and lack of growth.
- Desired industry expansion includes agriculture (19.6%), retail (18.6%), and healthcare (16.7%), with education also noted.
    - Write-ins called for economic diversification, including technology, skilled trades, healthcare specialties, arts, and family-oriented industries that provide living-wage jobs.
- Key priorities to retain young people include affordable housing (26.1%), jobs (20.5%), and local businesses (20.3%).
    - Write-ins emphasized better wages, lower cost of living, reduced barriers to development, expanded arts and entertainment, and more opportunities for young professionals.
- Business support priorities include amenities that attract business (17.2%), training programs (15.6%), and incubators (15.2%).
    - Write-ins focused on lower taxes, streamlined permitting, affordable commercial space, and addressing vacant storefronts and high downtown rents.
- Top park improvements include accessibility (14.3%) and natural areas and trails (13.8%), though 24.3% say current parks meet their needs.
    - Write-ins called for safer, cleaner parks, better connectivity, more shade and seating, and balancing new amenities with preservation of quieter spaces.

Community Vision

- The 2018 vision reflects Walla Walla “Well” (40.2%) or “Spot On” (15.9%) for most respondents.
- Top-aligned statements are preserving identity while adapting to change (29.1%) and inclusivity (21.3%).
- Least aligned are government transparency (21.8%) and inclusivity (19.7%), suggesting mixed perceptions.
- 78.5% say supporting locally owned businesses is very important, while 37.1% say the same for transportation access.

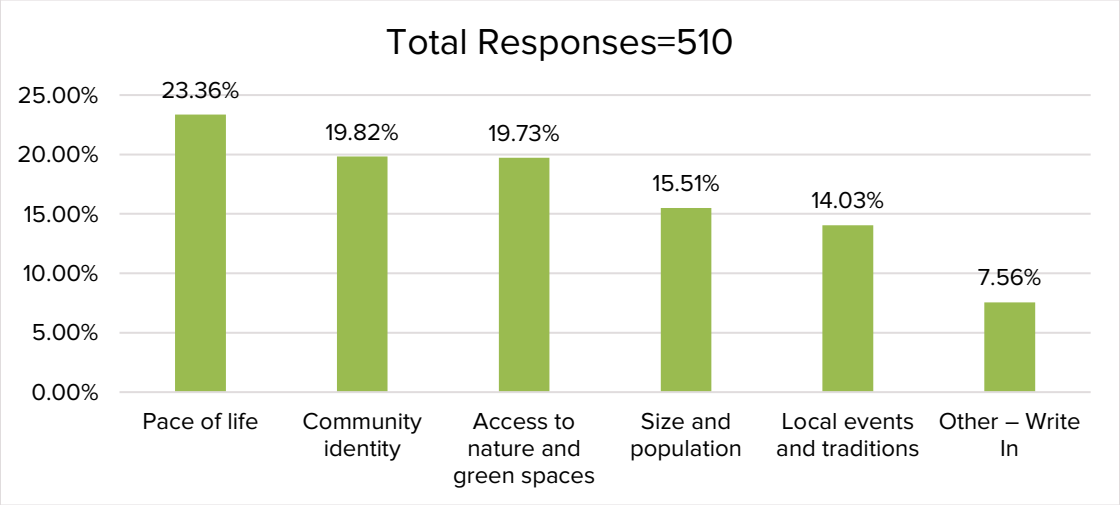
Housing in Walla Walla

- 65.0% have purchased a home; 31.2% have rented.

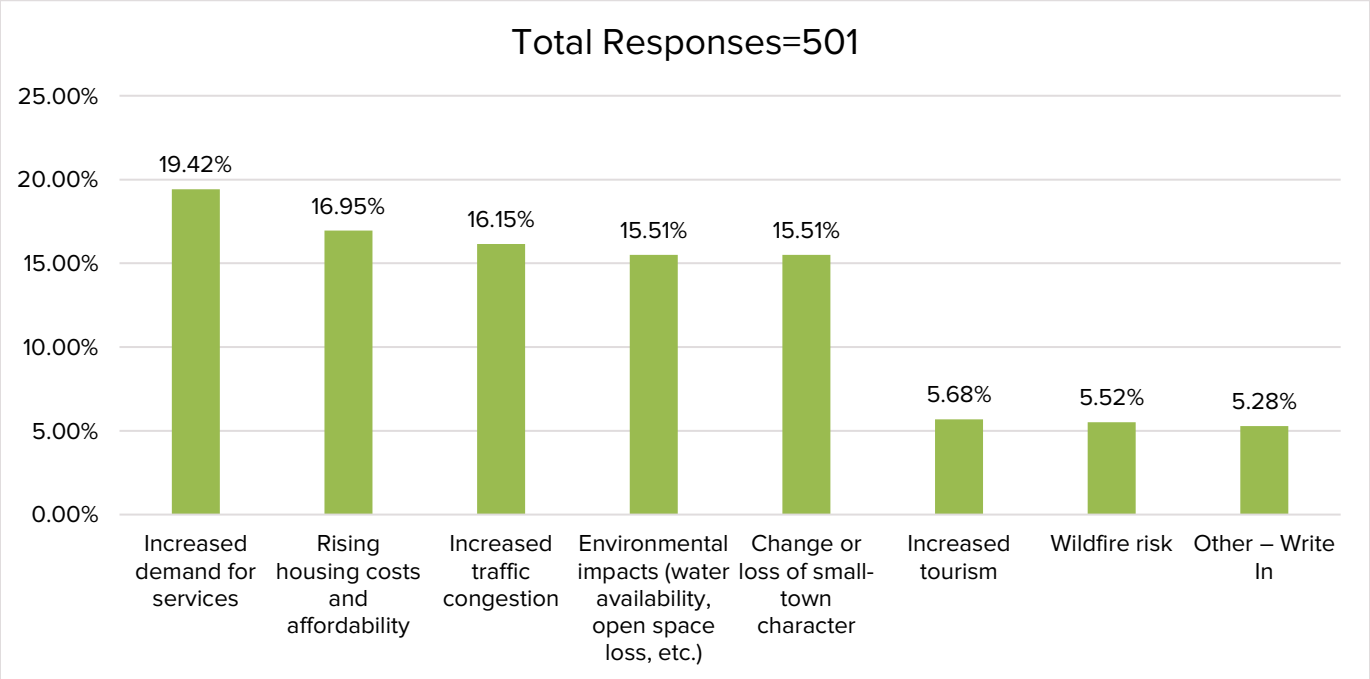
- Top rental challenges are finding housing (21.5%) and poor quality (17.5%).
    - Write-ins emphasized high costs, limited availability, and lack of suitable or pet-friendly options.
- Most respondents say there are not enough rental (62.5%) or ownership (68.7%) options for a range of incomes.
- Housing preferences are split: 31.0% support all housing types, while 29.5% prefer limiting growth in existing neighborhoods.
    - Write-ins cited high prices, limited supply, and regulatory barriers, with a need for more attainable housing options.



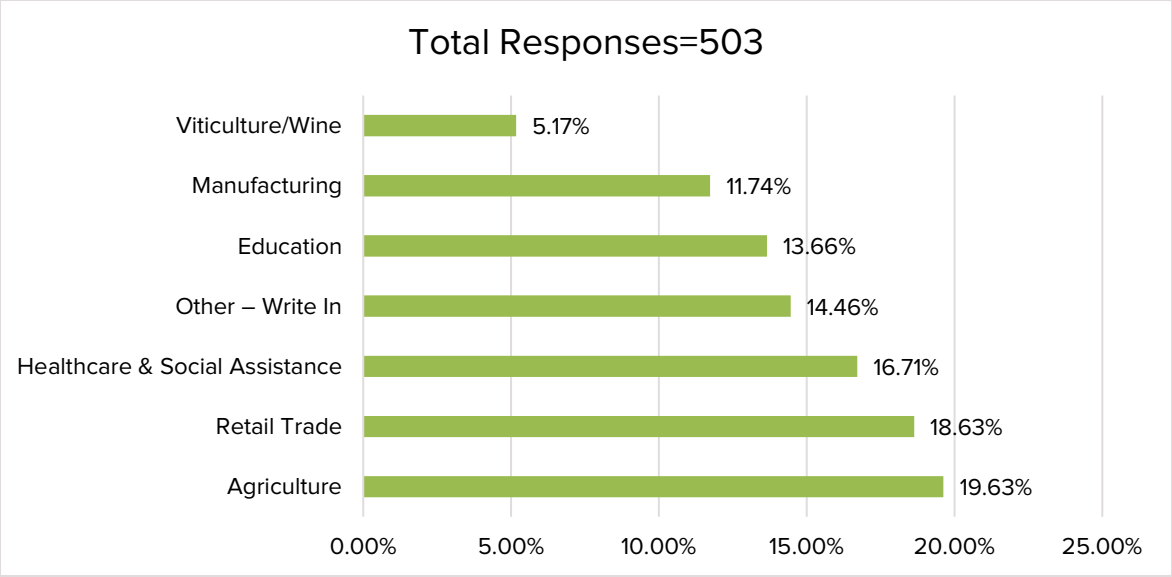
Survey Results



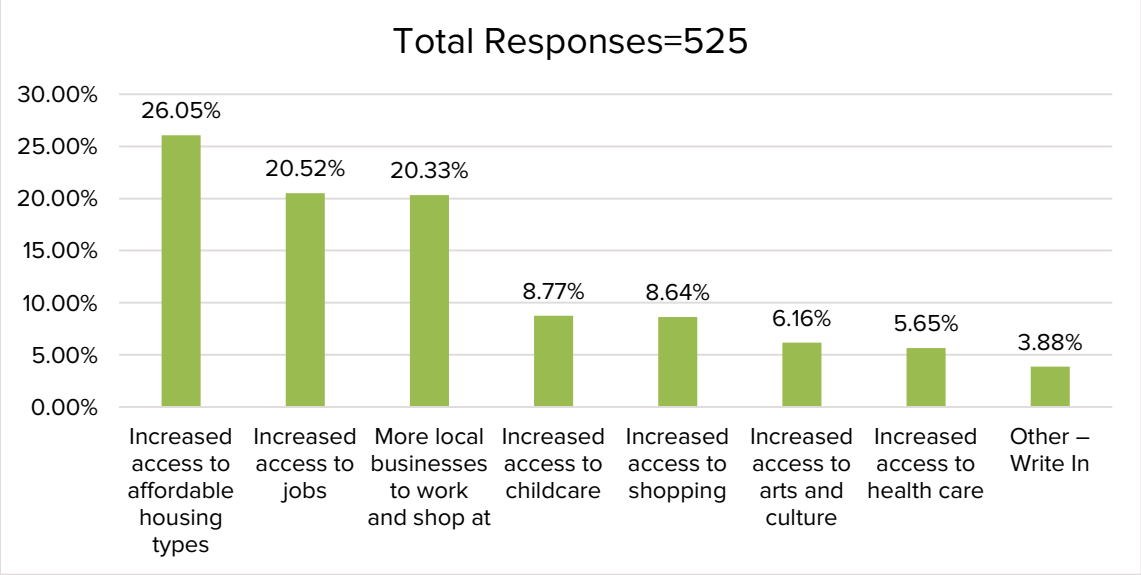
Appendix VII Figure 1. Which aspects of Walla Walla's atmosphere are most important to you? Select your top 2.



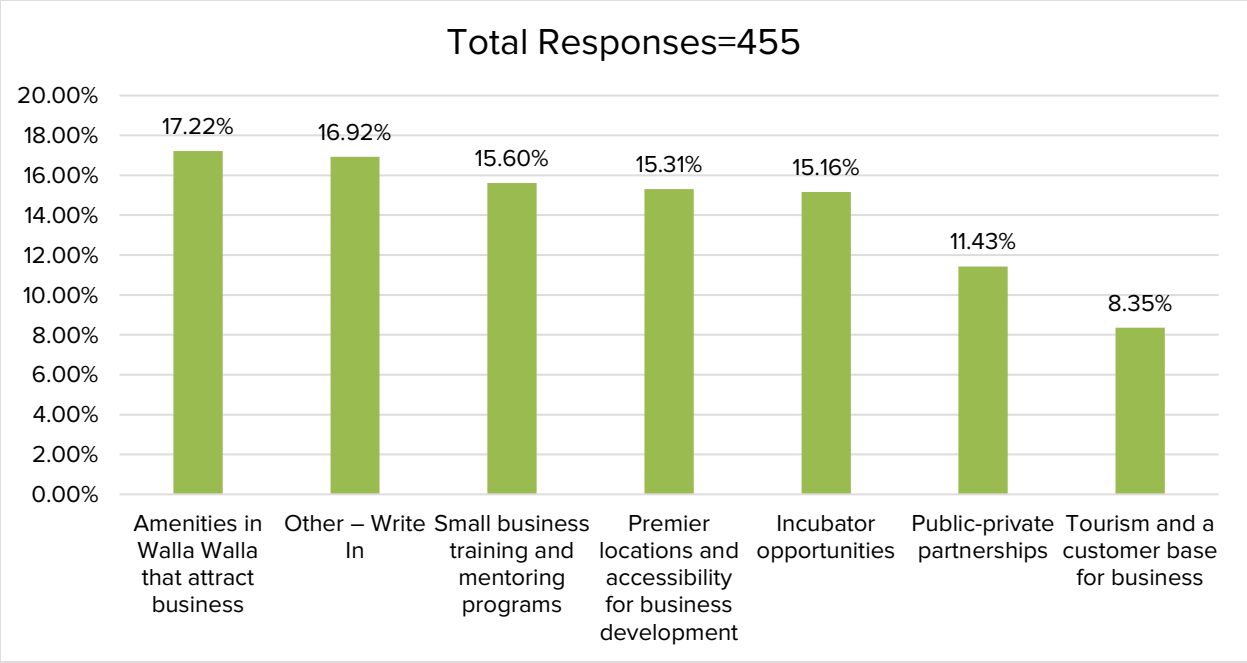
Appendix VII Figure 2. What are your biggest concerns regarding growth in Walla Walla? Select up to 3.



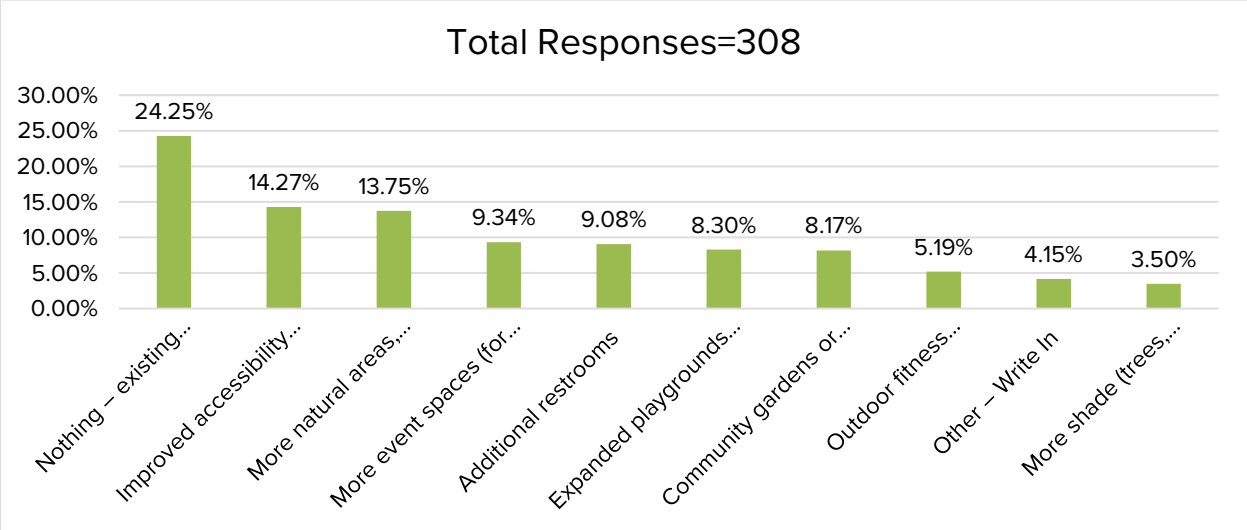
Appendix VII Figure 3. What industries would you like to see expanded in Walla Walla? Select any that apply.



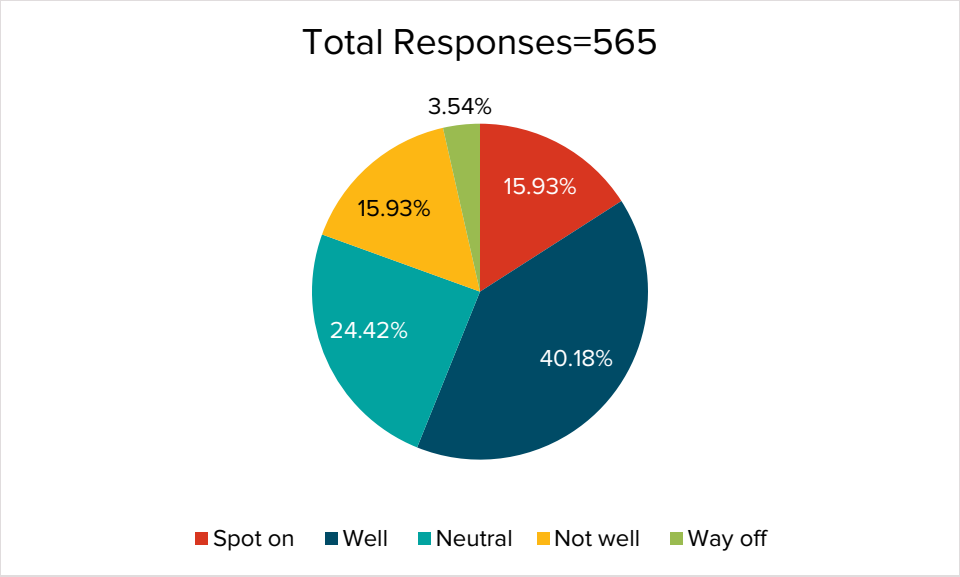
Appendix VII Figure 4. What would best foster economic growth and retain young people in the Walla Walla community? Select up to 3.



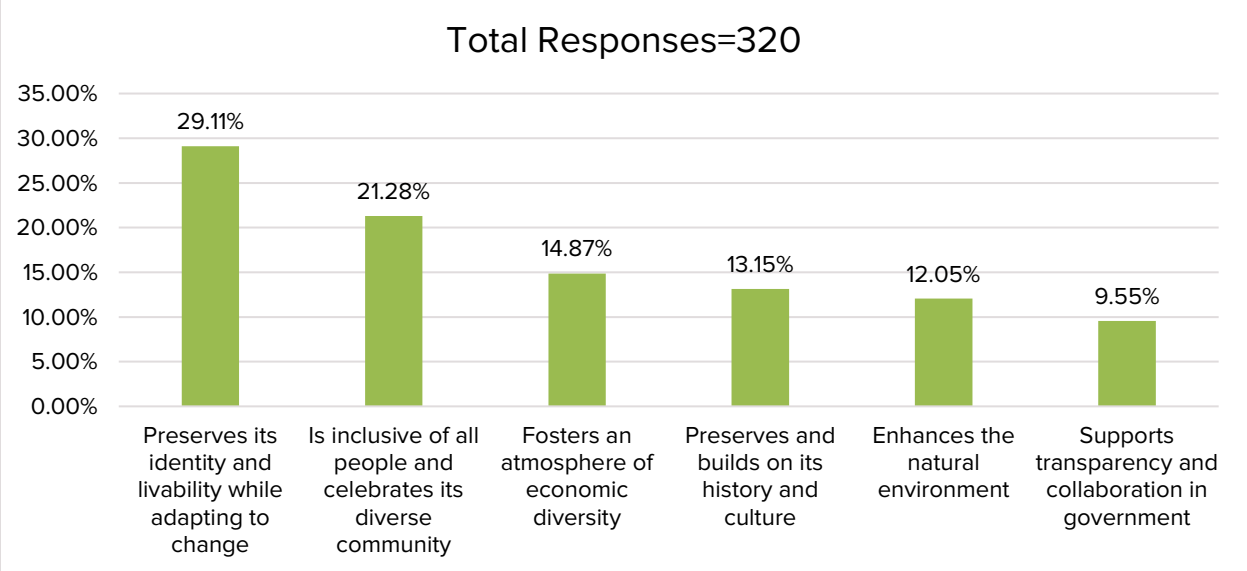
Appendix VII Figure 5. What would best support business development and retainment in Walla Walla? Select up to 3.



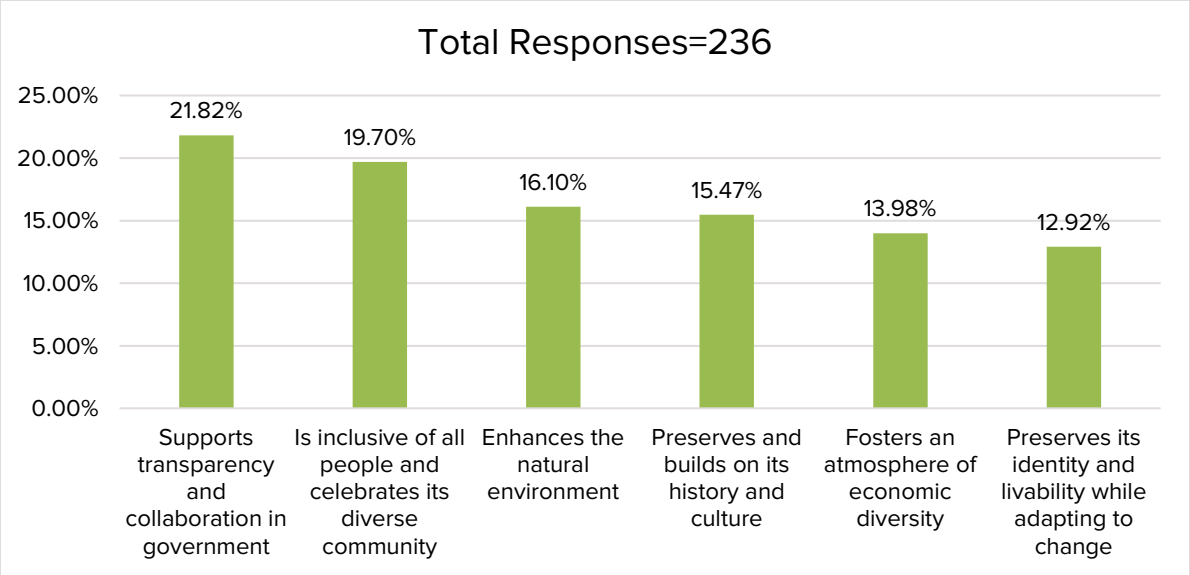
Appendix VII Figure 6. Thinking about parks and recreation in our community, what types of improvements or features would most enhance your experience when visiting parks, trails, or recreational facilities? Select up to 3.



Appendix VII Figure 7. How well does the 2018 vision statement represent Walla Walla in 2025 and your hopes for its future?



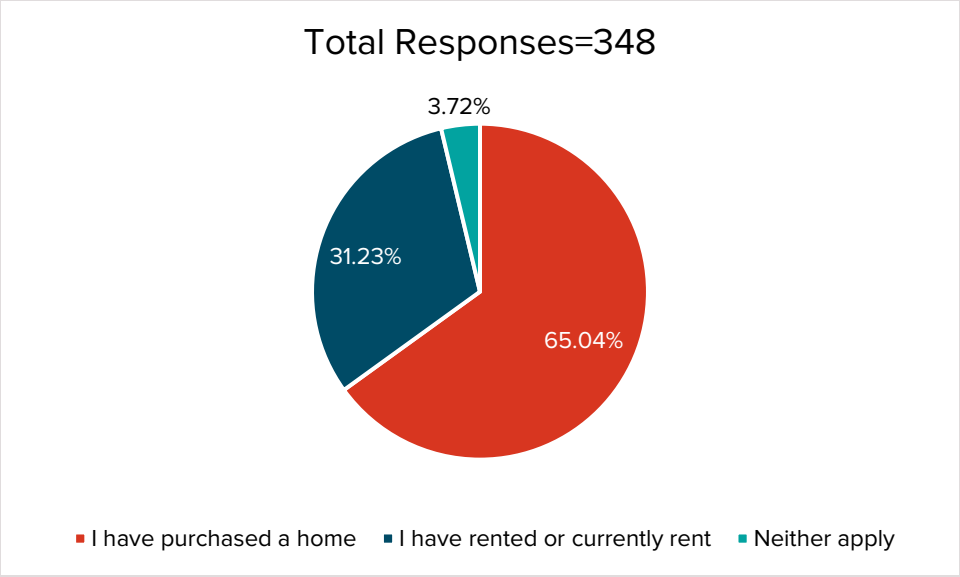
Appendix VII Figure 8. Which points in the 2018 vision statement represent your vision for Walla Walla the most? Select your top 2.



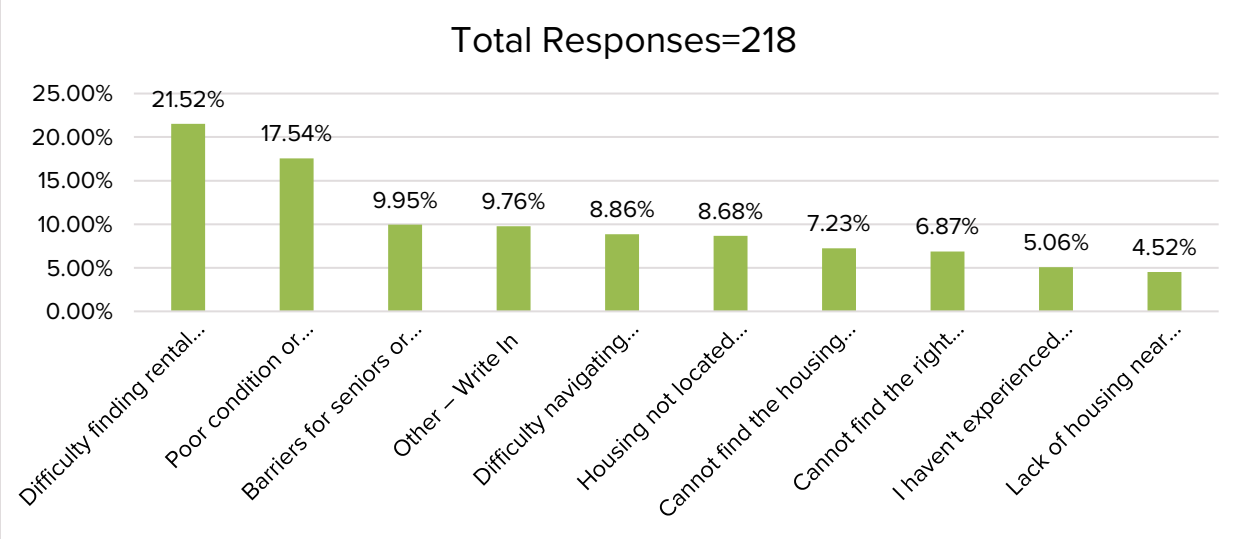
Appendix VII Figure 9. Which points in the 2018 vision statement represent your vision for Walla Walla the least? Select your top 2.

Appendix VII. Table 2. How Important is it to you that Walla Walla: Total Responses = 497

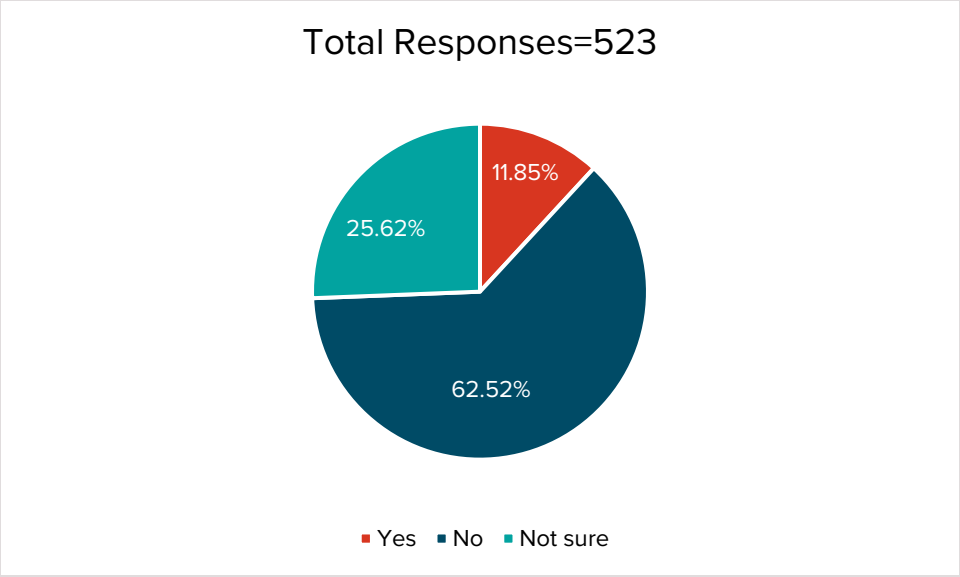
	Very important	Somewhat important	Neutral	Not important	I don't want this
be a diverse, welcoming, and family-friendly community	68.90%	19.30%	8.30%	3.00%	0.60%
preserves its historical heritage	42.20%	43.10%	11.80%	2.50%	0.50%
cultivates an inviting, vibrant, and walkable downtown	66.30%	25.50%	3.90%	3.20%	1.10%
enables locally owned businesses to successfully establish and thrive	78.50%	17.60%	3.60%	0.40%	0.00%
has a housing mix that serves a broad array of incomes and age groups	67.50%	18.60%	9.20%	3.00%	1.80%
has equitable access to parks, open space, trails, and other recreational opportunities	50.40%	34.50%	11.00%	3.10%	1.20%
has public transportation and non-motorized modes of travel that are easily accessible and available	37.10%	40.80%	14.50%	5.30%	2.30%



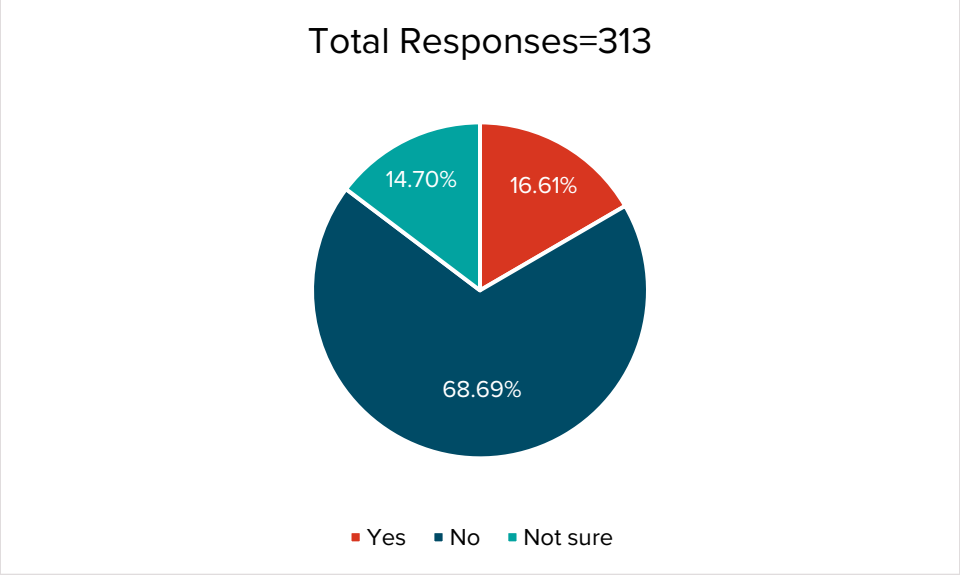
Appendix VII Figure 10. During your time in Walla Walla, have you rented or purchased housing? Select all that apply.



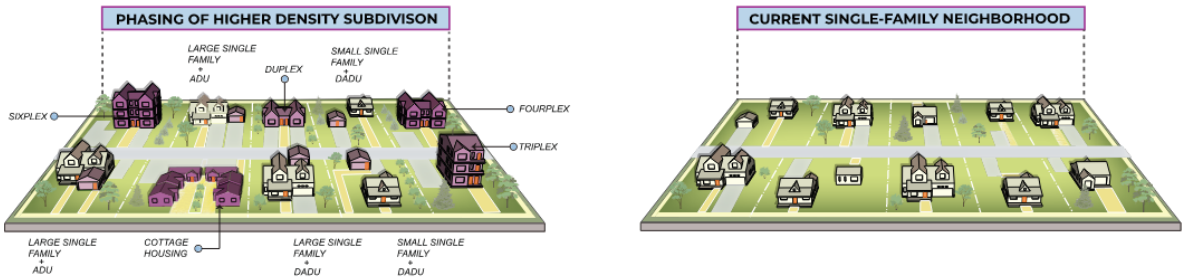
Appendix VII Figure 11. When it comes to rental housing, what specific housing challenges have you or someone you know experienced in Walla Walla? Select all that apply.



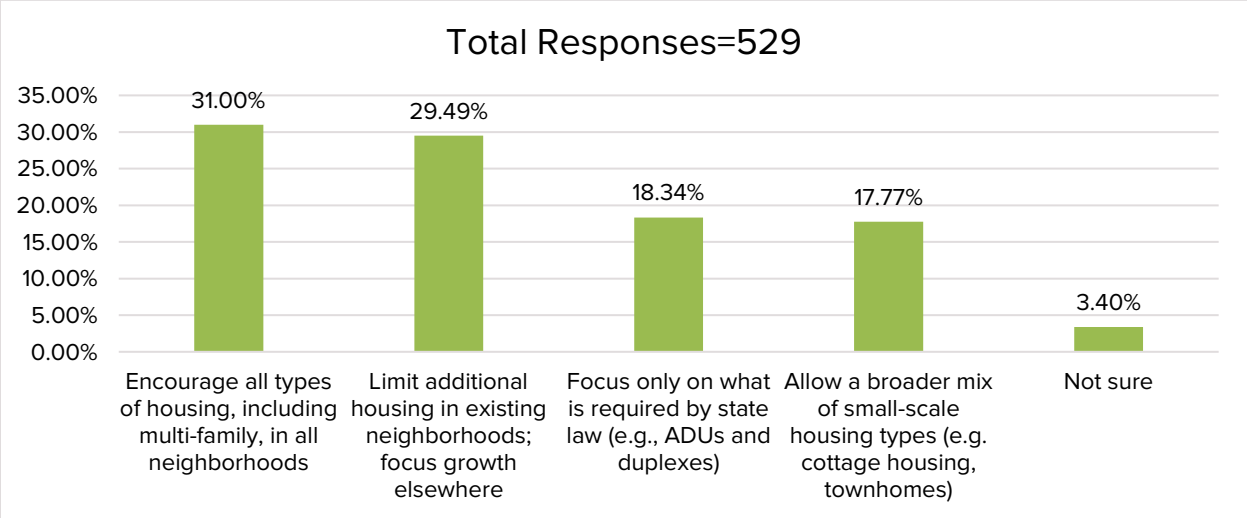
Appendix VII Figure 12. Do you believe there are enough rental housing options available in Walla Walla for people with a range of incomes and family sizes?



Appendix VII Figure 13. Do you believe there are enough housing options for ownership available in Walla Walla for people with a range of incomes and family sizes?



Appendix VII Figure 14. Reference Image for Appendix Figure 15.

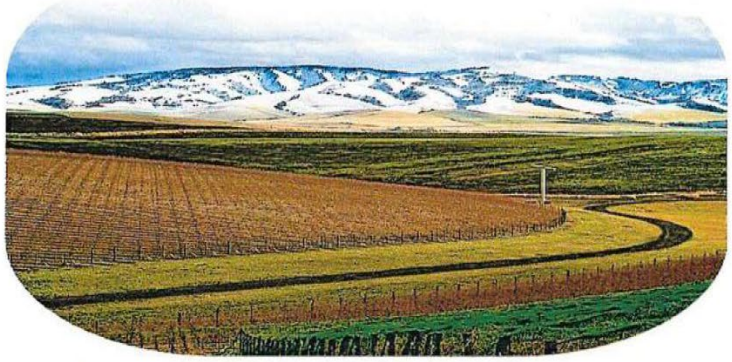


Appendix VII Figure 15. How should Walla Walla plan for new housing development in existing neighborhoods? Select one option that best reflects your values. Use the image below for an example of what housing types may look like in a current single-family neighborhood.

Appendix VIII. Countywide Planning Policies (CWPP)

Walla Walla

Countywide Planning Policies



Town of Prescott

Passed this 29th day of December, 2025 by Board members as follows: 3 Present or 0 Participating via other means, and by the following vote: 3 Aye 0 Nay 0 Abstained 0 Absent.

Attest:

Diane L. Harris, Clerk of the Board

Gunner Fulmer Chairman, District 3

Todd L. Kimball, Commissioner, District 2

Bertha J. Clayton, Commissioner, District 1

Constituting the Board of County Commissioners of Walla Walla County, Washington

ADOPTION

April 7, 2025, Walla Walla County Board of Commissioners

Todd Kimball

Gunner Fulmer

Bertha Clayton

Approval

January 22, 2025, Walla Walla City Council

Mayor Tom Scribner

Mayor Pro Tempore Steve Moss

Brian Casey

Rick Eskil

Monte A. Willis

Jeffrey Robinson

Gustavo Reyna

February 19, 2025, Waitsburg City Council

Mayor Martin Dunn

Mayor Pro Tempore Kevin House

Court Ruppenthal

Jillian Henze

Jennifer Bishop

Jim Romine

January 28, 2025, College Place City Council

Mayor Norma Hernandez

Paul Jessup

Michael Cleveland

Tito Espinoza

Loren Peterson

Melodie Williams

Heather Schermann

Monica Boyle

Prescott City Council

Kristin Du Brille

Karen Gleason

Jason Norris

Kathleen Oliver

Nathan Stueckle

Doug Venn

INTRODUCTION

The Growth Management Act (GMA or Act) was created in part to foster coordination and cooperation among units of local and state government. Cities and counties must engage in a collaborative planning process under the requirements of the Act.

Specifically, the Act states that:

> "The Legislature finds that uncoordinated and unplanned growth [...] pose a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of the State. It is in the public interest that citizens, communities, local governments, and the private sector cooperate and coordinate with one another in comprehensive land use planning." (RCW 36.70A.010)

To guide the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations, the GMA sets forth planning goals (RCW 36.70A.020) in 15 areas:

1. Urban Growth
2. Reduce Sprawl
3. Transportation
4. Housing
5. Economic Development
6. Property Rights
7. Permits
8. Natural Resource Industries
9. Open Space and Recreation
10. Environment
11. Citizen Participation and Coordination
12. Public Facilities and Services
13. Historic Preservation
14. Climate Change and Resiliency
15. Shorelines of the State

The GMA also states that:

> "[A] countywide planning policy is a written policy statement or statements used solely for establishing a countywide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted [...] (to) ensure that city and county comprehensive plans are consistent [...] as required in RCW 36.70A.100. Nothing in this document shall be construed to alter the land use powers of cities." (RCW 36.70A.210(1))

Further, "Federal agencies and Indian Tribes may participate in and cooperate with the countywide planning policy adoption process." (RCW 36.70A.210(4)) These policies may also be used for other purposes requiring collaboration and cooperation in addition to the development and adoption of comprehensive plans.

Walla Walla County's current countywide planning policies were originally adopted in 1993. Since that time, the GMA has been repeatedly amended and expanded and the communities in Walla Walla County have changed as well.

2023-2024 Collaborative CPP Review and Update

In 2023, Walla Walla County and the Cities within the county (City of Walla Walla, College Place, Waitsburg, and Prescott) adopted an interlocal agreement[1] to update and amend the Walla Walla Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). These policies have been revised and adopted in accordance with the procedures contained in that interlocal agreement. County and City comprehensive plans shall be consistent with the adopted CPPs. They may be amended from time-to-time hereafter in accordance with procedures established by the communities through ongoing coordination as part of a regional planning advisory council as established in these CPPs.

How to read the Countywide Planning Policies

Each chapter of this document begins with a description of the planning and policy context for the issue or issues covered in the chapter. After the context, each chapter defines a set of planning goals for the policies that follow.

The policies within the CPPs have equal importance and each should be understood in the context of the entire document. The CPPs specify how directive a policy is. The policies use one of three different operator words to do this: shall, should, and may. These operators are defined as follows:

- "Shall" means implementation of the policy is mandatory and imparts a higher degree of substantive direction than "should". "Shall" is used for policies that repeat State of Washington requirements or where the intent is to mandate action. However, "shall" cannot be used when it is largely a subjective determination of whether a policy's objective has been met.
- "Should" means implementation of the policy is expected, but its completion is not mandatory. The policy is directive with substantive meaning, although to a lesser degree than "shall" for two reasons. 1) "Should" policies recognize the policy might not be applicable or appropriate for all jurisdictions due to special circumstances. The decision not to implement a "should" policy is appropriate only if the implementation of the policy is either inappropriate or not feasible. 2) Some "should" policies are subjective; hence, it is not possible to demonstrate that a jurisdiction has implemented them. For example, some "should" policies encourage jurisdictions to support various programs or initiatives, but because "support" is a subjective term, implementation could take an array of forms.
- "May" means the actions described in the policy are either advisable or allowed. "May" gives permission and implies a preference. Because "may" does not have a directive meaning, there is no expectation that the described action will be implemented.

The last two chapters of the document provide framework for implementation of the CPPs and ongoing planning work. Chapter 9 establishes an advisory council to coordinate and collaborate on

[1] Walla Walla County Resolution 23-060, March 27, 2023
City of Walla Walla Resolution 2023-22, February 22, 2023
College Place City Council approved February 28, 2023
Waitsburg City Council approved
Prescott City Council approved

implementation of the CPPs and future amendments. Chapters 9 and 10 contain policies and an implementation matrix (Chapter 10) designed to assist the jurisdictions of Walla Walla County with prioritization and implementation of policies from each chapter that require specific and ongoing action and coordination.

1. URBAN GROWTH AREAS AND CONTIGUOUS AND ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT

1.A Urban Growth Areas

Context

Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) are "...areas within which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which growth can only occur if it is not urban in nature" (RCW 36.70A.110). Urban growth is defined as "...growth that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures, and impermeable surfaces to such a degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of land for the production of food, other agricultural products, or fiber, or the extraction of mineral resources...".

This chapter sets goals and policies focused on shared principles as the County and Cities work together on planning for future growth, facilitating growth in Urban Growth Areas, and transitioning these areas when annexations occur.

Goals

Goal 1 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will utilize a consistent methodology for completing a Land Capacity Analysis.

Goal 2 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will work together to distribute population, housing, and employment growth prior to updating comprehensive plans.

Goal 3 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will utilize a consistent process and criteria for expanding or adjusting UGA boundaries.

Goal 4 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will coordinate growth within unincorporated UGAs prior to annexation.

Goal 5 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will encourage higher density residential development in closer proximity to jobs, commercial services, transit, schools, and parks.

Goal 6 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will promote infill and redevelopment of existing areas to utilize services most efficiently and economically.

Goal 7 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will consider possible impacts to critical areas, greenbelts and open space, aquifer recharge areas, and both rural and resource lands when an expansion to a UGA is proposed.

Goal 8 - Where applicable, the County, Cities, and/or other services providers should coordinate on providing utilities and capital facilities within UGAs.

Goal 9 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will provide predictability for investors, landowners, and residents regarding types of land use, development standards, and zoning intended.

Goal 10 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will provide an adequate supply of industrial and commercial property and infrastructure to support economic development and employment projections.

Urban Growth Area Policies

1.1 Land Capacity (RCW 36.70A.115 and WAC 365-196-325): The County and Cities shall ensure that, taken collectively, adoption of and amendments to their comprehensive plans and/or development regulations provide sufficient capacity of land suitable for development within their jurisdictions to accommodate their projected population, housing, and employment growth.

a. The County and Cities shall jointly coordinate, through the process outlined in Chapter 9, a Land Capacity Analysis methodology to provide a consistent estimate of the land supply available to accommodate future population and employment growth and projected housing needs. This includes setting a reasonable market factor. Once developed, the methodology will be attached to these CPPs as an Appendix.
b. In the event of a dispute among jurisdictions relating to inconsistencies in collection and analysis of data, the affected jurisdictions shall meet and discuss methods of resolving the dispute. If a resolution cannot be achieved, representatives from the County and Cities via the Walla Walla County Growth Management Advisory Council shall work together to review and, if possible, facilitate any disputes between parties.

1.2. Policies for the distribution of 20-year population, housing, and employment growth:

a. The County and Cities shall jointly coordinate, through the process outlined in Chapter 9, a methodology for distributing the forecasted population, housing, and employment growth (growth targets) consistent with the requirements of the Growth Management Act. Once distributed, growth targets will be attached to these CPPs as an Appendix.
b. The County and Cities, as part of their Comprehensive Plan periodic updates, shall reflect those growth targets in their Comprehensive Plan.

1.3 Adopt a process and criteria to ensure regional coordination when establishing, expanding, and adjusting Urban Growth Areas:

a. Sufficient capacity must be included in the Urban Growth Areas to accommodate the 20-year population, housing, and employment (commercial and industrial) targets.
b. Urban Growth Area expansions shall not result in new areas being included for population, housing, or employment capacity that exceed what is necessary to accommodate the growth management planning projections, plus a market factor.

c. Except for UGA modifications under subparagraph "g", an expansion of the boundary of an individual UGA that results in a net increase of residential, commercial, or industrial land capacity shall not be permitted unless the UGA expansion is supported by a land capacity analysis completed consistent with the Land Capacity Methodology. (See Policy 1.1)
d. The County, City, or other interested party may initiate an amendment to an existing Urban Growth Area boundary through the Walla Walla County annual comprehensive plan amendment docketing process. The County has discretion to determine their annual comprehensive plan amendment process, including the schedule and review types.
e. The County should adopt specific procedures for filing comprehensive plan amendments which will be processed concurrently with the state-required Periodic Update.
f. Any expansion of an Urban Growth Area shall result in zoning that will ensure urban growth patterns and densities consistent with the Growth Management Act.
g. The County shall adopt procedures and criteria for considering UGA boundary revisions consistent with the requirements in RCW 36.70A.130(3)(c). Such 'swap' amendments must comply with applicable GMA criteria and shall not increase land capacity within the UGA.
h. When an Urban Growth Area boundary is proposed to be established, expanded, contracted, or adjusted the County and appropriate City should coordinate together to conduct early and continuous public involvement.
i. All Urban Growth Areas shall be reflected in County and respective City comprehensive plans.
j. Possible impacts to critical areas, greenbelts and open space, and both rural and resource lands shall be evaluated when an expansion to a UGA is considered.
k. UGAs should be designated where:
    a. Areas are already characterized by urban growth;
    b. Infrastructure exists or is planned, as identified in an approved capital improvement program, or can be reasonably and economically extended; and
    c. It is environmentally appropriate for growth to occur.
l. UGAs may provide for the inclusion of greenbelts and open space, some of which may be critical areas.

1.4 Coordinated growth management in Urban Growth Areas:

a. Adopted City and County comprehensive plans shall reflect the intent that all land within unincorporated Urban Growth Areas, where feasible, will either annex to a City or incorporate within the 20-year planning horizon.
b. To maximize the efficient use of urban lands, uses and densities permitted in unincorporated Urban Growth Areas should be consistent where feasible with the associated jurisdiction's zoning densities and uses.
c. Cities are the primary provider of municipal services and facilities in their Urban Growth Areas, responsible for demonstrating within their comprehensive plans and capital facilities plans the capacity to provide all urban services within their associated unincorporated Urban Growth Area(s). This may be accomplished through a collaborative process with the County and/or other service providers.

d. The County and Cities should establish procedures to facilitate the smooth transfer of governance for associated Urban Growth Area(s).
e. The County should plan with associated Cities and local communities to address land use, zoning, infrastructure needs, and other issues as needed.
f. The County and each City, where appropriate, should consider utilizing Interlocal Agreements (ILAs) as a mechanism to facilitate urban growth within unincorporated UGAs. An ILA could be utilized to coordinate on common development regulations and standards and permit review processes within these areas, resulting in development more closely aligning with adopted regulations within cities. This process could also be utilized to encourage the extension of urban services to these areas given urban growth typically requires urban governmental services.

1.B Contiguous and Orderly Development

Context

These policies facilitate the cost-effective provision of urban services by minimizing differences in urban development regulations and standards between the County and Cities in shared UGAs. These policies focus on specific topics where coordination is essential, including topics also covered by other chapters of the Countywide Planning Policies such as housing, transportation, and public capital facilities. These policies ensure the goals and policies specific to those topics are implemented in a consistent and orderly way. In contrast with the policies for UGAs, which are focused on coordination as projected growth is planned for, these policies are intended to coordinate development and transition when annexation occurs.

Goals

Goal 11 - Walla Walla County and each City will work to ensure that urban services in shared Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) serve development in an orderly and cost-efficient manner.

Goal 12 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will ensure the provision of urban governmental services in the Urban Growth Area and applicable capital improvement plans.

Goal 13 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will coordinate with each other and with special districts, where applicable, in the provision and financing of utilities and capital facilities.

Goal 14 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will work together to ensure that permitting in unincorporated urban growth areas is well coordinated.

Policies

1.5 The County and the Cities shall prioritize urban growth within Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) as follows:

a. First in areas already characterized by urban growth that have existing public facility and service capacities to serve such development;
b. Second, in areas already characterized by urban growth that will be served by a combination of both existing public facilities and services and any additional needed public facilities and services that are provided by either public or private sources; and
c. Third, in the remaining portions of the urban growth areas.

1.6 Non-urban development in the UGA should be discouraged. Non-urban development in the UGA should only be allowed if urban development is not feasible and if it will be compatible with future urban development.

1.7 The timing of capital improvements shall be consistent with the adopted capital facilities plan(s) of the purveyor(s).

1.8 Existing and future level of service standards shall be established within the appropriate capital facilities plan(s).

1.9 The County and Cities should coordinate the development and implementation of long-range planning between fire protection, police services, schools, transportation, and parks and recreation facilities.

1.10 The County should not encourage fully contained communities.

1.11 Service boundaries for urban governmental services shall not be extended past existing adopted service area boundaries.

1.12 Cities should be the purveyors of urban services, except in cases where an Urban Growth Area is not associated with a city.

1.13 To adequately plan for growth and implement the policies of the GMA, the County, the Cities, and special districts in the county, should establish ongoing mechanisms, such as the advisory council established in Chapter 9, to improve communication, information sharing, and coordinated approaches to common problems.

1.14 Walla Walla County should coordinate with adjacent and/or nearby counties and cities on issues of growth and delivery of urban services that cross county or state boundaries.

2. PUBLIC CAPITAL FACILITIES AND ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES

State Context

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that Countywide Planning Policies address the siting of public capital facilities of a countywide or statewide nature, including transportation facilities of statewide significance (RCW 36.70A.210(3)(c)). The term, "capital facilities of countywide or statewide nature" is not defined in state law but is synonymous with essential public facilities, which are defined in the GMA. Essential public facilities include facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities and state or regional transportation facilities, regional transit authority facilities, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, group homes, and secure community transition facilities (RCW 36.70A.200). The policies in this chapter focus on areas where coordination is necessary for the siting of public capital facilities and essential public facilities where coordination is necessary.

Local Context

Each county and city are also required to have a capital facilities plan. Capital facilities include, but are not limited to, water systems, sanitary sewer systems, stormwater facilities, reclaimed water facilities, schools, parks and recreational facilities, and police and fire protection facilities. Coordination between the County and Cities, in the form of sharing details, objectives, and locations with affected jurisdictions during the planning and design phase, for these facilities can improve service to the public and protect the environment and public health. Coordination on levels of service, in the form of communication and alignment of levels of service standards for public facilities and services between jurisdictions, helps ensure consistent service. Public services and facilities in Urban Growth Areas are expected to be provided at service levels to support urban densities and development intensity while reflecting the realities of limited resources and prioritization between those services and facilities. Public services and facilities in rural areas of Walla Walla County are expected to be provided at service levels reflecting lower densities and more dispersed patterns of development. This chapter also provides policies on public capital facilities.

Public Services and Facilities Goal

Walla Walla County and the Cities will coordinate on, develop, and provide adequate and efficient public facilities and services to ensure the health, safety, conservation of resources, and economic vitality of all communities and all residents.

Policies for All Capital Facilities

2.1 The County and the Cities should consider including impacts upon historically marginalized communities and disproportionately burdened communities when siting or expanding capital facilities.

2.2 Some regionally significant public capital facilities and essential public facilities may be located outside Urban Growth Areas. The County should permit or approve capital facilities or essential public facilities beyond Urban Growth Areas only if they are self-contained or to be served by services in a manner that will not promote sprawl.

2.3 Location of public capital facilities and essential public facilities:

a. If the primary population served by the facility is urban, the facility should be located in a city or unincorporated Urban Growth Area, where feasible.
b. Public capital facilities that generate substantial travel demand should be located along or near major transportation corridors and existing public transportation routes.
c. The design of capital facilities and utilities located within and serving rural and/or resource areas should be at a size and scale appropriate to rural locations to not increase development pressure in those areas.

Policies for Public Capital Facilities

2.4 Identification of needed capital facilities: The County and the Cities shall each prepare a capital facilities plan as part of the comprehensive plan periodic update as established in RCW 36.70A.130. The jurisdictions may also update their capital facilities plan yearly as part of each jurisdiction's budget amendment process. Where facility expansions or new facilities may impact another jurisdiction, the jurisdiction proposing the expansion or new facility shall provide data about proposed facilities expansions to impacted jurisdictions.

2.5 Uses shall adhere to local health district or state agency rules regarding commercial or industrial use of on-site sewage systems.

2.6 The County and the Cities should consider multiple uses for rights-of-way and easements related to public capital facilities, including multi-modal transportation.

2.7 In Urban Growth Areas, the County and the Cities shall coordinate on changes to or differences between levels of service (LOS) standards when development is proposed that would have LOS impacts across jurisdictional boundaries.

2.8 The County and the Cities should, where appropriate, integrate probability, vulnerability, and risk assessment information from the Walla Walla County Hazard Mitigation Plan, as may be amended, into capital facilities planning.

2.9 The County and the Cities should encourage the location of new human services facilities near access to transit.

2.10 The County and the Cities shall promote connection to sanitary sewers for residents and businesses within Urban Growth Areas as the preferred alternative to resolving failing septic systems.

2.11 The County and the Cities should support planning for the provision of broadband infrastructure.

2.12 The County and the Cities shall permit schools, institutions, and other community facilities that serve primarily urban populations within Urban Growth Areas in locations where they will support local comprehensive plans, except as provided by RCW 36.70A.211. Considerations should include recent growth, projections of population and student enrollment growth, adopted comprehensive plans and capital facilities plans, and the growth allocations once attached as an Appendix.

Policies for Essential Public Facilities

2.13 The County and the Cities shall not preclude the siting of essential public facilities as defined in RCW 36.70A.200 in their comprehensive plans and development regulations.

2.14 The County and the Cities may also generate standards to ensure that reasonable compatibility with other elements of the plans can be achieved.

2.15 When a proposed essential public facility could impact another jurisdiction in Walla Walla County, it is important that opportunities for communication are provided when an essential public facility permit application is received. Therefore, when essential public facilities are proposed to be located within Walla Walla County, the local government(s) involved shall:

a. Send notice to each jurisdiction as part of the notice of application comment period. This will ensure there is time to communicate and coordinate early in the permit process;
b. Encourage public involvement through public comment periods, newspaper notices, and public meetings and hearings as authorized through adopted permit processes and procedures; and
c. Consider factors for minimizing effects upon the health, safety, and welfare of residents around or near the facility when siting essential public facilities.

2.16 Essential public facilities may be identified by the state Office of Financial Management, other state agencies, or by local government.

2.17 The County and the Cities should not locate essential public facilities in designated resource lands or critical areas unless they are compatible with those lands and comply with critical areas and development regulations.

3. RURAL AND RESOURCE LANDS

Context

Rural and resource lands are important to our economy and community. It is a high priority to preserve the features and character of these areas. Under the Growth Management Act (GMA), the County is responsible for designating and regulating rural and resource lands through its comprehensive plan. However, preservation of rural and resource lands is a regional issue, and it is important to establish countywide planning policies so there is harmony and consistency between uses on rural lands and resource lands and those occurring in cities and unincorporated Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). All jurisdictions are responsible for designating and protecting critical areas; but, where open space corridors and habitat areas cross jurisdictional boundaries, countywide planning policies can ensure jurisdictions work together to protect these environmental resources.

While the GMA does not require countywide planning policies for these land use categories, the County and the Cities desire to coordinate planning for these areas.

Rural Lands

The GMA characterizes rural development as, "development outside the urban growth area and outside agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands designated pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170. Rural development can consist of a variety of uses and residential densities, including clustered residential development, at levels that are consistent with the preservation of rural character and the requirements of the rural element. Rural development does not refer to agriculture or forestry activities that may be conducted in rural areas." RCW 36.70A.030(36).

Walla Walla County's rural lands are characterized by lower levels of service; mixed residential, agricultural, and open space uses; broad vistas; parcels of varying sizes; a variety of housing types; and small unincorporated communities.

Resource Lands

Goal 8 of the GMA states that an objective of the Act is to "[m]aintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses." RCW 36.70A.020(8). Resource lands are further defined in the GMA as consisting of agricultural land, forestland, and mineral resource land. These lands are distinguished from rural lands by the commercial significance of these resources, and the County comprehensive plan designates these lands and establishes densities and allowed uses that are more restrictive than in rural lands to protect these resources.

Walla Walla County has a unique climate, topography, and land use mix. Resource lands in Walla Walla County are those lands defined as agricultural and mineral resource lands of long-term commercial

significance. Additionally, there are lands used for agricultural, mineral, and timber purposes that do not have long-term commercial significance but nevertheless support the rural economy and provide ecosystem services.

Rural and Resource Lands Goals

Goal 1 - Walla Walla County and the Cities are focused on supporting traditional lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to live, work, and recreate in rural areas and retain the rural and agrarian character of the county.

Goal 2 - Rural lands serve as a buffer between urban lands and resource lands in order to retain open spaces and bank land for possible future urban expansion where needed.

Goal 3 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will maintain resource-based industries through the conservation of productive agricultural, forest, and mineral resources while retaining open spaces and recreational opportunities.

Rural and Resource Lands Policies

3.1 The County and the Cities may use buffering and other land use techniques to retain the separation between rural lands and urban lands, as well as between rural lands and resource lands, to mitigate the impacts of permitted rural and urban uses on adjacent resource lands.

3.2 The County should consider input from Cities on establishing appropriate land use designations and development regulations for rural lands that are expected to be included within an Urban Growth Area and be annexed in the future to ensure eventual orderly inclusion.

3.3 The County and the Cities should work together early in the planning process to identify and designate greenbelts and open space corridors within and between urban growth areas. These areas may include recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, trails, and connections of critical areas and buffers.

3.4 The County and the Cities shall continue to utilize the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for floodplain management.

3.5 The County shall protect the "right to farm" in agricultural areas in its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

3.6 The County and the Cities should support rural and resource land uses that preserve the rural character and deliver economic benefits for all communities in the county.

4. TRANSPORTATION

Context

The Growth Management Act (GMA or Act) requires that transportation planning and improvements be coordinated among jurisdictions and be consistent with the land use elements of local comprehensive plans. The Act also places special emphasis on transportation because a jurisdiction may not approve development unless an adequate level of service is available or planned to accommodate the development. The countywide transportation policies address areas of mutual interest when more than one jurisdiction is affected by or involved in a transportation policy program or project. In Walla Walla County, this includes all jurisdictions since all incorporated cities and the county have a portion of the State Highway System within their boundaries and the cities' streets connect to county roads. These policies then apply to transportation related impacts, policies, programs, and projects involving more than one jurisdiction.

Transportation facilities in Walla Walla County consist of airports and airfields, commercial water transportation facilities, highway and road systems, transit systems, bridges, rail systems, truck routes, specialized transportation for the elderly and persons with disabilities, and bike and pedestrian routes.

Transportation planning policies and programs include the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Regional Plan, transportation improvement programs, six-year road programs, transportation components of jurisdictions' capital facilities plans, and other transportation financing strategies. The Walla Walla Valley MPO has served as the Sub-Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SRTPO) in accordance with the GMA since 2013.

Goals

Goal 1 - Walla Walla County and the Cities shall provide a balanced countywide transportation system that allows for the efficient, clean, safe, well connected, context-sensitive, multi-modal movement of people, goods, and services.

Goal 2 - Walla Walla County and the Cities shall reduce sprawl, conserve land and natural resources, and make more efficient use of transportation infrastructure.

Goal 3 - Walla Walla County and the Cities shall develop transportation plan elements, investment decisions, and regulations that are consistent with and reinforce land use and economic development policies.

Goal 4 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will work together through the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to provide effective and efficient transportation facilities and strategies.

Goal 5 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will work together to eliminate traffic deaths or serious injuries caused by traffic crashes involving any mode of transportation through the use of a data-driven, multi-disciplinary, and Safe System Approach that increases safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all.

Goal 6 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will work together to enhance transportation accessibility and inclusivity for all individuals, ensuring that every member of the community can navigate the transportation system safely and independently, regardless of age, ability, or socioeconomic status.

Policies

4.1 Walla Walla County and the Cities should maintain participation in the MPO/SRTPO to ensure transportation planning is consistent, local needs are reflected in the Regional Plan, and to avail themselves of transportation planning technical services.

4.2 Each comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to the Growth Management Act shall contain a transportation element consistent with the Regional Plan's land use and economic development policies as well as those of jurisdictions in the planning area.

4.3 The County and the Cities should consider including impacts upon historically marginalized communities and disproportionately burdened communities when siting or expanding transportation facilities, including transportation facilities of a statewide nature.

4.4 The County and the Cities should work toward establishing multi-modal levels of service that are sensitive to differences between UGAs and rural areas and that are consistent across jurisdictions when facilities cross jurisdictional boundaries.

4.5 The County and the Cities should adopt a cooperative process for early coordination of public and private capital projects that may impact the transportation system in the county or a neighboring jurisdiction. This process should include an early referral and response mechanism and appropriate criteria for use in evaluating the impacts of a proposal. This process should also apply to any transportation improvements contemplated by one jurisdiction that will impact an adjacent jurisdiction.

4.6 The County and the Cities should develop policies in their comprehensive plans to support Target Zero/Vision Zero, Complete Streets, and Context Sensitive Solutions as appropriate to circumstances.

4.7 The County and the Cities should coordinate with the MPO to collect non-motorized activity data that can be standardized countywide.

4.8 The County and the Cities should cooperate early in the permitting and design process for trails where they cross jurisdictional boundaries.

4.9 The County and the Cities should coordinate with the MPO and Valley Transit to conduct regular assessments of existing transportation facilities to identify barriers to accessibility. Incorporate feedback from community members, particularly those with disabilities, to inform improvements.

5. HOUSING

Context

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that Countywide Planning Policies consider the need for affordable housing, such as housing for all economic segments of the population, and parameters for its distribution. Furthermore, the GMA requires cities and counties to encourage the availability of housing that is affordable for all income levels at a variety of housing densities. Local jurisdictions are also encouraged to preserve existing housing resources in their communities and to provide an adequate supply of housing with good access to employment centers to support job creation and economic growth.

Housing affordability and availability is a major challenge facing Walla Walla County and its Cities. Housing shall mean housing intended for a full range of household incomes. These income levels are defined as follows (WAC 365-196-410(2)(e)(i)(C) and RCW 36.70.030):

- Extremely low-income shall mean those households that have incomes that are at or below 30 percent of the countywide median household income (median income), adjusted for household size.
- Very low-income shall mean those households that have incomes that are within the range of 31 to 50 percent of the median income, adjusted for household size.
- Low-income shall mean those households that have incomes that are within the range of 51 to 80 percent of the median income, adjusted for household size.
- Moderate-income shall mean those households that have incomes that are within the range of 81 to 120 percent of the median income, adjusted for household size.
    - The Department of Commerce (Commerce) provides guidance for demonstrating capacity for income band allocations that further breaks moderate-income households into 81 to 100 percent and 101 percent to 120 percent of the median income, adjusted for household size.

The housing goals and policies in the Countywide Planning Policies are connected to goals and policies in other chapters. For example, providing housing that is affordable and available to all economic segments of the community, which is the focus of this chapter, is only possible if the County and the Cities coordinate successfully on Urban Growth Areas, Public Facilities and Utilities, and Transportation as well as other topics.

Goals

Goal 1 - Walla Walla County and the Cities focus higher density residential developments, as needed to accommodate housing targets, near jobs, transit, schools, parks, and other daily needs and services.

Goal 2 - Walla Walla County and the Cities promote infill and redevelopment of existing residential areas and rehabilitation of existing housing stock.

Goal 3 - Walla Walla County and the Cities plan for and accommodate sufficient capacity of affordable housing units to meet the housing needs of all economic segments of the community, including extremely low, very low, low, and moderate-income households as well as the need for manufactured homes, manufactured home parks, group homes, foster care facilities, emergency shelters, emergency housing, and permanent supportive housing.

Goal 4 - Walla Walla County and the Cities promote preservation of existing housing as a means of providing housing choices affordable to all income levels.

Goal 5 - Walla Walla County and the Cities ensure that their permitting processes are timely, predictable, and fair.

Goal 6 - Walla Walla County and the Cities promote programs that support homeownership for new and established residents.

Policies

5.1 The County and the Cities shall plan for and accommodate a wide range of housing development types and densities throughout the county to meet the needs of a diverse population.

5.2 The County and the Cities shall encourage affordable housing through innovative land use techniques, including but not limited to: financial incentives, clustering, planned unit development, maximum lot size provisions, infill housing incentives, retaining existing housing, and density bonuses.

5.3 The County and the Cities should encourage and support financial incentive programs for homeownership.

5.4 The County and the Cities should pursue partnerships with nonprofit agencies, such as Blue Mountain Action Council, public corporations, such as Walla Walla Housing Authority, and others, to ensure that housing needs are being met.

5.5 The County and the Cities shall each identify specific policies and implementation strategies in their respective comprehensive plans and shall enact implementing regulations to provide a mix of housing types for housing at all income levels, considering easy access to employment centers.

5.6 The County and the Cities should provide appropriately zoned lands and location criteria to assure the inclusion of multi-family housing and manufactured home parks within UGAs.

5.7 The County and the Cities should share data and methodology for the housing needs assessments in their comprehensive plans to ensure consistency.

5.8 The County and the Cities shall include housing elements in their comprehensive plans that comply with the provisions of RCW 36.70A.070(2) and that are consistent with adopted growth allocations.

5.9 The County and the Cities may create or support a registration program with a consolidated database of available government-supported affordable housing units in the region including inventory, availability, conditions, and price structure, which should also link to a website providing tenants information on application and screening. (See pages 26-27 of the adopted Regional Housing Action Plan.)[2]

5.10 The County may permit high density housing within an unincorporated urban growth area which is not contiguous to a municipal boundary provided it meets the criteria for contiguous and orderly development per RCW 36.70A.020(1).

5.11 The County and the Cities should evaluate the impact of any new ordinance or regulation that may affect housing affordability with regard to the provision of housing options prior to adoption.

5.12 The County and the Cities should support reducing or eliminating minimum lot size requirements within Urban Growth Areas to promote the development of greater diversity of housing types where feasible.

5.13 The County and the Cities should ensure the vitality of established residential neighborhoods that:

a. Include consideration of senior and accessible housing needs;
b. Provide avenues to homeownership for moderate-income households; and
c. Provide support for institutions and services that serve historical and cultural communities and lower-income households in areas with displacement risk.

5.14 Physical, economic, and cultural displacement of low-income households may result from planning, public investment, private development and redevelopment, and market pressure. The County and the Cities should employ a range of strategies to mitigate displacement impacts as planning for future growth occurs, including the strategies and actions identified in the adopted Regional Housing Action Plan. [2]

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[2] Regional Housing Action Plan Adopted by:
City of Walla Walla Resolution 2021-23, August 11, 2021
City of College Place Ordinance 21-013, September 14, 2021
City of Waitsburg Resolution 2021-732, August 18, 2021

5.15 The County and the Cities should periodically review permit processes to ensure permits are processed in a timely and fair manner.

6. COUNTYWIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Context

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that communities "[E]ncourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities." (RCW 36.70A.020(5))

Countywide planning policies are required to include policies for countywide economic development and employment, including consideration of future development of commercial and industrial facilities.

Goals

Goal 1 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will support and encourage a sustainable, healthy economy and adequate employment opportunities that are vitally important to the long-term health of Walla Walla County.

Goal 2 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will collaborate in planning for economic development that benefits our region.

Goal 3 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will provide predictability in private investment decisions through land-use, zoning, development regulations, and permit processes.

Policies

6.1 The County and the Cities shall support and encourage economic development that is consistent with the preservation of Walla Walla County's quality of life and environment and that is within the capabilities of the county's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

6.2 The County and the Cities should coordinate the economic development element of local comprehensive plans with other elements of those plans, with particular attention being given to coordination with the land use and capital facilities elements.

6.3 The County and the Cities should ensure an adequate supply of industrial property throughout the county based on needs identified in the economic development elements of their comprehensive plans and should support the development of infrastructure to service lands designated as industrial.

6.4 The County should recognize the importance of industrial zoned property on the Columbia/Snake River system for the efficient transportation of local commodities to world

markets and support efforts to protect and encourage industrial zoned property on the river system.

6.5 Areas designated for future commercial and industrial uses should have infrastructure capacity, transportation, and housing, or the ability to provide the forementioned.

6.6 The economic development elements of all jurisdictions should encourage inter-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation on economic development issues, particularly those that affect the size and diversity of the economic base. Comprehensive plans should encourage coordination between local economic development organizations.

6.7 The County and the Cities should collaborate with the Port of Walla Walla, tribes, and special districts to encourage economic growth consistent with comprehensive plan policies for land use, transportation, and capital facilities and services, among other topics.

6.8 The County and the Cities should coordinate with federal and state resource agencies and economic development groups concerning their land use plans that may impact economic development activity.

6.9 The County and the Cities should work to retain those enterprises and industries that have created the economic base of the county and promote their continued growth.

6.10 The County and the Cities should continue to support and develop agriculture-based industries through continued innovations in production, marketing, and technology as well as increased investment in value-added processing.

6.11 The County and the Cities should contribute to an overall climate where business opportunities are provided and where regulations protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

6.12 The County and the Cities should ensure that all building permits, planning regulations, and procedures are clear and concise and administered in a fair and timely manner.

6.13 When more than one jurisdiction is involved in planning and permitting a business development, the jurisdictions involved should collaborate to provide consistent development regulations and permitting to the greatest degree feasible.

6.14 The County and the Cities should support and encourage economic development efforts to diversify and expand basic manufacturing, construction-related, and service-related jobs.

6.15 The County and the Cities should encourage the recruitment of new employers to meet the county employment projections.

6.16 The County and the Cities should work together to facilitate and promote a range of job opportunities throughout the county to create a balance between jobs and housing.

6.17 The County and the Cities should work together, in coordination with business owners, schools, and skill centers, to promote training programs that give people opportunities to learn, maintain, and upgrade skills necessary to meet regional job needs.

6.18 The County and the Cities should foster appropriate and targeted economic growth in areas with low and very low access to opportunity to improve access to employment opportunities for current and future residents of those areas.

7. FISCAL IMPACT

Context

To preserve and maintain quality of life and level of governmental services, jurisdictions in Walla Walla County are expected to fully evaluate their financial capacity to provide the full range of urban services, as described in Chapter 1 within Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). The policies in this chapter focus on opportunities for coordination that would have a positive fiscal impact for the region.

Goals

Goal 1: Walla Walla County and the Cities will provide a means for assessing the cost of providing public services in conformance with their respective comprehensive plans.

Goal 2: Walla Walla County and the Cities will creatively pursue all means of financing required public improvements.

Goal 3: Walla Walla County and the Cities will work together, where feasible, on the fiscal impact of providing services within unincorporated Urban Growth Areas. This includes consideration of innovative tactics which could provide a positive fiscal impact for communities.

Policies

7.1 Where capital improvement, utility, and land use plans involve lands within or adjacent to the UGA, the County and the Cities, individually and jointly, shall routinely conduct fiscal analysis, consistent with capital facility and utility planning requirements in RCW 36.70A.070(3) and (4), that identifies the most cost-effective means of providing and locating public services and infrastructure over the long term.

7.2 Each capital improvement plan should include:

a. Plans for cooperation between the public and private sectors to ensure coordination of those plans with emphasis on the effective provision of services at the adopted level of service concurrent with demand;
b. Inventory of existing capital facilities; and
c. Assessment of future needs.

7.3 The County and the Cities should consider the use of innovative financing strategies for capital improvements that minimize the costs to taxpayers and provide for equitable assignment of costs between existing and new development.

7.4 The County and the Cities should consider the imposition of impact fees to ensure that new development pays its fair share for improvements necessitated by growth and contributes to

the overall financing of capital improvements. Changes in or impositions of new impact fees should be accompanied by an analysis consistent with statutory requirements.

7.5 The County and the Cities may develop a process for use by the jurisdictions to facilitate the identification, analysis, and disclosure of the fiscal impacts of major development proposals and governmental actions. The process shall establish a formula to address fiscal impacts, including tax revenues and service cost implications of the following:

a. Proposed changes in municipal boundaries;
b. Proposed changes in UGAs;
c. Proposed master planned resorts; and
d. Proposed large-scale residential, commercial, and industrial developments.

8. COORDINATION WITH TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

Context

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation – Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla – the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Yakama Nation all have treaty rights and ceded lands in Walla Walla County. These Tribes have authorities, responsibilities, interests, and treaty rights within their respective reservation boundaries as well as Usual and Accustomed Areas (the latter applies to Walla Walla County). Since future growth and land use decisions in Walla Walla County affect all governmental entities, governmental agencies (including the Tribes) must be well informed and continuously involved in regional and local planning.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that "federal agencies and federally recognized Indian tribes whose reservation or ceded lands lie within the county shall be invited to participate in and cooperate with the countywide planning policy adoption process." (RCW 36.70A.210(4))
In addition, Countywide policies are required to address the protection of tribal cultural resources in collaboration with federally recognized tribes as above, provided that a tribe or multiple tribes choose to participate in the process. (RCW 36.70A(3)(i))

The Tribal coordination chapter is being provided as a placeholder if federally recognized Indian tribes, whose reservation or ceded lands lie within the county, choose to participate in the process to amend or update the Countywide Planning Policies in the future. This could provide a process to strengthen coordination and communication on permitting and planning processes utilized by the County and cities and enhance processes for protection of cultural resources.

Goals

Goal 1 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will invite federally recognized Tribes with ceded lands in the county to participate in planning and development activities and decisions.

Goal 2 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will protect natural and cultural resources in partnership with the Tribes.

Policies

7.6 The County and the Cities should provide meaningful and substantial opportunities for early and continuous tribal government participation in regional and local planning activities.

7.7 Local jurisdictions should work with the Tribes to develop agreements that ensure that the Tribes are consulted on issues within their interest early in the periodic update process. The parties to these agreements will jointly determine the appropriate contents of the agreements and a schedule for completing them.

7.8 The County and the Cities shall include Tribal government agencies in public notice and comment procedures and keep them informed of matters of interest to them.

7.9 The County and the Cities should ensure that their development regulations provide processes for inadvertent discovery of cultural resources during development activity.

9. ADVISORY COUNCIL, POLICY REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

Context

This document is meant to be a living document which guides coordination between the County and the Cities. As such, it is expected that it will undergo amendments periodically. This chapter outlines the process for future review and amendment of the Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) and appendices, and roles and responsibilities for implementation.

In 2023, Walla Walla County and the Cities within the county (City of Walla Walla, College Place, Waitsburg, and Prescott) adopted an interlocal agreement to jointly review and update and the Walla Walla Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). The interlocal agreement established a group to lead the update with representatives of each jurisdiction, called the Project Management Team. Through the 2023-2024 update, the jurisdictions identified a need to continue the work of the Project Management Team. This chapter establishes a new advisory council, modeled after the 2023 team, to lead implementation and future amendments of the CPPs.

Goals

Goal 1 - An advisory council shall ensure that the Countywide Planning Policies are maintained and implemented and that planning between Walla Walla County and the Cities is accomplished in a coordinated, consistent manner.

Goal 2 - Maintain the Countywide Planning Policies consistent with the Growth Management Act.

Goal 3 - Ensure the Countywide Planning Policies reflect local circumstances accurately.

Goal 4 – Ensure adequate public notification and opportunity for involvement for updates to the Countywide Planning Policies.

Walla Walla County Growth Management Advisory Council

9.1 The jurisdictions hereby establish the Walla Walla County Growth Management Advisory Council. The primary responsibility of the council is to ensure that the Growth Management Act requirements are coordinated within the County, its Cities, and the region.

9.2 The Walla Walla County Growth Management Advisory Council shall:

a. Provide a forum, as necessary, for coordination and consensus in the development of local plans and plan implementation issues that are common among jurisdictions.
b. Promote coordination and consistency among local plans and between local plans and the Countywide Planning Policies and the Growth Management Act to the extent necessary to achieve regional policies and objectives.
c. Serve as a forum to amicably work together and address differences when they occur on important planning issues impacting Walla Walla County.

d. Coordinate the review, revision, and monitoring of the Land Capacity Analysis which aids in developing comprehensive plans.
e. Define and implement procedures that ensure opportunities for early and continuous public involvement in policy discussions facilitated by the Walla Walla County Growth Management Advisory Council.

9.3 Membership, Administration, and Decision-Making

a. Each jurisdiction, Walla Walla County, City of Walla Walla, City of College Place, City of Waitsburg and City of Prescott, may appoint a maximum of three members to the advisory council and may make provision for an alternate member to serve in the event that its appointed member(s) is unavailable or unable to serve.
b. Decision making by the advisory council should be collaborative and by consensus. However, in the event of impasse or disagreement, a decision may be made by a majority of the members of the advisory council.
c. The Community Development Department Director for Walla Walla County (Department) is designated as the administrator for the advisory council.
d. The Department and advisory council will communicate via in-person meetings, telephone, or email to relay information, answer questions, or raise concerns. All members will respond promptly to communications. The Department will ensure that information related to matters coming before the council is provided to the members in a timely manner.
e. The Department will keep the official council records and make them available to council members and the jurisdictions. Records shall be made available for public inspection in accordance with law.
f. The advisory council through the Department shall coordinate and cooperate with the Washington State Department of Commerce Growth Management Services.

Countywide Planning Policies Review and Amendment

9.4 The Walla Walla Countywide Planning Policies should be dynamic and regularly monitored for applicability and effectiveness.

a. The adopted Countywide Planning Policies should, at a minimum, be reviewed through the advisory council before each required comprehensive plan periodic update as required by RCW 36.70A.130.
b. The County or a city, or the advisory council, may propose amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies at any time.
c. The advisory council shall review and discuss the merits of the proposed amendment, revise the language as agreed to by the advisory council members via their bylaws, and make a recommendation on the amendment to the Board of County Commissioners.

9.5 County Review. Walla Walla County shall take action to consider and adopt amendments or revisions to the Countywide Planning Policies following a recommendation from the advisory council.

a. The County should conduct SEPA environmental review and public notice as required after receiving recommended amendments from the advisory council.
b. The County may ask the advisory council to respond to SEPA agency and public comments.
c. The Board of County Commissioners will invite the advisory council to a public meeting to discuss the proposed countywide planning policy amendments.
d. After this review, the Board of County Commissioners will vote on whether or not to send the draft amendments to the cities for review and ratification.
e. If the Board of County Commissioners does not vote to send the draft amendments to the cities for review, the Board should provide a written statement to the advisory council documenting their concerns or reasons for not doing so to facilitate further review.
f. The Board of County Commissioners may amend the final draft countywide planning policy amendments after consultation with the advisory council prior to sending the amendments to the cities for review.

9.6 City Approval Process. Within 60 days of the Board of County Commissioners' vote, the respective city legislative authorities must act by resolution to adopt the recommended amendment.
a. City approval means a vote by the legislative authority to approve or disapprove the proposed amendments (up or down vote). Draft amendments may not be modified during the city approval process.
b. If a city does not act, it shall be presumed that the city approves of the amendments.
c. If a city does not act, or does not vote to approve the amendments, their City Council should provide a written statement of its concerns or reasons for not doing so to the advisory council to facilitate further review.

9.7 County Approval Process. After the 60-day city review period has ended, or all four cities ratify the amendments or vote to not approve the amendments, the Board of County Commissioners shall hold a public hearing and may adopt or not adopt the proposed policy amendments. Draft amendments may not be modified during the county approval process.
a. If the Board of County Commissioners does not vote to approve the amendments, they should provide a written statement of their concerns or reasons for not doing so to the advisory council to facilitate further review.

9.8 The jurisdictions, through the advisory council, shall strive for ratification by all four cities and adoption by the County during these review processes.

Countywide Planning Policies Appendices

9.9 Appendices. As provided in Chapter 1, Countywide Planning Policies appendices will be added containing methodologies for conducting the Land Capacity Analysis, establishing countywide population, employment, and housing projections, and allocating those projections between the jurisdictions.

a. The jurisdictions will primarily rely on the advisory council's expertise for coordinating this technical planning work within the bounds of the adopted countywide planning policies. Each jurisdiction will be able to appoint representatives to the council and it is expected that council members are concurrently and separately consulting internally with other departments and officials as appropriate.
b. The appendices may be adopted and later amended by the Walla Walla County Board of Commissioners without going through the policy amendment adoption process listed above based on a recommendation of the advisory council if they are consistent with the countywide planning policies.
c. These appendices should be reviewed, along with the policies, by the advisory council before each required comprehensive plan periodic update as required by RCW 36.70A.130.

10. IMPLEMENTATION

Context

Countywide Planning Policies, to be effective, must be able to be implemented. While many countywide planning policies will be implemented by the county and cities through comprehensive plans, development regulations, and other programs, many policies will require ongoing coordination. In addition to the responsibilities defined in other countywide planning policy chapters, this section further clarifies the planning roles and responsibilities of the advisory council and member agencies.

Goals

Goal 1 - Walla Walla County and the Cities will coordinate at the staff level and via the Walla Walla County Growth Management Advisory Council on an ongoing basis to implement the countywide planning policies and address other planning issues as they arise.

Policies

10.1 Walla Walla County is the regional government within the county providing various services within unincorporated and incorporated areas as required and specified by law and by legal agreements. Walla Walla County shall:

a. Be responsible for the development, adoption, and implementation of comprehensive plans and development regulations for the unincorporated portions of the county.

b. Be responsible for coordinating water quality planning in multi-jurisdictional watersheds and for other environmental planning activities as agreed to by all affected and interested jurisdictions.

c. Be responsible for administering the federal Endangered Species Act in multi-jurisdictional watersheds as agreed to by all affected and interested jurisdictions.

d. If agreeable, consider executing interlocal agreements with each City as appropriate to address joint issues identified in the Countywide Planning Policies and other matters agreed to be of mutual interest.

e. Define and implement procedures that assure opportunities for early and continuous public involvement through short- and long-range planning efforts.

10.2 Cities within Walla Walla County provide a variety of services primarily to residents within their respective municipal boundaries. Cities shall:

a. Provide urban governmental services identified in the Growth Management Act and adopted interlocal agreements.

b. Be responsible for developing, adopting, and implementing comprehensive plans and development regulations within the incorporated boundaries of their respective city.

c. Participate with other agencies in multi-jurisdictional planning activities, including but not limited to environmental planning, transportation planning, and growth management planning.

d. If agreeable, consider executing separate interlocal agreements with Walla Walla County as appropriate to address issues identified in the Countywide Planning Policies and other matters agreed to be of mutual interest.

10.3 The Walla Walla County Growth Management Advisory Council will ensure that the Growth Management Act requirements are coordinated within the County, its Cities, and the region and monitory implementation of the Countywide Planning Policies as established in Chapter 9.

Implementation Table

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
Chapter 1: Urban Growth Areas and Contiguous and Orderly Development				
1.1.a. The County and Cities shall jointly coordinate, through the process outlined in Chapter 9, a Land Capacity Analysis methodology to provide a consistent estimate of the land supply available to accommodate future population and employment growth and projected housing needs. This includes setting a reasonable market factor. The adopted methodology will be attached as an Appendix.	Develop, agree to, and adopt and land capacity analysis methodology	County lead, in partnership with Cities	Prior to beginning 2026 comp plan update process (jurisdictions will need the methodology in order to establish capacity for growth targets)	Advisory Council and process established in Chapter 9
1.2.a. The County and Cities shall jointly coordinate, through the process outlined in Chapter 9, a methodology for distributing the forecasted population, housing, and employment growth (growth targets) consistent with the requirements of the Growth Management Act.	Coordinate the process for distributing population, housing, and employment growth among all jurisdictions/UGAs	County lead, in partnership with Cities	Prior to 2026 comp plan update	Population, housing, and employment growth targets reflected in Comprehensive Plans
1.2.b. The County and Cities, as part of their next Comprehensive Plan periodic updates, shall reflect those growth targets in their Comprehensive Plans, as adopted in an Appendix.	Adopt growth targets into comprehensive plan	All jurisdictions individually	During 2026 comprehensive plan update (and all those following)	Land use changes sufficient to accommodate growth targets
1.3.e. The County should adopt specific procedures for filing comprehensive plan amendments which will be processed	Adopt procedures for filing comp plan amendments	County	Prior to 2026 update	County code as well as supportive policy in comp plan update

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
concurrently with the state-required Periodic Update.	processed concurrently with periodic update cycle			
1.3.g. The County shall adopt procedures and criteria for considering UGA boundary revisions consistent with the requirements in RCW 36.70A.130(3)(c). Such 'swap' amendments must comply with applicable GMA criteria and shall not increase land capacity within the UGA beyond what is needed to accommodate the growth planned for the succeeding 20-year planning period and a reasonable market factor.	Adopt procedures and criteria for considering UGA boundary revisions (UGA "swap" amendments)	County	During 2026 periodic update	Procedures and criteria in comprehensive plan update for UGA boundary revisions consistent with new state law
1.4.a. Adopted City and County comprehensive plans shall reflect the intent that all land within unincorporated Urban Growth Areas, where feasible, will either annex to a City or incorporate within the 20-year planning horizon.	Stated intent within comprehensive plans that all land within unincorporated portions of UGAs should be annexed into a City or should incorporate within the planning horizon	Cities	During 2026 comprehensive plan update	Policy language to this effect adopted into comprehensive plans.
1.4.d. The County and Cities should establish procedures to facilitate the smooth transfer of governance for associated Urban Growth Area(s).	Establish procedures to transfer governance of UGAs	County and Cities	Long-range (during the planning period)	Interlocal agreements, Advisory Council
1.4.f. The County and each City, where appropriate, should consider utilizing Interlocal Agreements (ILAs) as a mechanism to facilitate	Establish interlocal agreements to facilitate growth within UGAs	County and each City	Long-range (after 2026 comp plan update)	Interlocal Agreements

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
urban growth within unincorporated UGAs. An ILA could be utilized to coordinate on common development regulations and standards and permit review processes within these areas. This could result in development more closely aligning with adopted regulations within cities. This process could also be utilized to encourage the extension of urban services to these areas given urban growth typically requires urban governmental services.				
1.13 To adequately plan for growth and implement the policies of the GMA, the County, the Cities, and special districts in the county, should establish an ongoing mechanisms, such as the advisory council established in Chapter 9, to improve communication, information sharing, and coordinated approaches to common problems.	Establish an ongoing mechanism to improve communication, information sharing, and coordinated approaches to common problems	All jurisdictions – advisory council and other similar mechanisms	Medium term – after adoption of updated CPPs	Growth Management Advisory Council
1.14 Walla Walla County should coordinate with adjacent and/or nearby counties and cities on issues of growth and delivery of urban services that cross county or state boundaries.	Coordinate with adjacent counties and cities outside county boundaries	County	Long-range	Likely to be informal dialogue in the case of cross-state boundaries. Benton-Franklin COG could be a venue for engaging with counties to the west on planning issues.
Chapter 2: Public Capital Facilities and Essential Public Facilities				

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
2.1 The County and the Cities should consider including impacts upon historically marginalized communities and disproportionately burdened communities when siting or expanding capital facilities.	Develop criteria for consideration of impacts on historically marginalized and disproportionately burdened communities for capital facilities decisions	Advisory Council, any community could take the lead on this policy and then workshop with counterparts	During comprehensive plan periodic update	Comprehensive plan policies on capital facilities
2.8 The County and Cities should, where appropriate, integrate probability, vulnerability, and risk assessment information from the Walla Walla County Hazard Mitigation Plan into capital facilities planning.	Update of Hazard Mitigation Plan	County	Currently in progress, expected adoption late 2024	County should include cities and service providers in Hazard Mitigation Plan update process
2.11 The County and Cities should support planning for the provision of broadband infrastructure.	Identification of areas lacking broadband access in comprehensive plan; installing conduit for future broadband cable where possible; pursue grants from state and federal sources to fund construction of fiber optic or other broadband infrastructure	All jurisdictions	Identify areas lacking access in 2026 comprehensive plan update. Other provisions as needed	Policy and capital facilities planning
Chapter 3: Rural and Resource Lands				

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
3.2 The County should consider input from Cities on establishing appropriate land use designations and development regulations for rural land that is expected to be included within an Urban Growth Area and be annexed in the future to ensure eventual orderly inclusion.	Input from cities on appropriate designations for rural land that may be suitable for inclusion in the UGA	County	During County comprehensive plan update	Meetings led by County with each City to establish land use designations for areas that may be suitable for inclusion in UGAs
3.3 The County and the Cities should work together early in the planning process to identify and designate greenbelts and open space corridors within and between urban growth areas. These areas may include recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, trails, and connection of critical areas and buffers.	Designate greenbelts and open space corridors within and between UGAs	County and Cities	During next comprehensive plan update	Work of the advisory council
3.5 The County shall protect the "right to farm" in agricultural areas in its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.	Confirm that development regulations protect right to farm or develop new code	County	Annual code amendment process	Buffers and use regulations
4.1 Walla Walla County and the Cities should maintain participation in the MPO/SRTPO to ensure transportation planning is consistent, local needs are reflected in the Regional Plan, and to avail themselves of transportation planning technical services.	Maintain staff participation in MPO	All jurisdictions	Ongoing	Annual work plans/budgets
4.2 Each comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to the Growth Management Act shall contain a transportation element consistent with the Regional Plan's land use and economic	Adopt transportation element consistent with the regional transportation plan's land use and	All jurisdictions	During 2026 comprehensive plan update	Comprehensive plan drafting – assess transportation element's

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
development policies as well as those of jurisdictions in the planning area.	economic development policies			consistency with 2045 Plan.
4.3 The County and the Cities should consider including impacts upon historically marginalized communities and disproportionately burdened communities when siting or expanding transportation facilities, including transportation facilities of a statewide nature.	Develop criteria for consideration of impacts on historically marginalized and disproportionately burdened communities for transportation facilities decisions	Advisory Councils, any community could take the lead on this policy and then workshop with counterparts	During comprehensive plan periodic update	Comprehensive plan policies on transportation. Also, the jurisdictions should develop criteria in code or directors' decisions for evaluating transportation projects that incorporates this.
4.4 The County and the Cities should work toward establishing multi-modal levels of service that are sensitive to differences between UGAs and rural areas and that are consistent across jurisdictions when facilities cross jurisdictional boundaries.	Establish multi-modal levels of service in comprehensive plan	County leads	During comprehensive plan updates	Comprehensive plan levels of service in transportation element
4.5 The County and the Cities should adopt a cooperative process for early coordination of public and private capital projects that may impact the transportation system in the county or a neighboring jurisdiction. This process should include an early referral and response mechanism and appropriate criteria for use in	Adopt cooperative process for early coordination of capital projects that may impact the transportation system in the county or a neighboring jurisdiction	County leads, including drafting early referral and response	During comprehensive plan update cycle	County should consider adopting a process into its comprehensive plan, and cities should adopt policies to participate.

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
evaluating the impacts of a proposal. This process should also apply to any transportation improvements contemplated by one jurisdiction that will impact an adjacent jurisdiction and should allow for mitigations across jurisdictional boundaries.		mechanism, cities provide feedback.		
4.6 The County and the Cities should develop policies in their comprehensive plans to support Target Zero/Vision Zero, Complete Streets, and Context Sensitive Solutions as appropriate to circumstances.	Adopt policies in comprehensive plans that support Target Zero/Vision Zero, Complete Streets, and Context Sensitive Solutions as appropriate	All jurisdictions	During 2026 comprehensive plan update cycle	Each jurisdiction will have to determine during policy development in the comp plan update the appropriate circumstances for these programs or priorities.
4.7 The County and the Cities should coordinate with the MPO to collect non-motorized activity data that can be standardized countywide.	Collect non-motorized activity data in a way that is standardized in coordination with MPO	All jurisdictions (MPO lead)	Ongoing	Public works work programs. Staff assigned to work with MPO should coordinate with the MPO staff.
5.1 The County and the Cities shall plan for and accommodate a wide range of housing development types and densities throughout the county to meet the needs of a diverse population.	Housing allocations by income bracket; needs assessment and gap analysis and adequate provisions documentation in individual comprehensive plans	County (leads Housing Allocations by income bracket); County and Cities lead needs	During 2026 comprehensive plan update	Comprehensive Plans for individual jurisdictions

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
		assessment and gap analysis and adequate provisions documentation in individual plans. Coordination via Advisory Council.		
5.2 The County and the Cities shall encourage affordable housing through innovative land use techniques, including but not limited to financial incentives, clustering, planned unit development, maximum lot size provisions, infill housing incentives, and density bonuses, including to retain existing housing.	Development of codes to implement these tools as deemed appropriate by jurisdictions	Cities primarily (County not expected to plan for housing below 50% AMI re: Commerce guidance)	Concurrent with 2026 comprehensive plan periodic updates (some may go longer depending on what is needed to demonstrate adequate provisions being made for all economic segments)	Development regulations updates necessary as part of becoming consistent with 2026 comprehensive plan updates
5.3 The County and the Cities should encourage and support financial incentive programs for homeownership.	Develop and implement programs to incentivize homeownership for households making below	Mostly cities	Long-range (will likely require establishing funds or fee programs that	Various mechanisms, including development agreements with organizations like Habitat

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
	100% AMI (potentially targeted at 50-80% and 80-100%)		may take time to fully fund or implement)	for Humanity, impact fee or other fee waivers for single-family homes or townhomes with affordability covenants
5.4 The County and the Cities should pursue partnerships with nonprofit agencies, such as Blue Mountain Action Council and others, to ensure that housing needs are being met.	Engage with BMAC and other nonprofit organizations to provide input on housing needs	County lead, Cities participate	Begin with housing needs assessment partnership during early phases of 2026 comprehensive plan update	County representative attend BMAC meetings or vice versa; invitations from all jurisdictions to have BMAC or other staff prepare material and brief councils/commission on housing needs
5.5 The County and the Cities shall each identify specific policies and implementation strategies in their respective comprehensive plans and shall enact implementing regulations to provide a mix of housing types for housing at all income levels, considering easy access to employment centers.	Develop implementation strategies in individual comprehensive plans	All jurisdictions individually	During 2026 comprehensive plan update	Develop implementation strategies or tools during policy writing phase of comprehensive plan periodic update process
5.6 The County and the Cities should share data and methodology for the housing needs assessments in their comprehensive plans to ensure consistency.	Share data and methodology for housing needs assessments	Cities lead (City of Walla Walla probably has the most robust data so it	Early stages of 2026 periodic update process	Housing Needs Assessments (appendices in comprehensive plans)

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
		might make sense for them to lead)		
5.8 The County and the Cities may create or support a registration program with a consolidated database of available government-supported affordable housing units in the region including inventory, availability, conditions, and price structure, which should also link to website providing tenant information on application and screening. (See pages 26-27 of the adopted Regional Housing Action Plan.)	Create or support a consolidated database of government-supported affordable housing units.	All jurisdictions and/or external partners	Long-range (post-2026 update)	Secure database for jurisdictions to use with public-facing website providing tenant information and screening
5.10 The County and the Cities should evaluate the impact of any new ordinance or regulation that may affect housing affordability with regard to the provision of housing options prior to adoption.	Evaluate proposed ordinances' or regulations' effects on housing affordability	All jurisdictions individually	Medium- to long-range (2026 and beyond)	Add criteria to internal staff report templates or requirements
5.11 The County and the Cities should support reducing or eliminating minimum lot size requirements within Urban Growth Areas to promote the development of greater diversity of housing types where feasible.	Reduce or eliminate minimum lot size requirements within UGAs	All jurisdictions	Any annual code amendment docket	Code amendments in individual jurisdictions
5.14 The County and the Cities should periodically review permit processes to ensure	Periodic review of permit processes	All jurisdictions individually	Every year during code cleanup process (or however	Preparation of permit data reports to Commerce should be followed by

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
permits are processed in a timely and fair manner.			frequently this is done). Annual reports on permit process are required of jurisdictions	presentation to or discussion with decision making bodies about the results to ensure accountability for timely and fair permit processing.
Chapter 6: Countywide Economic Development and Employment				
6.2 Walla Walla County and the Cities should coordinate the economic development element of local comprehensive plans with other elements of those plans, with particular attention being given to coordination with the land use and capital facilities elements.	Ensure economic development elements are coordinated with other elements, especially land use and capital facilities	All jurisdictions individually	During 2026 comprehensive plan updates	Policy consistency review between land use and capital facilities and economic development elements
6.3 The County and the Cities should ensure an adequate supply of industrial property throughout the county based on needs identified in the economic development elements of their comprehensive plans and should support the development of infrastructure to service lands designated as industrial.	Periodically assess supply of industrial land in response to development that occurs and ensure supply is adequate on regular basis.	County lead, coordinate with cities and economic development agencies, Advisory Council	During comp plan update and at regular intervals (perhaps every year or every five years)	Periodic updates and 5-year check-in should include assessment of industrial land supply taking into account pipeline projects, at a minimum. Individual jurisdictions could choose to assess supply more frequently depending on development trends.

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
6.4 The County should recognize the importance of industrial zoned property on the Columbia/Snake River system for the efficient transportation of local commodities to world markets and support efforts to protect and encourage industrial zoned property on the river system.	Comp plan policy or policies recognizing importance of industrial-zoned property on the Columbia/Snake River system	County	Part of 2026 comprehensive plan update	Policy analysis and writing to properly incorporate this CPP
6.6 The economic development elements of all jurisdictions should encourage inter-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation on economic development issues, particularly those that affect the size and diversity of the economic base. Comprehensive plans should encourage coordination between local economic development organizations.	Adopt one or more policies that encourage interjurisdictional cooperation and coordination on economic development issues	All jurisdictions	During 2026 comprehensive plan update	Policy language could likely be shared between jurisdictions.
6.12 The County and the Cities should ensure that all building permits, planning regulations, and procedures are clear and concise and administered in a fair and timely manner.	Periodic review of permit processes	All jurisdictions individually	Every year during code cleanup process (or however frequently this is done). Annual reports on permit process are required of jurisdictions	Preparation of permit data reports to Commerce should be followed by presentation to or discussion with decision making bodies about the results to ensure accountability for timely and fair permit processing.
Chapter 7: Fiscal Impact				

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
7.1 Where capital improvement, utility, and land use plans involve lands within or adjacent to the UGA, the County and the Cities, individually and jointly, shall routinely conduct fiscal analysis, consistent with capital facility and utility planning requirements in RCW 36.70A.070(3) and (4), that identifies the most cost-effective means of providing and locating public services and infrastructure over the long term.	Develop or update fiscal analysis standards located in comprehensive plans or capital improvement plans in line with RCW 36.70A.070(3) and (4).	All jurisdictions individually	Capital improvement plan updates as required in each jurisdiction; land use changes as part of annual docket requests as well as periodic updates	Advisory council or similar body should jointly develop standards for fiscal analyses that are consistent with RCW 36.70A.070 and meet needs of all jurisdictions.
7.2 Each capital improvement plan should include: d. Plans for cooperation between the public and private sectors to ensure coordination of those plans with emphasis on the effective provision of services at the adopted level of service concurrent with demand; e. Inventory of existing capital facilities; and f. Assessment of future needs.	Ensure capital improvement plans meet the standards enumerated in this policy.	All jurisdictions	Next update to each jurisdictions' capital improvement plan.	Capital improvement plan text.
7.4 The County and the Cities should consider the imposition of impact fees to ensure that new development pays its fair share for improvements necessitated by growth and contributes to the overall financing of capital improvements. Changes in or impositions of	Introduce discussion of impact fees with decision making bodies in each jurisdiction as appropriate	Staff at each jurisdiction	After 2026 comprehensive plan update	Annual work program for city councils/board of county commissioners.

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
new impact fees should be accompanied by an analysis consistent with statutory requirements.				
7.5 The County and the Cities may develop a process for use by local government to facilitate the identification, analysis, and disclosure of the fiscal impacts of major development proposals and governmental actions. The process shall establish a formula to address fiscal impacts, including tax revenues and service cost implications of the following: e. Proposed changes in municipal boundaries; f. Proposed changes in UGAs; g. Proposed master planned resorts; and h. Proposed large-scale residential, commercial, and industrial developments.				
Chapter 8: Coordination with Tribal Governments				
8.2 Local jurisdictions should work with the Tribes to develop agreements that ensure that the Tribes are consulted on issues within their interest early in the periodic update process.	Work with tribes to develop agreements that ensure Tribes are consulted early in the periodic update process	Each jurisdiction	Early in the 2026 comp plan update process (late 2024)	Letter from mayor/other chief executive or elected official to appropriate Tribal official formally

Policy requiring one or more jurisdictions to take tangible action	Action(s) needed	Responsible party(ies)	Timeline	Implementation mechanism
Policy Prioritization Key	"Shall" policy (required, usually related to statutory requirements)	"Should" policy (implementation expected, but completion is not mandatory)		"May" policy (either advisable or allowed)
The parties to these agreements will jointly determine the appropriate contents of the agreements and a schedule for completing them.				inviting participation in the comp plan process. Should be done in early stages of public engagement and scoping so information can be provided with Tribes about opportunities to participate.
8.3 The County and the Cities shall include Tribal government agencies in public notice and comment procedures and keep them informed of matters of interest to them.	Public notice and comment procedures specifically include Tribal government agencies	Each jurisdiction individually	Early 2025 at the latest to ensure notice is being provided appropriately during early phases of comp plan update	Municipal/county code and SEPA distribution lists (annual work program)
8.4 The County and the Cities should ensure that their development regulations provide processes for inadvertent discovery of cultural resources during development activity.	Review or develop inadvertent discovery language into code	Staff from all jurisdictions	2025	Annual work program

Appendix IX. Climate Vulnerability Assessment

Walla Walla Climate Element

Climate Vulnerability Assessment



The City of Walla Walla Climate Element is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act. The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov.

GLOSSARY

- **Adaptive Capacity:** The ability to moderate the damage of, cope with, or adjust to climate change. An example of this is having access to a vehicle and health insurance which increases people's ability to manage health impacts from extreme heat, smoke, and any injuries related to climate hazards.
- **Climate Change:** The long-term shifting of environmental conditions and a change in predicted weather patterns. Climate change shows itself in many ways, including changes in rainfall, droughts, increasing floods, and heat waves.
- **Climate Hazards:** The climate-related physical events or trends that may cause damage and loss, such as floods, extreme heat, and wildfire.
- **Climate Risks**: The potential impacts that climate change could have on a system, which depend on its exposure to climate factors and its sensitivity to those changes.
- **Exposure:** The degree to which a system is exposed to climate hazards. For example, areas in towns and cities that are in a 100-year floodplain will have higher exposure to flooding impacts.
- **Sensitivity:** The degree to which that system is likely to be affected by climate change. For example, older adults are less able to regulate their body temperatures and thus more physically sensitive to extreme heat than younger people.
- **Frontline Communities:** Communities that will be disproportionately impacted by climate change; these are the populations that face historic and current inequities, often experience the earliest and most acute impacts of climate change and have limited resources and/or capacity to adapt.
- **Overburdened Communities:** Geographic areas where vulnerable populations experience multiple, compounding environmental harms and health risks. In Washington State, these communities have historically faced systemic health, social, and environmental inequities, leading to disproportionate exposure to pollution, climate hazards, and limited access to resources that support well-being.
- **Urban Heat Island Effect:** Urban areas that are significantly warmer than surrounding rural areas. They form where there is limited greenery and a high density of heat-absorbing urban materials, such as concrete, asphalt, and buildings. Heat islands can occur in small or large cities and suburban areas, or anywhere with large extents of heat-absorbing surfaces and fewer trees.
- **Vulnerability**: The state of susceptibility to harm from exposure to stresses associated with environmental and social change and from the absence of the capacity to adapt.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) is a foundational component of Walla Walla's Climate Element (CE) for the 2026 Comprehensive Plan update. This document provides an overview of current and projected climate risks affecting the city's infrastructure, ecosystems, and residents, serving as a critical resource for climate resilience and adaptation planning. The purpose of this document is to guide the development of CE measures to enhance climate resilience and integrate climate considerations into future planning and development.

Climate Impacts: Today and Tomorrow

The City of Walla Walla ("Walla Walla") has already experienced climate impacts and will continue to be affected by climate hazards, such as rising temperatures, periods of poor air quality, and reduced winter snowpack leading to drought. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report highlights the need to reduce emissions and prepare for climate impacts. Without action, these impacts will grow more intense, and adaptation will be necessary across multiple sectors to avoid ever-worsening outcomes (IPCC, 2023). Without investments into climate action at the global scale and adaptations to current and future climate risks, the city is expected to face increasingly severe climate impacts, including:

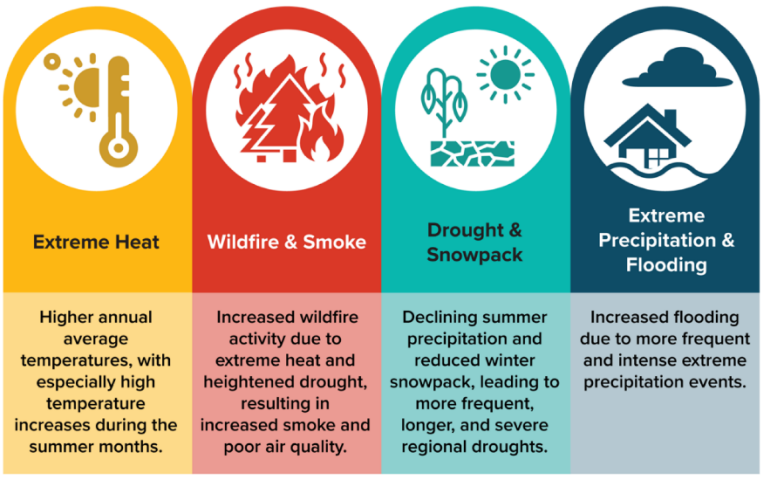


Figure 1. Key Climate Impacts in the City of Walla Walla

As part of Walla Walla's update to its Comprehensive Plan, the City is developing a Climate Vulnerability Assessment to provide an overview of current and future climate risks that are affecting Walla Walla's social, economic, environmental, and physical systems. This CVA will be used to develop and prioritize Climate Resilience Element goals and policies to enhance climate resilience in the city.

Assessing Vulnerability

The CVA focuses on key climate risks and hazards affecting Walla Walla's assets and sectors aligned with the Comprehensive Plan. The risk assessment examines climate risks in terms of exposure and sensitivity and assesses the ability of a sector to respond by examining the adaptive capacity. **Exposure** refers to the extent a system encounters climate hazards, **sensitivity** assesses the system's likelihood of being affected, and **adaptive capacity** reflects the system's ability to cope with or adjust to climate impacts.

The CVA analysis draws on extensive research from municipal, county, state, federal, Tribal, and peer-reviewed sources, supplemented by input from the City's Climate Policy Advisory Team (CPAT). This collaborative planning process included one community survey, one staff listening session, and three CPAT meetings to address climate and hazard risks and inform resilience policies.

Key Findings

Key findings for each of the three sectors analyzed in this CVA are summarized here, with an overall climate vulnerability ranking. The overall vulnerability score for each sector combines the climate risk and adaptive capacity scores to provide a broad understanding of vulnerability to climate change impacts, ranging from low to high. A "high vulnerability" rating signifies both a high level of climate risk and a low level of adaptive capacity. Whereas a "low vulnerability" rating indicates a low level of climate risk and a high level of adaptive capacity. The ranking tables below include icons to indicate the degree of climate risk, adaptive capacity, and overall vulnerability. Further details on this scoring, methodology, and rationale are in the Approach and Methodology and Appendix 1. Climate Risk and Adaptive Capacity Scoring Matrix section.

The CVA is divided into three main sectors: Community Health and Well-Being, Natural Environment and Water Resources, and Built Infrastructure. These sectors were identified in collaboration with City staff and CPAT. Assessing infrastructure and assets impacted by climate hazards using sectors aligns with Commerce guidance. The sector structure enables city staff to quickly identify information relevant to their departmental operations. Additionally, each sector has three sub-sectors. While some sub-sectors and their assets may align with other sectors or sub-sectors, the designations represent the most relevance and connection within the sector.

Community Health and Well-being

Walla Walla's community health and well-being is vulnerable to extreme heat, flooding, and wildfires. These climate hazards will be especially impactful to vulnerable populations including the elderly, disabled, unhoused, and those living with chronic health conditions. More frequent and severe heatwaves, floods, and wildfires can strain emergency services as more people may be needing care and resources. Outdoor workers, including those in construction and agriculture, face risk of poor air quality and heat stress during wildfires and extreme heat days. The City has some plans including a Community Wildfire Protection Plan to increase wildfire emergency responses, but additional planning is needed to address public health impacts from extreme heat and flooding.

Table 1. Community Health and Well-being Climate Vulnerability Ranking

Sector	Climate Risk	Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)	Vulnerability
Physical and Mental Health	 High	 Moderate	 Moderate/High
Emergency Management	 Moderate	 Low	 Moderate
Community Services	 Moderate	 Low	 Moderate

Natural Environment and Water Resources

Walla Walla's natural environment and water resources face significant risks from climate change, including extreme heat, drought, and wildfires, which threaten ecosystems, agriculture, and water quality. Rising temperatures and reduced snowpack are putting stress on water resources, impacting agriculture, fisheries, and habitats, while increasing wildfire frequency threatens timber, water quality, and vulnerable watersheds. Drought and declining snowpack further stress water supplies, with the potential for long-term impacts on agriculture, water infrastructure, and streamflow. Although some measures are in place, such as water conservation and wildfire protection, more comprehensive planning is needed to address the increasing risks to agriculture, ecosystems, and cultural resources from climate change.

Table 2. Natural Environment and Water Resources Climate Vulnerability Ranking

Sector	Climate Risk	Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)	Vulnerability
Ecosystems, Parks, and Open Space	Moderate/High	Moderate/High	Moderate/High
Water Supply and Quality	Moderate/High	Moderate	Moderate/High
Resource Lands	Moderate/High	Moderate/Low	Moderate/High



Built Infrastructure

Housing and transportation infrastructure in Walla Walla faces significant heat, wildfire, and flooding risks due to the urban heat island effect, wildfire and smoke occurrence in the region, and numerous streams and creeks throughout the city. Extreme temperatures will damage the city's transportation and housing infrastructure, leading to higher maintenance and repair costs, as well as increased financial strain and public health risks for residents. Walla Walla also faces a high risk of short-duration, high-volume flooding from Mill Creek, driven by intense rain or rapid snowmelt. While the Mill Creek flood control project has reduced flood impacts in the city, aging infrastructure and recurring floods highlight ongoing vulnerabilities, especially upstream and downstream of the flood control channel. Walla Walla has undertaken several projects to increase stormwater resilience including street trees, bioswales, and additional pipe capacity. While some structures face direct and indirect wildfire exposure risk, the most significant impact from wildfire might be decreased air quality during fire season. Additional planning is needed to increase weatherization in current and new housing, and to properly determine climate hazard risks to housing, roads, and other key infrastructure.

Table 3. Built Infrastructure Climate Vulnerability Ranking

Sector	Climate Risk	Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)	Vulnerability
Transportation	 Moderate	 Low	 Moderate
Housing	 Moderate/High	 Moderate	 Moderate/High
Water Infrastructure	 Moderate	 Moderate	 Moderate/Low

Next Steps

The results of the CVA will be used to inform policy development for the City Climate Element as part of the Comprehensive Plan update.

INTRODUCTION

Report Goals

To ensure that resilience measures address the climate impacts that are most relevant to the City of Walla Walla, Cascadia Consulting Group (project team) is conducting this **Climate Vulnerability Assessment** as part of the first phase of the Climate Element planning process. The vulnerability assessment will help the project team, the City, and planning partners prioritize climate resilience measures. This CVA complies with Washington State Department of Commerce's Climate Element Guidance, and aims to:



Figure 2. Primary objectives of the Climate Vulnerability Assessment

Why Assess Climate Change Vulnerability?

Walla Walla is already facing climate change effects, such as rising temperatures, more frequent droughts, and shifts in precipitation patterns. The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (2023) highlights the urgency of mitigation and adaptation, warning that without action, climate impacts will worsen, and adaptation will be necessary across multiple sectors to avoid the worst outcomes (IPCC, 2023). Without investments into climate action and adaptations to current and future climate risks, the city is expected to face increasingly severe climate impacts, including rising annual average temperatures, reducing snowpack and variable precipitation leading to longer and more frequent droughts, worsened wildfire smoke and poor air quality days, and more intense extreme weather events.



Wildfire Smoke Walla Walla Valley (Union Bulletin, 2023)

Recent examples of climate impacts include the record-breaking heat dome experienced in the summer of 2021, which caused significant heat-related illness and infrastructure strain. Coordinating climate planning efforts helps the City address "compounding impacts," where multiple hazards—such as wildfires and power outages—occur simultaneously, resulting in greater damage and more complex recovery efforts. For instance, wildfires can increase air pollution (PM2.5), and when combined with a heat wave and power outages, it can create hazardous health conditions.

Approach and Methodology

This CVA leverages research available across City, county, state, federal, and peer-reviewed sources to assess how various systems across the city are vulnerable to climate change. As a first step, the project team reviewed the landscape of current climate change risks and plans across multiple City, county, and regional reports. This CVA builds on a solid foundation of climate research, data, and planning to provide an analysis specific to Walla Walla and areas within the city.

Sectors

The project team used a qualitative approach to analyze existing literature with the goal of creating three sector-focused vulnerability assessments. There are three primary sectors within this CVA. These sectors are defined below (Table 4).

Table 4. CVA Sectors and Sub-sectors

Sector	Sub-sector
Community Health and Well-being	• Public health (physical and mental health) • Emergency management • Community services
Built Infrastructure	• Housing • Transportation • Water infrastructure
Natural and Water Resources	• Ecosystems, parks, and open space • Water supply and quality • Resource lands

Climate Vulnerability Framework

Climate vulnerability is defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a combination of **climate risks** (a combination of exposure to climate impacts and sensitivity to those impacts) and the **capacity to adapt** (Figure 3). We use this framework to understand Walla Walla's vulnerability to climate change. To characterize **Climate Risk,** we looked at:

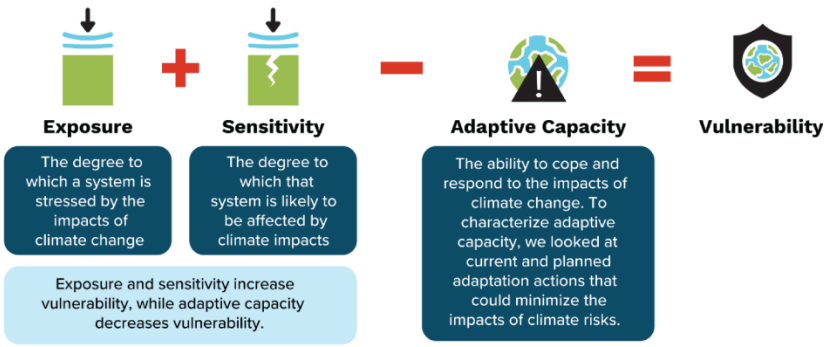


Figure 3. Climate Vulnerability Framework

Climate risks (Exposure plus Sensitivity) increase vulnerability, while adaptive capacity helps reduce vulnerability. A CVA can help identify ways to boost adaptive capacity or manage risks, thereby enhancing the city's resilience to climate change.

The overall vulnerability score for each sector combines the climate risk and adaptive capacity scores to provide a broad understanding of vulnerability to climate change impacts, ranging

from low to high. A "high vulnerability" rating signifies both a high level of climate risk and a low level of adaptive capacity. Whereas a "low vulnerability" rating indicates a low level of climate risk and a high level of adaptive capacity. For the full Climate Risk and Adaptive Capacity Scoring Matrix, refer to Appendix 1. Climate Risk and Adaptive Capacity Scoring Matrix.

It is important to note that this city-wide assessment is not intended to evaluate specific infrastructure or assets. Individual facilities and communities may have vulnerabilities that differ from the sector-level findings. Though this methodology is based on established methods, these rankings are meant to be informative and may not encapsulate some of the nuances of climate vulnerability across Walla Walla.

Documents and Resources

This CVA leveraged a wide body of research available from City, county, state, federal, and academic and peer-reviewed sources. The project team review of academic, professional and government sources was also supplemented with local, community-based sources including local newspapers and various community engagement activities. Resources reviewed include:

Category	Resources
Walla Walla Policy and Planning Context	• City of Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan (2018) • Walla Walla County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2025) • Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan (2021) • Walla Walla Regional Housing Action Plan (2021) • City of Walla Walla Urban Forestry Management Plan (2021) • City of Walla Walla Stormwater Management Plan (2015) • CTUIR Climate Adaptation Plan (2022) • City of Walla Walla Strategic Plan (2024) • Tiger Mill Plan (2025) • Walla Walla Continuing Operations Plan (2023) • Go Walla Walla Project Story Map
Regional Climate Data and Assessments	• Climate Mapping for a Resilient Washington (2023) • Fifth National Climate Assessment (2023) • Washington State Climate Summary (2022) • PNW Temperature, Precipitation, and SWE Trend Analysis Tool (2023)
Social Vulnerability Assessment Tools	• Census Data • CDC Social Vulnerability Index • WA Environmental Health Disparities Tool • Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

Please refer to Appendix 3. Social and Economic Vulnerability for a detailed analysis on how Walla Walla's social and economic vulnerability was considered throughout this assessment.

Spatial Analysis

In addition to existing City maps, the project team created new maps to better assess the extreme heat and wildfire vulnerabilities to key assets in Walla Walla, as well as social vulnerability data. Data was compiled from multiple data sources including the City of Walla Walla, Trust for Public Land, and the US Census Bureau. The City of Walla Walla GIS team provided point and polygon data for key features including trees, housing, and community buildings. Critical facilities and housing points were supplemented and verified with internet searches. All maps were developed in ArcGIS Pro.

Map	Data Source
Heat Severity	Trust for Public Land
Critical Facilities	City of Walla Walla – GIS Supervisor
Housing	City of Walla Walla – GIS Supervisor
Tree Canopy and Parks	City of Walla Walla – GIS Supervisor
Age and Income Demographics	US Census Bureau - American Community Survey

Engagement

The City and relevant partners were engaged through review periods, presentations, and workshops. During the CVA drafting process, the project team presented preliminary findings to the CPAT and conducted a staff workshop to solicit input and gather additional information . The vulnerability assessment was also shared with the City staff team and CPAT members for one round of review. The project team relied on input and data gathered from Climate Resilience Element public engagement activities, such as the Climate Survey, to ensure the CVA reflects local understanding and priorities.

CLIMATE CHANGE TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

This summary analyzes historical trends and future projections to illustrate the current and anticipated impacts of climate change and related hazards in Walla Walla. The city is expected to face the following climate impacts now and into the future:

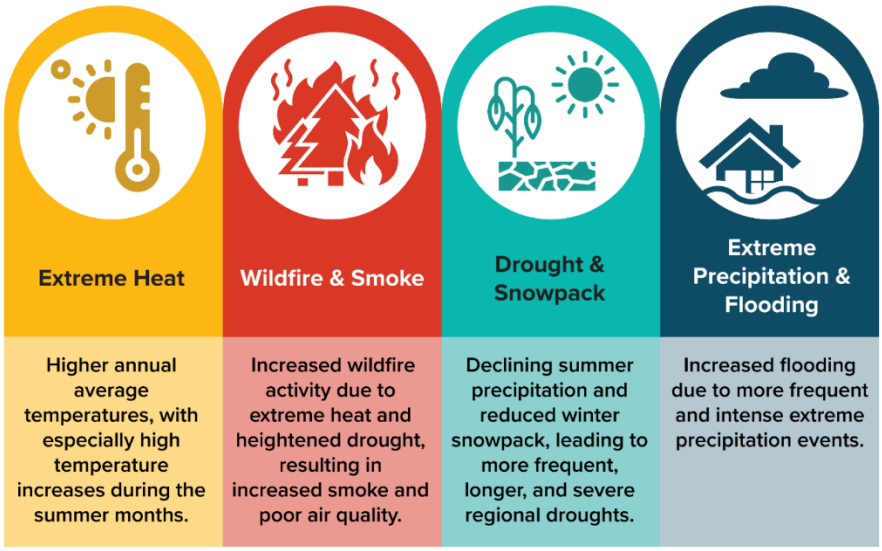


Figure 4. Key Climate Impacts in the City of Walla Walla

Climate Impacts Assessment

Methodology

The first step in the Vulnerability Assessment process was to perform a climate impacts assessment. To complete this, the project team used a variety of established and peer-reviewed resources—including the University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group's Climate Mapping for a Resilient Washington, NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information WA State Climate Summary, the 5th National Climate Assessment's Northwest Chapter, and other relevant studies and datasets—to identify observed and projected climate trends relevant for the city. When city-scale data was not available, the team relied on Walla Walla county-scale climate impact data, as noted throughout the document. Additionally, while earthquakes present a natural hazard to the city, earthquakes were not included as a climate hazard because there is limited verified correlations between climate change and earthquakes (Walla Walla County -

Emergency Management, 2024). For the full Climate Impacts Summary, see Appendix 2. Summary of Climate Impacts.

Climate Drivers and Variability

Climate change refers to the long-term shifting of environmental conditions and weather patterns. Climate change is primarily caused by human activity, particularly the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from burning fossil fuels. Higher levels of atmospheric GHGs, notably carbon emissions, have driven the increase in land and ocean temperatures since the Industrial Revolution, leading to various biophysical impacts such as more frequent and intense heatwaves, wildfires, storms, droughts, melting glaciers, sea-level rise, and ocean acidification (Marvel, et al., 2023).

Natural feedback processes like the El Niño-Southern Oscillation and the Pacific Decadal Oscillation contribute to variations in air temperature, extreme weather events, precipitation, and ocean conditions over interannual and interdecadal periods. However, the rate of climate change caused by human activities far exceeds any natural variability from these processes (Perlwitz, Knutson, Kossin, & LeGrande, 2017).

Climate Scenarios and Projection Models

The rise in GHG emissions in the atmosphere has already caused the climate to change significantly, as described above. Models projecting future climate conditions and impacts, including how climate hazards will increase and intensify over the next century, use a variety of climate scenarios. These scenarios are based on factors such as future land use, population growth, technological innovation, and global GHG emission levels.

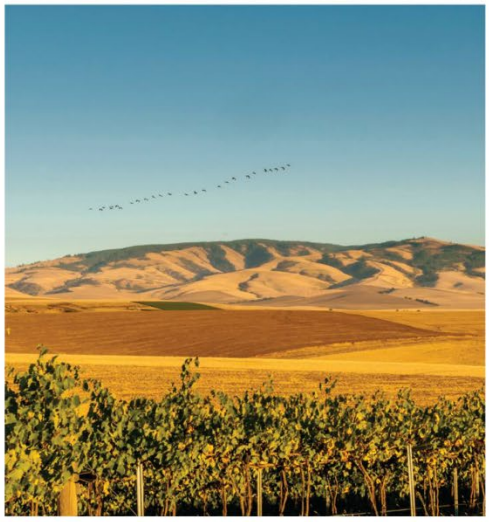
The Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs) are scenarios developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to model potential climate futures based on different levels of greenhouse gas concentrations. Each RCP represents a different "pathway" or level of carbon dioxide and other emissions in the atmosphere, depending on a range of possible human behaviors and climate processes. These pathways allow researchers, policymakers, and communities to explore potential risks and plan for changes (IPCC, 2022).

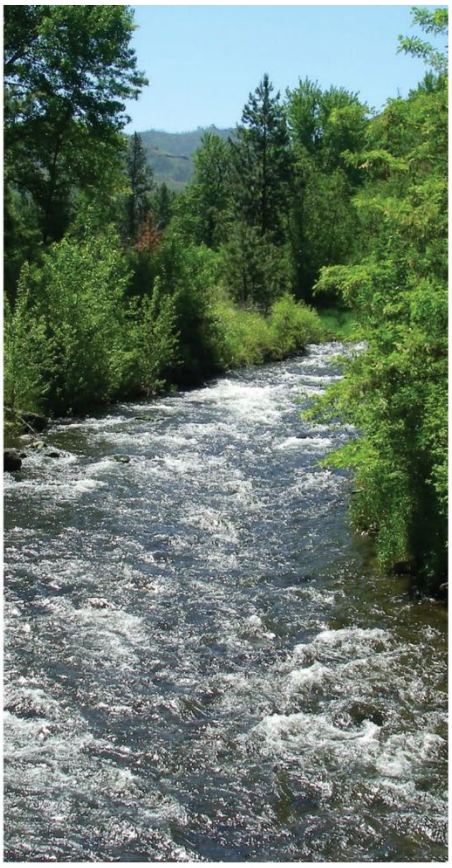
This vulnerability assessment will primarily use RCP 8.5, which represents a ”business-as-usual” scenario in which emissions continue at their current trajectory. It is a high emissions scenario and projects a global temperature warming of about 4.3˚C (approximately 7.7 ˚F) by 2100 relative to pre-industrial temperatures (IPCC, 2022). This CVA primarily uses RCP 8.5 because it represents the most realistic emissions trajectory that we are currently on.

CLIMATE VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Relying on the methodology outlined above and building on the information gathered through the Climate Impacts Summary (Appendix 2. Summary of Climate Impacts) and the Social and Economic Vulnerability Assessment (Appendix 3. Social and Economic Vulnerability), the project team assessed the city's vulnerability across three key sectors. The following sections provide an assessment of overall climate vulnerability score, key takeaways and an overview of key climate risks and adaptive capacity within Walla Walla.









Community Health and Well-being

How to Read this Section

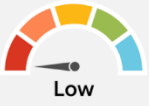
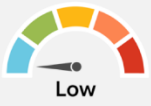
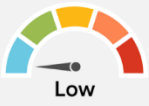
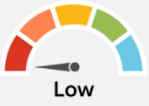
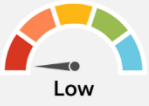
This section presents the climate vulnerability assessment of Walla Walla's physical health, mental health, emergency management, and community services sub-sectors. Each sub-sector includes an analysis of climate risks across relevant climate impacts, as well as a discussion on adaptive capacity. Note that the Community Health and Well-being sector overlaps with the other two sectors in topics such as resource lands and water infrastructure, so it is important to consider the full CVA for the most comprehensive analysis. Consequently, drought was not assessed for Physical and Mental Health or Emergency Management sub-sectors because the Natural Environment and Water Resources sector describes this climate impact and effect on communities in detail.

Introduction and Key Takeaways

Community health and well-being faces moderate risk from climate risks including extreme heat, extreme precipitation and flooding, and wildfire and wildfire smoke. Extreme heat events will impact vulnerable populations such as the unhoused, elderly, and ill, while wildfire smoke can worsen existing conditions and make it unsafe for people to work or recreate outside. Extreme precipitation and flooding can damage homes, cause trees to fall on people or buildings, and inundate important infrastructure and transportation networks in Walla Walla. Climate impacts, especially flooding and wildfire events, may strain emergency response resources. There is a need for additional comprehensive planning to address gaps to exposure and sensitivity to these climate impacts in this sector, especially for overburdened communities.

Table 5. Key vulnerability rankings for the community health and wellbeing sector

Physical and Mental Health			
Climate Stressor	**Climate Risk**	**Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)**	**Vulnerability**
Extreme Heat			
Extreme Precipitation			
Drought	See Water Supply & Quality		
Wildfire/Wildfire Smoke			

Emergency Management			
Climate Stressor	**Climate Risk**	**Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)**	**Vulnerability**
Extreme Heat			
Extreme Precipitation			
Drought	See Water Supply & Quality		
Wildfire/Wildfire Smoke			
Community Services			
Climate Stressor	**Climate Risk**	**Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)**	**Vulnerability**
Extreme Heat			
Extreme Precipitation			
Drought			
Wildfire/Wildfire Smoke			

Physical and Mental Health

Climate Risk

Climate change has mental and community health impacts related to flooding and wildfire events that can displace and injure residents. In addition, Walla Walla experiences extreme temperature and storm events that can threaten the wellbeing of residents, especially vulnerable populations. Extreme heat, extreme precipitation, and poor air quality will lead to negative public health outcomes in the city, exacerbating chronic health problems and stressing the city's healthcare system (Vogel, J., et al., 2023). While all residents will experience physical and mental health impacts to some extent, some community members will be more sensitive to these impacts.

According to the WA Department of Health, Walla Walla has relatively high disparity ratings for Environmental Health Disparities, Socioeconomic Factors, and Sensitive Populations, with the north-west central area of the city ranking highest. For socioeconomic factors, which demonstrate the concentration of vulnerable populations in the area, such as those living below the poverty line, those without high school diplomas, and historically disadvantaged communities, Walla Walla's score is high, especially in the north-west area of the city. There are two census tracts with high instances of low-income residents (37-41%) with average incomes under 185% of the poverty level (Figure 5).

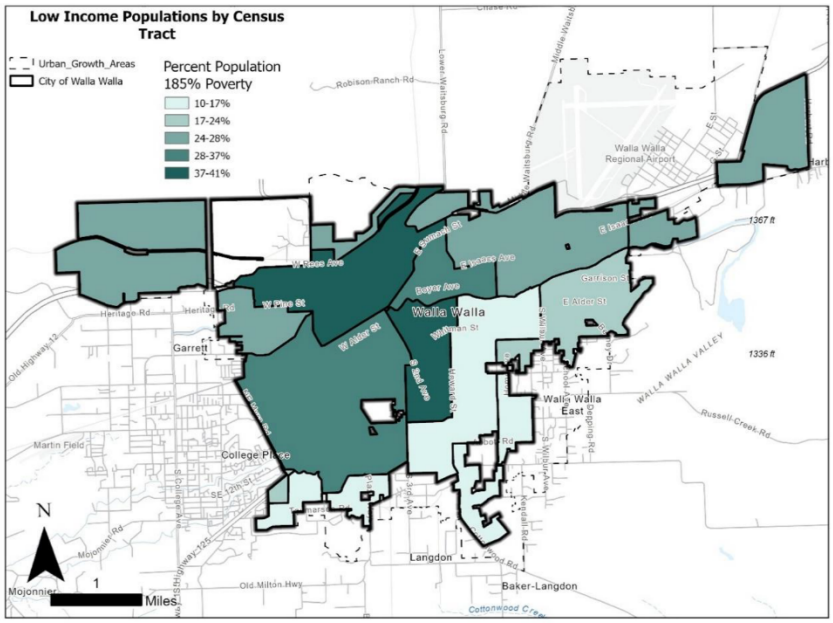


Figure 5. Percent of low-income population, defined as household income less than 185% poverty level by Census Block Group. Map by Cascadia (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

For sensitive populations, which demonstrates populations at risk to cardiovascular disease and populations with low birthrates, the city's score is high in the central area of the city and

medium-low in areas outside the city center. There are 9,500 residents over 65 years old in Walla Walla (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). In 15 block groups, there is a larger percentage of the population over 65 years than the city average (Figure 6).

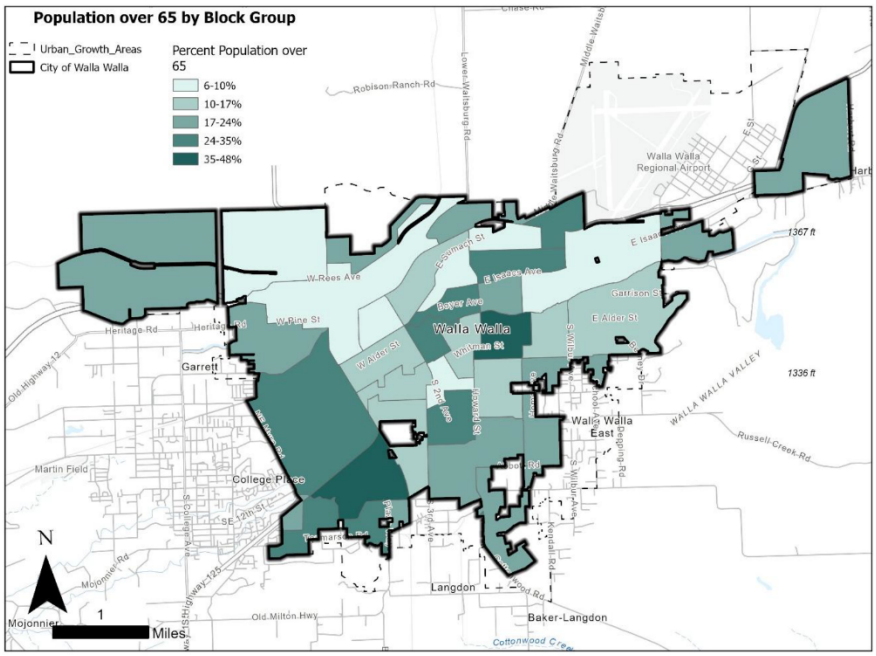


Figure 6. Percent of population over 65 years by Census Block Group. Map by Cascadia (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

Increased Temperatures and Heatwaves

Extreme temperatures put vulnerable populations in Walla Walla at risk. Houseless individuals and people experiencing poverty may lack adequate shelter to protect them from extreme temperatures. In the City of Walla Walla, 14.4% of the population is experiencing poverty, compared to the state rate of 10.3% (US Census ACS 2021). Extreme heat also exacerbates pre-existing health conditions such as respiratory and cardiovascular diseases (Vogel, J., et al., 2023). Figure 7 highlights the areas in the city most exposed to severe heat in the summer and highlights the distribution of tree cover and availability of green spaces for cooling and recreational purposes.

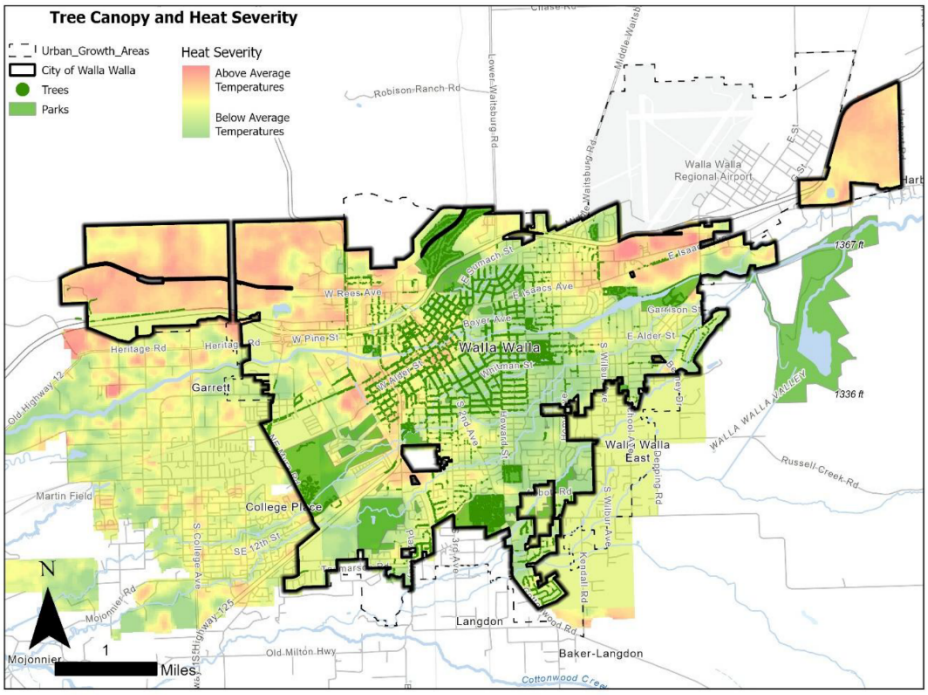


Figure 7. Heat severity, tree canopy, and green spaces in Walla Walla. Map by Cascadia (Trust for Public Land, 2025; City of Walla Walla, 2025)

Extreme heat events like the 2021 heat dome will become more likely in the future, and can cause cascading impacts on residents, businesses, and systems. Additionally, extreme heat can act as a force multiplier with compounding effects on other areas of physical and mental health, including unhealthy water conditions for species and illnesses in humans caused by excessive temperatures, longer growing seasons leading to greater pollen production and worse allergy seasons, an increase in biological contamination in surface waters, residential wells, and groundwater (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022).

Extreme heat has particularly dangerous implications for Walla Walla residents who must work outside (Center for American Progress, 2024). Prolonged heat exposure can cause heat exhaustion or stroke, potentially leading to hospitalization or death if untreated. High temperatures slow work pace and require more frequent breaks, and in extreme heat, work may be impossible. While resident well-being is crucial, reduced work opportunities also have economic impacts on families, businesses, and the city.



Walla Walla Outdoor Work (Walla Walla Public Works)

Issues related to extreme heat impact everyone, but they have particular implications for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) and Tribal members. Extreme heat can impact Tribal members' ability to harvest traditional foods. For example, Tribal Harvesters and Entrepreneurs, who spend significant time outdoors, face disproportionate mental and physical health impacts of climate hazards such has extreme heat (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022). More specifically, individuals who spend extended periods of time tending to land and harvesting First Foods in extreme heat may experience higher healthcare costs and increased emergency room visits. The Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) employs a significant population of construction workers from the Tribe, who face disproportionate exposure to extreme heat and other outdoor-work related challenges exacerbated by climate change (CTUIR, 2025). Extreme heat can especially impact Tribal youth, Tribal elders, and those with pre-existing health conditions. Chronic health issues such as physical inactivity, diabetes, and heart disease are worsened by reduced access to traditional food.

Walla Walla is the site of the Washington State Penitentiary, Washington's largest prison and with a capacity of approximately 2,200 people. Prison facilities and their populations are vulnerable to extreme temperatures due to lack of adequate natural and artificial cooling and ventilation (Ovienmhada, 2024). The Washington State Penitentiary is in a high seat severity area of Walla Walla (Figure 8). Additionally, many incarcerated individuals work in local industries, such as agriculture, and are exposed to extreme heat and poor air quality (CPAT, 2025). Some vineyard operators in and around Walla Walla have their workers leave the field around 93°F. However, penitentiary community members who work in outdoor industries may

have to work up to 105°F, putting them at significantly more risk (CPAT, 2025). This population is left out of most demographic surveys and index maps, so the true impact is underrepresented, furthering their vulnerability.

In June 2021, the Pacific Northwest experienced a historic heat dome that set all-time-high temperature records across the region. In Walla Walla, temperatures reach 116°F, breaking the high temperature record (NOAA, 2021). High temperature resulted in nearly 130 deaths in Washington (Vogel, et al., 2023), including 1 in Walla Walla County (Washington State Department of Health, 2022).

Finally, extreme heat can increase physical and emotional stress and can make everyday tasks more difficult. Living in prolonged stressful conditions can negatively impact communities and their ability to communicate productively. This can lead to diminished conflict resolution ability and inhibit social cohesion, impeding communities' ability to support each other through extreme heat events (Center for American Progress, 2015).

Wildfire And Wildfire Smoke

Wildfire and wildfire smoke, which is increasing in the Northwest, present direct and indirect health threats to people and animals. The frequency of illnesses and death during extreme heat events and wildfire smoke days is increasing, stressing chronic health conditions such as asthma and health systems more broadly (IPCC, 2022). Similar to extreme heat events, prolonged exposure to smoke and poor air quality can lead to hospitalization and long-term health problems, especially for outdoor workers.

Adaptive Capacity

The City of Walla Walla has an extensive street tree program that was reestablished by the Urban Forestry Plan in 2015. The program was started and is supported as a stormwater mitigation program, but street trees have a known heat island reducing effect (City of Walla Walla, 2015). For example, street trees and urban forests provide public health benefits by cooling the air and reducing pollution. Trees improve air quality by removing several pollutants from the atmosphere, including ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter. Additionally, trees can also reduce flooding by increasing permeable surfaces to store stormwater and manage water pollution (City of Walla Walla, 2015).

Through the Walla Walla Urban Forestry Plan, the City seeks solutions and programs to proactively manage its tree canopy to prevent emergency situations. The City has a goal to attain over 40% tree canopy coverage, with the goal of planting larger trees in less forested areas to increase tree canopy, which can reduce urban heat islands. The Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan also has policies to maintain the city's tree canopy to lower energy costs, keep people cool, and reduce heat exposure.

The Walla Walla County Department of Community Health (DCH) seeks to provide Walla Walla residents with tools and strategies to prepare for hazardous air quality events. The county shares resources including the EPA AirNow tool to allow residents to track real time air quality data. DCH shares symptoms that residents should be aware of and ways to protect themselves from wildfire smoke, including indoor air filters and reduced outdoor exposure.

The Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan also includes policies aimed at protecting water quality and human health, such as encouraging shoreline restoration and promoting physical activity

through thoughtful land use and community design. These policies contribute to the city's adaptive capacity by enhancing environmental resilience and supporting community well-being in the face of changing conditions.

Walla Walla typically operates at least one official cooling center during excessive heat warnings. Excessive heat warnings occur when two or more consecutive days temperatures exceed 105°F or nights do not fall below 75°F. The City publishes on the City website and via news outlets the location of the cooling center and other places residents can go to cool off such as libraries, parks, pools, and movie theaters. Figure 8 shows the location of the county-activated cooling center in Walla Walla. Not all residents may be aware of the location of the cooling center or have the ability to get there. For example, disabled or elderly residents may be able to access cooling centers but are among the most at risk of heat illness.

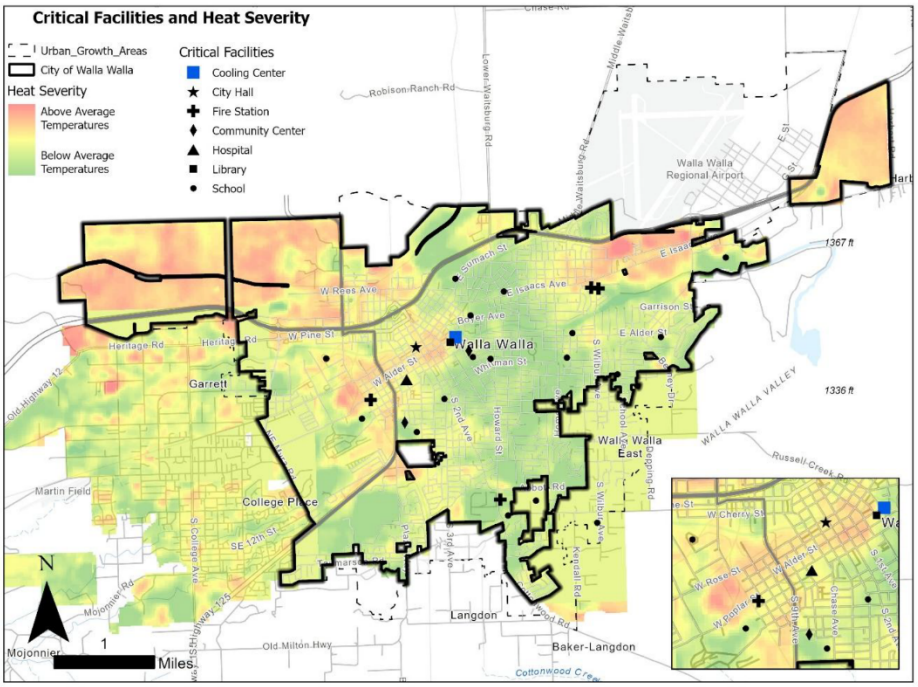


Figure 8. Heat severity and potential cooling opportunities for residents. Map by Cascadia (City of Walla Walla, 2025; Trust for Public Land, 2025).

The CTUIR Adaptation Plan includes policies and programs to increase public health beyond traditional metrics, including foods, mental health, and cultural practices. The connection and value of water, air, and land to "culturally sustainable practices" helps the Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Cayuse people survive as nations (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022). The CTUIR Adaptation Plan utilizes holistic, physical, and spiritual approaches to health, as indigenous communities define health in a multifaceted way.

Emergency Management

Climate Risk

Emergency management services including critical facilities, emergency services, and communication systems are vulnerable to climate impacts including extreme heat, flooding, and wildfire. Critical facilities and emergency services support community well-being by responding to emergencies and providing resources in critical situations. These resources include Providence Hospital, City fire stations, Walla Walla County Courthouse, police department and emergency dispatch, City Hall, and other government facilities, for example. If these facilities and resources are impacted by climate hazards such as flooding or wildfire, their ability to respond may be impacted.

Increased Temperatures and Heatwaves

More frequent and higher temperatures can increase demand for emergency services to respond and transport patients to hospitals for treatment. Higher temperatures exacerbate pre-existing conditions, especially for vulnerable populations such as those without health insurance or with disabilities.

Flooding

Flood events in Walla Walla often happen quickly. A sudden warming following a cold snap melts snow and ice, creating high meltwater in the valley (CPAT, 2025; Walla Walla County, 2025). Major impacts from flooding occur in areas without flood control measures, and severe storms can prevent or delay emergency responses. Providence Hospital has experienced employee and patient transportation issues during flooding events (Walla Walla County, 2025). Additionally, the hospital has had to shelter individuals following floods (Walla Walla County, 2025). Aging roads and bridges are also vulnerable to natural disasters, further impeding emergency responses (IPCC, 2023).

Walla Walla has experienced significant floods in 1931, 1964, 1996, and 2020. The 1931 flood led the US Army Corps of Engineers to complete flood control projects at Mill Creek. These included a diversion from Mill Creek to Yellowhawk and Garrison creeks and channelizing Mill Creek within the city.



Storm Damage (County of Walla Walla HMP)

Stormwater runoff and floodwater pose significant risks to water quality, potentially causing illness among residents. Walla Walla experiences around 2 extreme precipitation events of 1-inch or more annually, which exacerbate health risks related to flooding (Abatzoglou & Brown, 2012). In addition to concerns over waterborne diseases, these storms increase the likelihood of trees and limbs falling, further endangering residents and damaging buildings (Frankson, et al. , 2022). This situation presents an urgent emergency management challenge, requiring proactive measures to protect public health and infrastructure.

Wildfire

Drought increases the risk of wildfires in and around the City of Walla Walla, which increases the need for emergency management plans and programs. During a wildfire event, first responders need to quickly respond to the fire and support residents needing to evacuate. This depends on adequate and accessible communication channels and sufficient evacuation routes. The County has identified communication limitations due to the extensive and mountainous geography that interferes with radio communication (Walla Walla County Emergency Management, 2023). These communication challenges put first responders at risk and increase the likelihood of fires spreading and could lead to significant harm if a wildfire threatens Walla Walla (Walla Walla County Emergency Management, 2023).



Blue Creek Fire, Image from (NBC Right Now, 2015)

The 2015 wildfire season was the most destructive fire season to date in the region. It burned one million acres, around six times the average annual wildfire season (Frankson, et al. , 2022).

Adaptive Capacity

The City's Comprehensive Plan includes policies for wildfire mitigation, erosion control, emergency preparedness, and infrastructure readiness, enhancing the community's ability to manage climate-related hazards. These measures, including improved risk assessments, emergency water and power systems, and shelter availability, strengthen Walla Walla's adaptive capacity to effectively respond to emergencies and climate challenges.

The City of Walla Walla Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) outlines the processes and people responsible for responding to different emergency situations, including climate related hazards such as flooding and storms.

The Walla Walla County Community Wildfire Protection Plan also seeks to identify and address wildfire risks and improve wildfire response capabilities. Walla Walla has a watershed attendant and pays for fire watch with US Forest Service, as well as a 100-year partnership with the WA Department of Natural Resources.

The 2025 County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) has some flooding priority projects to mitigate flooding risks around Mill Creek. The plan includes general community protection measures such

as debris and sediment management, as well as vegetation and development controls, all focused on safeguarding against various hazards, including flooding. Additional policies include the construction of emergency generators to ensure a reliable water supply and building a local emergency communication system. The Hazard Mitigation Plan also recommends implementing the Mill Creek and Walla Walla County Community Wildfire Protection Plan to increase the City of Walla Walla's adaptive capacity.

Walla Walla seeks to continually improve flood awareness and preparation. The Mill Creek Flood project helped mitigate the flooding impacts in 1996 and 2020. In addition, the City has 13 National Flood Insurance Program policies in place with $5,150,000 in coverage. A FEMA grant to develop a watershed resiliency plan can ensure continuation of drinking water supply by increasing forest resilience to wildfire (City of Walla Walla, 2024). To increase preparedness for other disasters, the Walla Walla Strategic Plan identifies a proposal to strengthen the Community Paramedic Program. Additionally, the 2025 Myra Road South extension project seeks to reduce emergency response times by extending the road to connect to US 12. This extension will be completed by April 2026.

Community Services

Climate Risk

Community services include social services, cultural resources, food access, and schools supporting the Walla Walla community. This includes access to cultural resources and practices such as Indigenous stewardship and First Foods, which play a fundamental role in the health, well-being, and cultural identity of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Community services can provide an opportunity for Walla Walla residents to access resources necessary for resilience in the face of current and projected climate impacts. However, the physical and social infrastructure associated with community services are vulnerable to extreme heat, flooding, drought, and wildfire in the city.

Increased Temperatures and Heatwaves

Populations most vulnerable to the effects of high heat, such as houseless community members, can also be the hardest to support. Unhoused and low-income residents may have shelter that does not adequately protect against extreme temperatures, leaving them vulnerable to heat related illnesses. Building trust, relationships, and ongoing community resources is an important step service providers may take to ensure the health of all residents. Addressing the needs of vulnerable populations also requires supporting access to vital resources, such as First Foods, which are deeply connected to both cultural and community well-being.

First Foods, their nutritional value, and the ecosystems they depend on are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. While First Foods are extremely adaptive to climate change, the City must also manage land and resources for their success to promote resiliency (CTUIR, 2025). Rising temperatures, including the warming of surface waters, are disrupting the lifecycles and relationships of key species and threatening access to vital cultural resources. These disruptions not only affect the availability of First Foods but also undermine cultural and ceremonial practices, which are critical to the mental, cultural, and physical well-being of Tribes. Such changes have the potential to hinder the transmission of traditional knowledge, which plays a vital role in promoting Indigenous health and healing intergenerational trauma (IPCC, 2022).

Extreme weather events further exacerbate these challenges by affecting plant habitats, pollinator populations, and the overall health of ecosystems. Climate-induced stresses like increased invasive species, mismatches between vegetation growth and the nutritional needs of game animals, and rising risks of plant and animal diseases are all contributing to the destabilization of these essential food systems. As a result, the ecosystems that support the abundant and nutritious growth of First Foods are increasingly at risk, directly impacting the social services they provide, especially in times of climate changes (CTUIR, 2025).

Flooding

Several institutions that provide critical resources for city residents are vulnerable to flooding. The city is home to both hospitals in Walla Walla County, including the VA Medical Center, which is outpatient only, and Providence Hospital. During flood events, hospital employees experience transportation issues and may require time off. While the hospital is elevated, its generators are on the ground floor, making it vulnerable to power disruptions if there is a flood.

Walla Walla is also home to two colleges: Whitman College and Walla Walla Community College. Due to their proximity to Mill Creek, these large campuses and their populations may be vulnerable to flooding if Bennington Lake or the Mill Creek Channel overflow. Essential services and resources such as grocery stores, public works, large employers, and other community resources are at risk of severe weather impacts, such as flooding. These locations may be damaged by floods or made inaccessible by flooded roadways.

There are other critical facilities in the City of Walla Walla that may be at risk of a Mill Creek flood, including City Hall and WESCOM (City of Walla Walla, 2023).

Drought and Snowpack

Drought and low streamflow may impact some of Walla Walla's most important cultural resources, including First Foods growing and access to fishing rights. First Food availability and the health of their ecosystems is dependent on a healthy watershed and are vulnerable to variable precipitation including drought.

Wildfire

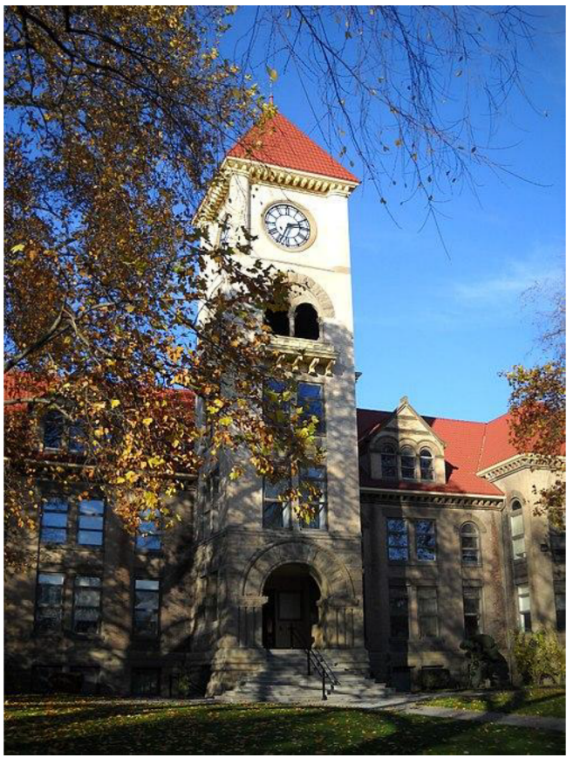
Wildfire can burn harvestable crops, cropland, and First Foods. As discussed above, wildfires can increase erosion, harming the quality and quantity of available topsoil to grow First Foods and other crops such as wine grapes. Additionally, wildfire smoke and related poor air quality can be harmful to anyone trying to harvest First Foods as short- and long-term exposure can have serious health effects. Integrating Indigenous cultural burning practices, such as intentionally lighting small, controlled fires, can help reduce wildfire risk by thinning forests, reducing fuel loads, and promoting healthy ecosystems (Lake, 2020). The Tiger Mill Project also aims to manage the spread of natural and prescribed fire safely and effectively, and reducing the risk associated with wildland fire's potential to degrade the municipal water supply (USDA Forest Service).

Childcare facilities in the city are particularly vulnerable to wildfire smoke, which are in high demand and must respond to high heat and smoke warnings (Climate Policy Advisory Team, 2025). As wildfire smoke events increase, childcare centers require additional tools and resources to keep their participants safe.

Adaptive Capacity

Walla Walla has a robust public-school and higher education network, which are important community features that can support the distribution of information and resources to community members. Schools and universities can take on a more intentional role to serve as community resource hubs providing shelter, support, and information about climate resilience and during natural hazard events.

Childcare providers are mandated to respond to smoke warnings to ensure the health and safety of the children. Some childcare centers have begun drafting plans to respond to smoke and heat warnings (CPAT, 2025). For example, childcare centers can provide air conditioning or adopt indoor air policies when poor air quality or high temperatures reach a certain threshold.



Whitman College Administrative Building.

Natural Environment and Water Resources

How to Read this Section

This section presents the overall climate vulnerability of Walla Walla's ecosystems, parks, and open space; water supply and quality; and resource lands. Each sub-sector includes an analysis of climate risks across relevant climate impacts, as well as a discussion on adaptive capacity. Note that the Natural Environment and Water Resources sector overlaps with the other two sectors in topics such as community services and water infrastructure, so it is important to consider the full CVA for the most comprehensive analysis. As noted in the summary table below, extreme precipitation was not assessed for the Water Supply and Quality sub-sector due to limited data availability, and drought was not assessed in the Ecosystems section because of overlapping content in the Water Supply and Quality sub-sector.

Introduction and Key Takeaways

Walla Walla's natural environment and water resources face moderate to high risks from climate change, particularly from extreme heat, drought, and wildfires, which impact ecosystems, natural resources, and agricultural lands. Rising temperatures are expected to affect water quality, availability, and ecosystems in the Walla Walla Watershed and surrounding area, while drought poses a significant threat to water supply and crop yields, particularly due to reduced snowpack and high water demand. The Mill Creek Watershed is highly vulnerable to wildfires, which could degrade water quality and habitats. Although some measures like water conservation, regional coordination of natural resources, and a Community Wildfire Protection Plan are in place, there is limited policy support for agricultural and ecosystem resilience directly related to climate, leaving crops, critical habitats, and cultural foods at risk. Overall, while there are some adaptive measures, more comprehensive planning related to climate resilience is needed to address the growing challenges of climate change on this sector.

Table 6. Key vulnerability rankings for the natural environment and water resources sector

Ecosystems, Parks, and Open Space			
Climate Stressor	**Climate Risk**	**Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)**	**Vulnerability**
Extreme Heat	 Moderate/High	 Moderate/High	 Moderate/High
Extreme Precipitation	 Moderate	 Moderate/High	 Moderate
Drought	See Water Supply & Quality		
Wildfire/Wildfire Smoke	 High	 Moderate	 High

Water Supply and Quality			
Climate Stressor	**Climate Risk**	**Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)**	**Vulnerability**
Extreme Heat			
Extreme Precipitation	Not assessed for this sector.		
Drought			
Wildfire/Wildfire Smoke			
Resource Lands			
Climate Stressor	**Climate Risk**	**Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)**	**Vulnerability**
Extreme Heat			
Extreme Precipitation			
Drought			
Wildfire/Wildfire Smoke			

Ecosystem, Parks, and Open Space

Climate Risk

Walla Walla's parks, ecosystems, and open spaces are increasingly vulnerable to various climate impacts, including declining snowpack, drought, prolonged heatwaves, and destructive flooding.

The City of Walla Walla park system exceeds 600 acres (18 parks), offering a variety of green spaces, programs, and community events (Figure 9). However, while the current park areas are sufficient for the population, projected growth in the southern part of the city will require additional park space to meet the needs of a younger and older population with higher demands for recreational activities (City of Walla Walla, 2018).

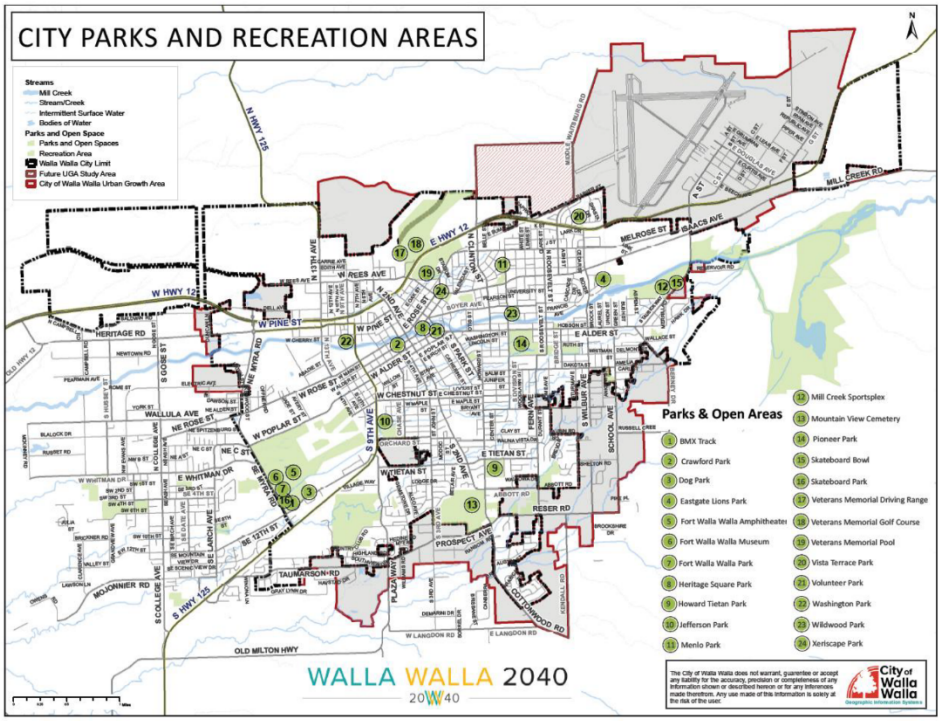


Figure 9. City Parks and Recreation Areas

Increased Temperature and Heatwaves

Within the City's UGA, there are several fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas and priority habitats that will likely be affected by climate impacts (Figure 10). For example, climate change can impact where native and non-native species live and how their populations change. Some non-native species can outcompete others, becoming invasive in both natural areas and human-managed lands like forests used for timber or recreation (Chang, et al., 2023). Rising temperatures, the spread of disease, and increased competition are putting native fish like the bull trout and cutthroat trout at risk.

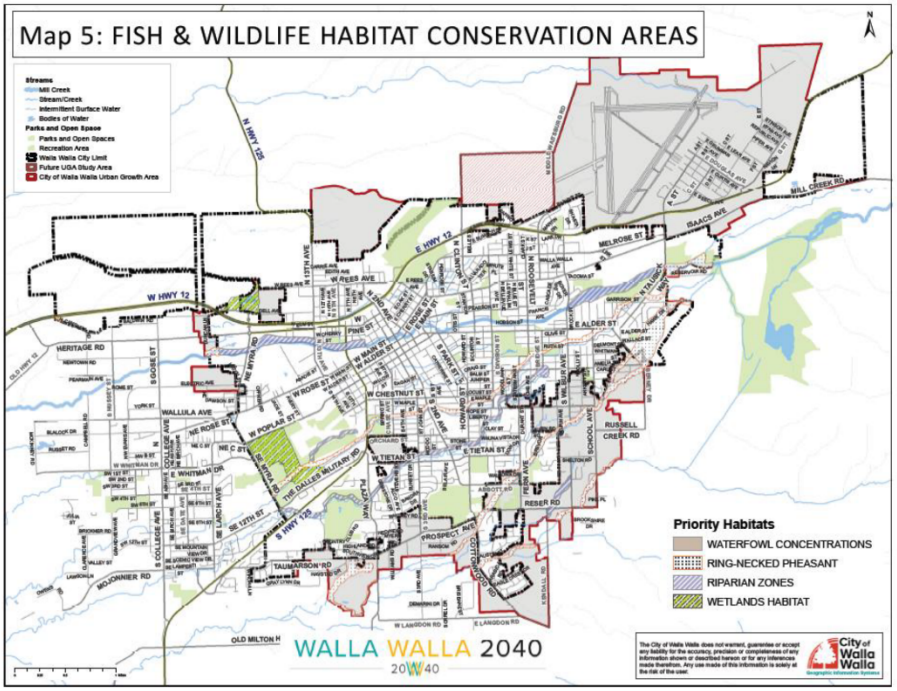


Figure 10. Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas - City of Walla Walla

The CTUIR First Foods ecosystems also depend on native insects for health and abundance. Climate change will likely reduce suitable habitats for key pollinators, including a 30% loss for Black-Notched Bumblebees and 6% for Fuzzy Horned Bumblebees by mid-century (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022). Additionally, invasive species, such as mussels, predatory fish, and drought-tolerant grasses, will benefit from changing conditions, outcompeting native species and increasing ecosystem stress. Warmer temperatures are likely to alter pathogen distribution, increasing disease and pest impacts on plants and animals, including conifers and big game, culturally important species to the CTUIR (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022).

Extreme Precipitation and Flooding

The City of Walla Walla maintains thousands of trees across public spaces and has been a Tree City USA for over 30 years, helping to improve flooding impacts and stormwater management. Trees help reduce stormwater management costs by intercepting rainfall, saving the City approximately $13,812 annually (ArborPro and City of Walla Walla, 2021). The city has several frequently flooded areas, including along Mill Creek, where parks also exist (Figure 11).

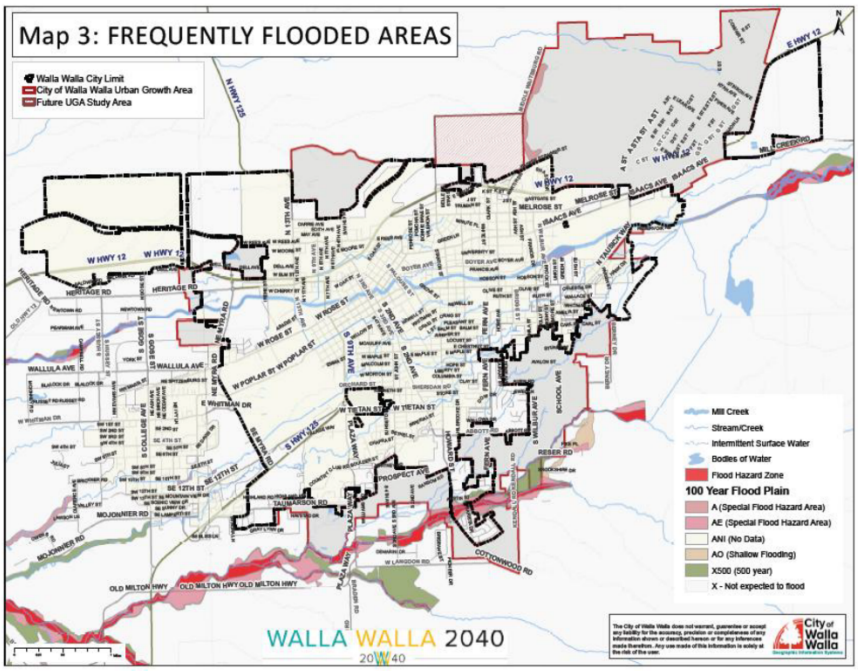


Figure 11. Frequently Flooded Areas - City of Walla Walla

In 2018, the City of Walla Walla launched a green infrastructure maintenance program, funded by the Stormwater Utility and managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. Most of the trees in Walla Walla (69%) are in "good" or "better" condition as of 2021, with approximately 6.1% of the city's trees in poor condition; and less than another 1% in critical or dead condition (ArborPro and City of Walla Walla, 2021). Additionally, about 22% of Walla Walla's potential urban forest remains unplanted.



Pioneer Park (Rose Garden at Pioneer Park, 2016)

Walla Walla has experienced, on average, two significant storms every year for the past 50 years. Changing precipitation patterns is also likely to disrupt vegetation growth, affecting big game nutritional needs and reproductive success for key species to the CTUIR (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022).

The County of Walla Walla suffered considerable damage from a windstorm on January 4, 2008, with gusts reaching 78 mph and sustained winds of 55 mph. The storm caused an estimated $4.9 million in damage across Walla Walla County, with nearly 40% of homes in the valley affected, largely due to falling trees. While this storm was Countywide, many of the trees affected were in urban areas, such as within the City's UGA.

Wildfire

Fire was once a natural part of Washington's ecosystems, occurring regularly with seasonal lightning storms and through cultural burning (Lake, 2020). The frequency and intensity of fires varied based on plant types and conditions. However, over the last century of wildfire suppression, fuel buildup has led to more intense and uncontrollable fires (Walla Walla County Emergency Management, 2023).

Regional weather shifts are also increasing fire risk, with wet seasons leading to excessive vegetation growth followed by dry conditions. Wildfire risk is expected to rise significantly, with the Columbia River region seeing two to three times greater risk and the Blue Mountains facing a six times increase with a 1.8°F rise in temperature (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022).

Between 1970 and 2015, the Walla Walla watershed experienced 37 fire ignitions. Current fire fuel models show over 23,000 acres of timber and nearly 10,000 acres of shrub/grasslands at

high risk for extreme fire behavior, especially during typical fire season conditions (Walla Walla County Emergency Management, 2023).

For ecosystems, increases in wildfire size and intensity are expected to lead to local extinctions of resident fishes, warmer stream temperatures, and increased sediment transport, turbidity, and fine sediments in streambeds. Connecting habitats can help prevent local extinctions after wildfires and debris flows, but if habitat areas are small and separated by factors like temperature or road barriers, extinctions may be permanent (Chang, et al., 2023).

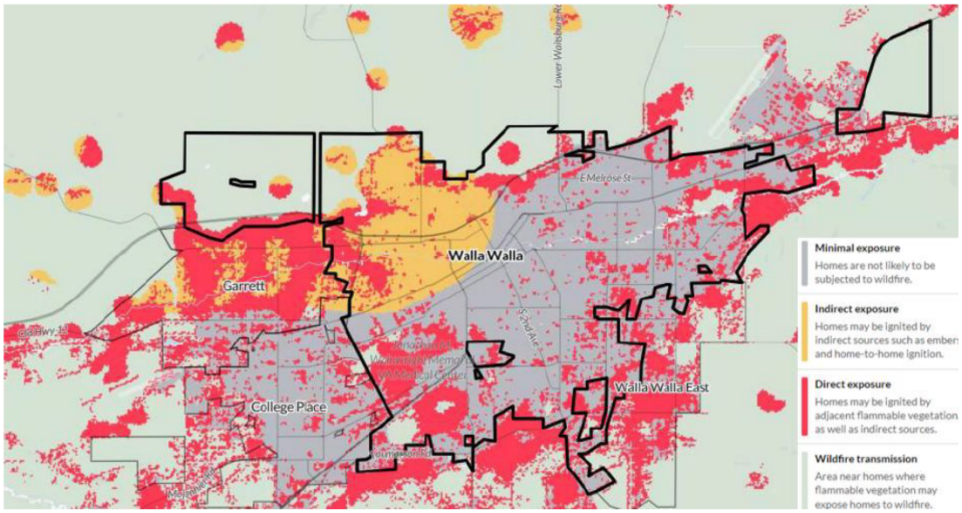


Figure 12. Wildfire Risk Reduction Zones (Walla Walla County - Emergency Management, 2024)

Wildfire risk analysis identifies the southwestern and northern parts of Walla Walla County, along with areas between Eureka Flats and the City of Walla Walla, as the most fire prone. This is due to fire frequency, proximity to emergency services, fuel availability, fire history, and development in these regions (Walla Walla County Emergency Management, 2023).

In 2015, the Blue Creek Fire threatened the Mill Creek Watershed, igniting on July 20th near the watershed's western boundary, approximately 10 miles east of Walla Walla, Washington. Caused by harvest equipment during a wheat harvest and exacerbated by dry conditions, the fire burned 5,992 acres, costing over $10 million in suppression efforts. The Columbia Complex Fire, which occurred in 2006, was sparked by lightning and consumed 132,048 acres of forested land northeast of Walla Walla, resulting in a suppression cost of over $35 million and the destruction of six structures (Walla Walla County Emergency Management, 2023).

Adaptive Capacity

Walla Walla has been improving its urban forestry despite historical funding challenges, planting 1,500 trees in the last three years (Climate Policy Advisory Team, 2025). The City is experimenting with native and drought-tolerant vegetation to withstand heat and cold, while collaborating with development, engineering, and utilities to integrate more trees into neighborhood areas and right-of-way spaces. Efforts are ongoing to find sustainable ways to

coexist with housing and development while expanding tree planting capacity (Climate Policy Advisory Team, 2025).



In the winter of 2021, the City of Walla Walla contracted with ArborPro to conduct a comprehensive street tree inventory update and develop an updated Urban Forest Management Plan. The inventory found Walla Walla's coverage at 20.3%, and suggests aiming for a 40% canopy cover goal, using vacant sites to guide future planting efforts. (ArborPro and City of Walla Walla, 2021). The City has completed several open space and park infrastructure projects over the last few years, such as the Walawála Plaza, 2024 Heritage Square project, 2023 Mill Creek Sportsplex, and 2024 Pioneer Park Pedestrian Improvements (City of Walla Walla, 2024).

Pioneer Park Recreation Area (Pioneer Park, 2018)

The City also completed additional open space and park infrastructure projects, including improving the picnic shelter at Washington Park, featuring triangular sail shades to provide sun and rain protection. The City's investment in projects such as this, focused on reducing the impacts from heat waves and other extreme weather events and improving public outdoor spaces, will support the community's adaptive capacity going forward. Additional measures can be taken to improve equitable access to parks, especially for more vulnerable populations such as those with limited mobility or low income.

To respond to fire risk in the watershed and surrounding areas, Walla Walla completed fire fuels reduction projects in 2008, 2015, and 2018 on areas within the watershed it has ownership. The City also ensures that trees and vegetation are pruned and trimmed as necessary to protect roads, bridges, and other infrastructure from damage (Walla Walla County, 2025).

Water Supply and Quality

Mill Creek, the City's primary water source, flows through Walla Walla and College Place before joining the Walla Walla River. "Walla Walla (pášxa)" means "many small waters" in the local Sahaptin language (čiškíin ~ ičiškíin) (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2025). The city is surrounded by many tributaries, including Mud Creek, Yellowhawk Creek, Birch Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Caldwell Creek, and Russell Creek, along with other smaller streams (City of Walla Walla, 2018).

In the Walla Walla Urban Growth Area (UGA), water availability depends on rainfall, runoff, and aquifer recharge. The area relies on a combination of shallow gravel aquifers, deep basalt aquifers, and surface water sources. The City of Walla Walla's municipal water supply primarily

comes from Mill Creek, with some service areas extending into the UGA. While wells are occasionally used to supplement Mill Creek surface water, they are not the primary source. Outside the city limits, private wells are commonly used for drinking water and irrigation.

Climate Risk

Over the past century, water use has increased, causing lower aquifer levels, reduced creek and river flows, and higher temperatures in the Walla Walla River and its tributaries, including Mill and Yellowhawk Creeks (City of Walla Walla, 2018).

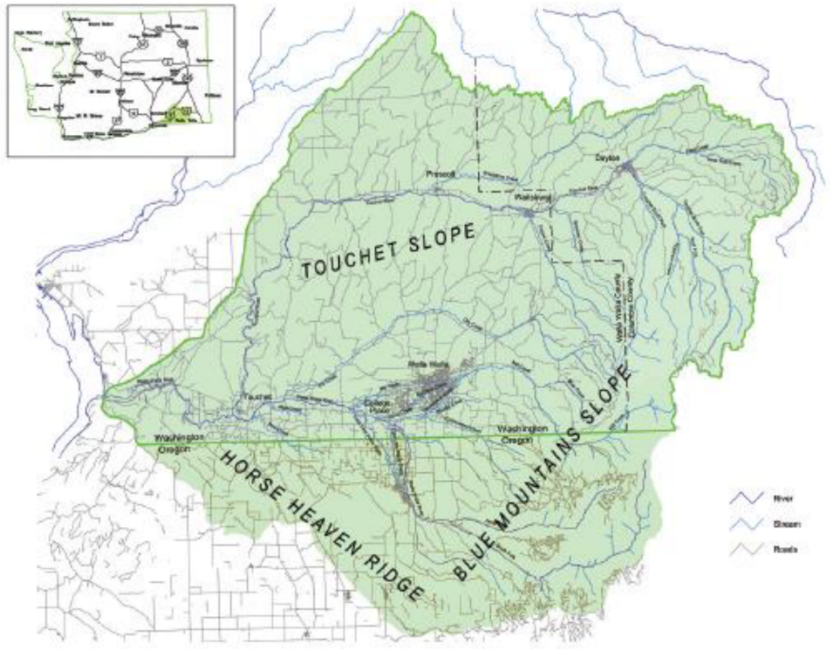


Figure 13. Walla Walla River Basin

Drought

The City's current water demand forecast does not take climate change into account. Lower aquifer levels have led to water quality degradation and reduced stream flow, which harms aquatic life, habitats, and species. If Mill Creek were temporarily unavailable, the City could rely on its wells running almost continuously. However, in the case of a long-term loss of Mill Creek, the City would need to upgrade its infrastructure and find additional water sources (City of Walla Walla, 2018). Additionally, low streamflow has been worsened by irrigation diversions, alterations like concrete channels and levees, pollution from both point and non-point sources, declining water levels in aquifers, increased stream temperatures, and degraded habitats for fish and other species (Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021).

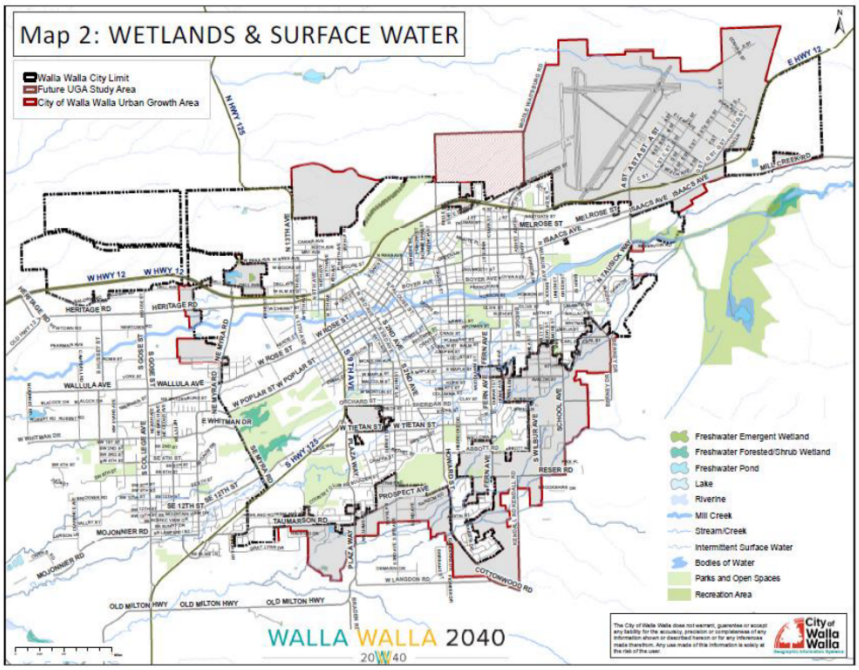


Figure 14. Walla Walla Wetlands & Surface Water

The Walla Walla River Basin in Milton-Freewater experiences a 20% groundwater well contamination rate, with a projected increase of 214-377% by 2050 (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022). Pumping groundwater may be required during times of drought when surface water is insufficient. The City uses an Aquifer Recharge System for excess surface water during certain times of the year and injects it into the deep basalt aquifer to ensure sufficient groundwater. However, groundwater is sensitive to changes in annual precipitation and population growth and development will increase the sensitivity of water resources to changes in annual precipitation (Raymond & Rogers, 2022).

Additionally, warming winters reduce snowfall reliability, shifting precipitation to rain, and increasing the likelihood of rain-on-snow events. The CTUIR Adaptation Plan suggests a significant reduction (75-100%) in snow water equivalent by the 2080s (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022). 60% of Blue Mountains surface water and 100% of CTUIR residential water comes from groundwater, highlighting the need for careful management of recharge and extraction that emphasizes natural and passive water management and floodplain restoration solutions.

Wildfire

While direct wildfire risk within the City of Walla Walla is considered low, impacts to the city's water supply from a wildfire within the Mill Creek Watershed could be severe and is considered highly vulnerable (Walla Walla County, 2025). The Mill Creek Municipal Watershed and its surroundings are particularly vulnerable to wildfires, posing risks to both residential areas and water quality, which affects the City of Walla Walla's water supply for over 34,000 residents.

The watershed is characterized by forest conditions with heavy fuel loads and is vulnerable to wildfires, which could result in destruction of timber, structures, personal property, wildlife habitat, recreation areas and watershed areas (Walla Walla County, 2025).

Over the past century, fire suppression has disrupted natural ecosystems, leading to an accumulation of fuels, while access challenges hinder effective mitigation and suppression. A high severity fire could increase sedimentation into Mill Creek, reduce the quality and quantity of water supply, and increase treatment costs for the City of Walla Walla (City of Walla Walla, 2024). The 2006 Community Wildfire Protection Plan notes that wildfires can harm water quality for 5 to 10 years, with the worst effects during the first runoff season, especially after rain or snowmelt.

The Blue Creek Fire began on July 20, 2015 in agriculture lands at the base of the Blue Mountains. The fire grew rapidly due to Red Flag Warning conditions and spread to adjacent forest lands. The fire was controlled at the edge of the Mill Creek Watershed which provides the drinking water for the City of Walla Walla (Walla Walla County, 2025).



Mill Creek Dam (Mill Creek, 2021)

Increased Temperatures and Heatwaves

Climate change is driving drastic shifts in temperature and habitats, with the Walla Walla Water Basin seeing a historic loss of fisheries, especially salmonids (Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021). Historically, the Walla Walla Basin was home to a wide variety of fish, including several species of salmon and trout. Today, only a few native fish species remain, such as summer steelhead and bull trout, both listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act. With growing population, industry, and tourism on top of climate impacts such as increasing temperatures, the basin faces even more pressure to meet competing water needs, while still maintaining the instream flows necessary to support a healthy ecosystem (Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021).

Adaptive Capacity

The City's Comprehensive Plan has existing policies that support emergency systems to supply water in the face of disasters, such as emergency power generators. The City also has a goal to reduce water loss by 1% per year and include water conservation measures such as school outreach, customer education, and landscaping initiatives (xeriscaping demonstration, irrigation timers, etc.). Planning efforts are being coordinated at the watershed level to improve management of surface water, groundwater, and aquatic habitat (City of Walla Walla, 2018).

To promote ecosystem flood resiliency, the City is working on sedimentation and flood control projects with sluice gates and injection wells, and working with residents who have creeks in their backyard to improve natural climate solutions and water flow (CPAT, 2025). The Tiger-Mill Project is also being proposed to protect the Mill Creek Municipal Watershed and restore ecosystem processes and functions that foster landscape diversity and achieve desired vegetation conditions (Umatilla National Forest Supervisor's Office, 2025).



Mill Creek Dam (US Army Corps of Engineers)

The Walla Walla Basin is an important center for agricultural production in the region. Over the last three decades there have been significant efforts to address water management in the basin with several collaborative planning processes and completion of many on the ground projects (Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021). The Watershed Partnership began a 10-year pilot program in 2009 that allowed local decision-making and flexibility in water management. The Legislature passed Senate Bill 5352 in 2019 which tasked the Watershed Partnership and Ecology to collaboratively develop a 30-year strategic plan for water management in the Walla Walla Basin (Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021). The Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan reflects a two-year planning effort by Ecology, the Watershed Partnership, CTUIR, and Washington and Oregon stakeholders to guide water resource decisions for the next 30 years in the Walla Walla Basin.



Walla Walla River (Walla Walla River)

The CTUIR also promotes actions to address opportunities for water recapture and understanding of unique hydrology, including understanding how groundwater sources are affected by flood and drought (such as infiltration of high flows into hallow aquifers) (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022).

However, the City's policies lack a comprehensive drought management strategy that includes preparedness, resilience, and response, especially with the anticipated increase in dry spells. There is also a lack of specific information on water loss due to drought in Mill Creek, and the policies are limited in addressing the impacts of drought on agriculture and food systems. Furthermore, there are no robust public awareness or education campaigns on water conservation (City of Walla Walla, 2018).

Resource Lands

Agriculture, particularly grape growing and winemaking, became a prominent industry in Walla Walla and the surrounding farmland in the mid-1980s. The wine industry has had a significant impact on reinvestment in Walla Walla's downtown and supports the region's job and tourist economy. In the Walla Walla UGA, about 34% of the land is in agriculture use, with half of the city's planning area zoned for residential purposes and the rest divided between agriculture, commercial, and industrial uses (City of Walla Walla, 2018). Agricultural lands within the city are expected to transition to urban uses as the city grows, which could help prevent the conversion of surrounding rural agricultural lands. The region has a long growing season from May to September, and crops like winter wheat and peas can withstand colder temperatures, growing from late winter to early summer (City of Walla Walla, 2018).

Climate Risk

Walla Walla's economy is closely tied to surrounding agricultural activities and wine tourism, making changes to agricultural land use and productivity directly relevant to the city's long-term economic resilience. Although many of the resource lands climate-related impacts occur outside the city's urban growth area, they have significant implications for the local economy and community well-being. In Walla Walla County, the predominant land use is agriculture—including dryland and irrigated fruits, berries, grain crops, livestock grazing, and land enrolled in the federal Conservation Reserve Program. As of 2012, the county had 943 farms covering 645,121 acres, accounting for 82% of the total land area. Because these impacts extend across jurisdictional boundaries, effective response will depend more on regional coordination and advocacy than on city-specific policies alone.

Heat and Drought

Dryland farming is common in the Walla Walla basin, but much of the basin's lowlands and floodplains rely on irrigation to grow crops like sweet onions, alfalfa seed, fruit, and row crops. Irrigation from surface water and groundwater makes up the largest portion of water use in the region. Agriculture remains one of the area's top industries, growing at almost 1% annually and providing jobs for around 13% of Walla Walla County's population (Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021).

Additionally, over the past two decades, the region has seen an increase in winery development, with over 180 wineries now operating and contributing significantly to the local economy. Both agriculture and wineries are heavily reliant on water, and both industries face challenges in securing enough water to meet current and future demands, which is expected to worsen with climate change (Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021).

Climate change impacts crop production, with varying effects on yield depending on the crop and region, causing both increases and decreases in projections. For example, the 2021 drought in the region led to limited irrigation access and crop yield losses.



Blue Mountain Vineyard - Walla Walla County (Winter Vineyard)

More specifically, changes in temperature and precipitation are affecting the region's wine industry, which supports part of the region's agricultural economy (Two Degrees, 2020). Daytime and nighttime temperatures have increased in the region, and the daily shift between high and low temperature that is critical to growing grapes has been reduced (Two Degrees,

2020). Agricultural land use changes may also result in shifts in the local workforce, as certain crops may no longer be viable to grow in the region. This could force farmers to either adapt by switching to different crops or face financial strain. The transition could lead to higher costs for production and labor, further impacting the local economy. One CPAT member noted that agricultural workers are generally required to leave outdoor work environments when temperatures reach 95°F . In the region, this threshold is expected to increase from an average of 17 days to 35-42 days a year by mid-century. This shift raises concerns about the ability to manage resources effectively, as it reduces available work hours and challenges the provision of adequate resources for worker safety.

For the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, as seasonal precipitation and temperatures change, suitable habitat for First Food species will shift – with an expected 10-40% reduction in habitat suitability for huckleberries across much of CTUIR. The timing of harvests may shift 1-2 months earlier, and as resource availability changes, conflicts over who can access existing resources is likely to increase; particularly for water management practices that prioritize Indigenous stewardship and reciprocal relationships. For Tribal people, health is intertwined with cultural and spiritual connections to land, and First Foods affect physical and emotional wellbeing and health.

Wildfires

Populations in Walla Walla County depend on forests and other resource lands for resources and cultural practices, but warmer temperatures and less summer rainfall have worsened wildfires, and this trend is expected to continue. Human activities like recreation, development, and energy infrastructure also affect wildfire frequency, with longer wildfire seasons and more human-caused ignitions expected as droughts become more frequent and severe (Chang, et al., 2023).



Walla Walla Fire 2023 (Union Bulletin, 2023)

In Walla Walla County, agricultural fields can act as fuel for fires, burning similarly to grassy areas. While fires in these fields may not be as challenging to control as large timber fires, they can still cause considerable damage if precautions aren't taken. Wind-driven fires in these areas spread quickly and can be hard to contain, especially during extreme droughts or high winds,

making suppression efforts more difficult (Walla Walla County Emergency Management, 2023). Additionally, wildfire smoke can negatively impact wine growing and tourism by compromising the quality of grapes, while also deterring visitors who may be concerned about air quality and health risks during wildfire seasons (Paterson, 2022).

Tribal landscape management, including practices like prescribed burns, bolsters cultural and environmental connections and resilience, but management legacies, forced relocation of Tribal peoples, and legal restrictions have limited Tribes' ability to use these techniques, impacting sovereignty and cultural preservation (Chang, et al., 2023). For fire-dependent communities and ecosystems, fire can serve as a biodiversity component and burning can help with resource management, actually helping to reduce a hazardous build-up of fuels that lead to larger and more catastrophic fires (Lake, 2020).

Flooding and Extreme Weather

Agriculture land in the UGA is threated by flash floods and rapid warm winds, called Chinook wind events, which will be exacerbated by climate change. In spring 2017, one of these events resulted in damage to existing infrastructure and loss of economic land with an estimated cost of $1.3 million to repair the damage, and acres of land lost to rapid erosion (Walla Walla County, 2025).

Adaptive Capacity

Because agriculture lands primarily exist outside of the City's UGA, existing City policies are limited in addressing drought impacts on agriculture and food systems in Walla Walla. However, the City's Comprehensive Plan does have policies on protected and sustainable natural resource areas. These policies aim to create and sustain protected natural resources, waterways, and forests. Additionally, the CTUIR Adaptation Plan includes goals to promote First Foods knowledge, access, processing, and safe harvest, as well as land management practices that prioritize Indigenous stewardship and reciprocal relationships (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022).



Built Infrastructure

How to Read this Section

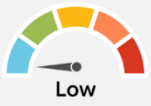
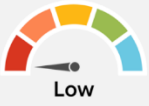
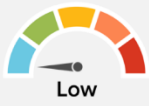
This section presents the overall climate vulnerability of Walla Walla's transportation, housing, and water infrastructure sub-sectors. Each sub-sector includes an analysis of climate risks across relevant climate impacts, as well as a discussion on adaptive capacity. Note that the Built Infrastructure sector overlaps with the other two sectors in topics such as emergency management, community services, and water infrastructure, so it is important to consider the full CVA for the most comprehensive analysis. As noted in the summary table below, drought was not assessed for the Transportation or Housing sub-sectors due to its minimal direct risk, and heat and wildfire were not assessed for the Water Infrastructure sector as they are covered in the Water Supply and Quality sub-sector.

Introduction and Key Takeaways

The transportation sector is moderately vulnerable to extreme heat and precipitation, with low to moderate vulnerability to wildfire and smoke, as extreme temperatures can damage roads and rail lines. The housing sector faces moderate risks from heat, precipitation, and wildfire, particularly in the South Ward, which is near wildfire-prone areas and flood-prone streams. Water infrastructure is moderately vulnerable to heavy rain but has minimal risk from drought, while Walla Walla's stormwater systems may face increased pressure during floods. The Mill Creek flood control project protects the city from significant flood risks as approximately 60% of the City of Walla Walla would otherwise be in the Mill Creek floodplain. Walla Walla's extensive street trees program and other green infrastructure projects increase the city's heat resilience and stormwater capacity by reducing the urban heat island effect and increasing surface permeability. The City also has wildfire resilience and home repair programs that support weatherization and retrofits, especially benefiting low-income and elderly residents (City of Walla Walla CDBG, 2019).

Table 7. Key vulnerability rankings for the built infrastructure sector

Transportation			
Climate Stressor	**Climate Risk**	**Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)**	**Vulnerability**
Extreme Heat	 Moderate	 Low	 Moderate
Extreme Precipitation	 High	 Moderate	 Moderate/High
Drought	Not assessed for this sector.		
Wildfire/Wildfire Smoke	 Moderate/Low	 Low	 Moderate/Low

Housing			
Climate Stressor	**Climate Risk**	**Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)**	**Vulnerability**
Extreme Heat			
Extreme Precipitation			
Drought	Not assessed for this sector.		
Wildfire/Wildfire Smoke			
Water Infrastructure			
Climate Stressor	**Climate Risk**	**Adaptive Capacity (Ability to Adapt)**	**Vulnerability**
Extreme Heat	Not assessed for this sector.		
Extreme Precipitation			
Drought			
Wildfire/Wildfire Smoke	See Water Supply and Quality		

Transportation

Climate Risk

Increased Temperatures and Heatwaves

The age and materials used to construct infrastructure such as roads and bridges will determine their sensitivity to extreme heat. Extreme heat can cause asphalt and concrete to expand and buckle damaging road surfaces (McQuate, 2024). The impacts to transportation corridors may in some cases displace households and reduce regional labor supply (IPCC, 2022). The

replacement of aging infrastructure, such as those listed in Table 8, provides opportunities to incorporate resilient design strategies and materials in new infrastructure projects.

The Columbia Walla Walla Railroad moves through the city, primarily transporting agriculture products including wheat and vegetables. Steel rail lines can also buckle and kink in extreme heat, forcing trains to slow down to avoid derailment (Yale Climate Connections, 2024).

The asphalt and concrete used for the runways at the Walla Walla Regional Airport may be vulnerable to high heat, as well as Valley Transit Station which is in a moderate heat severity area. Existing policies do not prioritize the resilience of transportation infrastructure, and the City has struggled to fund maintenance and replacement of aging infrastructure. Without necessary retrofits, infrastructure is ill-prepared to withstand climate stressors like extreme heat or flooding.

Table 8. Walla Walla bridges undergoing repair and maintenance in 2025. (City of Walla Walla, 2024)

City Bridges Undergoing Repair in 2025
Myra Road
2nd Avenue
Main Street
Colville Street
Otis Street
Merriam Street
Clinton Street
Wilbur Avenue

Flooding and Extreme Weather

Flash floods at Mill Creek impact bridges, roads, and culverts in the 100- and 500- year floodplains, or other low-lying areas with flood potential. The Walla Walla County Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies that there are 38 land parcels in the city that are in flood zones. The parcels have a value of $44.8 million. Four of those parcels have minimal exposure to flooding but are valued at $34.7 million (Walla Walla County - Emergency Management, 2024). Major arterials in the South Ward, such as 2nd Avenue, are at risk of flooding from the creeks in the south part of the city, such as Stone Creek, Garrison Creek, and Yellowhawk Creek (CPAT, 2025). Damage to transportation infrastructure from flash floods demonstrates a need to implement transportation infrastructure upgrades tolerant to repeat floods and flash floods (Walla Walla County, 2025).



Mill Creek near Whitman College during February 2, 2020 Flood Event (Reese, 2020)

Based on Walla Walla's FEMA floodplain map, 169 structures in the urban growth area are in the 100-year flood zone along Middle Waitsburg Road and Russell and Reser Creeks (Walla Walla County, 2025). The Mill Creek Flooding Project controls and diverts excess rainfall and water from Mill Creek to reduce impacts to the city. The conveyance channel directing Mill Creek through and beneath the city is aging and requires significant repairs or reconstruction (Climate Policy Advisory Team, 2025). Additionally, some downtown buildings are built directly above or against the Mill Creek Channel (Climate Policy Advisory Team, 2025).

The National Weather Service reports three flash floods annually since 2000. It is important to note that the City's floodplain and floodway boundaries have not been updated since the initial mapping in 1983, which could put additional people and buildings at risk, and some flooding policies and efforts remain unfunded or partially funded (Walla Walla County, 2025). Extreme precipitation increases the risk of erosion and landslides in Walla Walla, yet the Comprehensive Plan currently overlooks flooding impacts on roadways, including the need for elevated, flood-resistant sidewalks and roads.

Policies also fail to address the long-term social, economic, and environmental impacts of flooding on housing, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Repeated flood events further damage infrastructure repair efforts, with the age and quality of roads, bridges, and buses affecting their ability to endure extreme weather events.

Wildfire

Wildfires directly and indirectly impact Walla Walla's transportation network, especially near major roads and highways in wildfire exposure areas. Infrastructure in areas like Mill Creek Road and the Kooskooskie region, with high wildfire hazard ratings, faces risks of disruption and heavy traffic during evacuations (Walla Walla County, 2025).

Adaptive Capacity

Several City plans and policies outline steps to improve the resilience of Walla Walla transportation infrastructure. The CTUIR has implemented Land Development Codes and a comprehensive plan to mitigate the effects of extreme weather events and long-term stress on infrastructure. It includes policies to implement "multi-use development zoning for carbon-free commutable neighborhoods" (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022). Additionally, Kayak Public Transit supports the community and economy by managing a regional transportation system that spans southeastern Washington and northeastern Oregon, with four fixed routes and four commuter bus services. The program is funded through Federal and State grants, as well as CTUIR general funds, and all bus services are currently free to the public (CTUIR, 2025).

Flooding is a natural process vital to river function, and future infrastructure can be designed to avoid flood risks by being located outside the 100-year floodplain. Development also offers opportunities to restore floodplains, mitigate impacts on infrastructure, and enhance habitats, with ongoing projects like the Walla Walla Watershed's erosion control and the Mill Creek Flood Project already helping to reduce flood damage.



Mill Creek in Walla Walla, June 13, 2022. (Walla Walla Union-Bulletin, 2022)

The Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan includes policies emphasizing a circulation system to ensure safe and efficient movement of people and goods, incorporating pedestrian and bicycle transportation while minimizing disruptions. The plan also includes policies fostering active transportation and transit use by providing attractive end-of-trip facilities, reducing off-street vehicle parking requirements for developments near transit, and enhancing infrastructure for walking and biking.

The City of Walla Walla has many infrastructure projects in progress, including numerous road construction projects that promote upgrades to water infrastructure and increased capacity of the water treatment plant. Additional projects to repair and upgrade City bridges provide the opportunity to utilize building practices that increase climate resilience.

The Mill Creek and Walla Walla County Community Wildfire Protection Plan was developed in response to the threat of wildfire to Walla Walla County residents. A wildfire threat analysis provides firefighters and managers with a wildfire tool that describes various physical and environmental conditions for fire risk across a landscape. The risk analysis considered locations where fire threats coincide with infrastructure, cultural and environmental resources, and residences.

Housing

Climate Risk

Housing infrastructure in the city can be stressed by extreme events including precipitation, droughts, and heatwaves that are expected to intensify in the coming years. These impacts will be exacerbated by challenges such as a high number of cost burdened households, a lack of well-paying jobs, and a housing supply deficit (Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021). There are over 11,000 houses in Walla Walla that may face different climate hazards (Table 9).

Table 9. Types and quantities of houses in Walla Walla. Table by Cascadia. (City of Walla Walla, 2025)

Housing Type	Number of Units in Walla Walla
Single-Family	10,662
Multi-Family	162
Apartment	186
Manufactured Home	603
Senior Housing	13
Affordable Housing	8
Total	**11,634**

Increased Temperatures and Heatwaves

Extreme heat poses a significant danger to residents in non-climate-controlled housing, as high temperatures can lead to heat-related illnesses and even death. Renters in Walla Walla are particularly vulnerable to climate risks like extreme heat due to the aging rental housing stock (CPAT, 2025). There are nearly 4,200 housing units in the city in severe heat areas, or areas where the summer temperatures can be much hotter than the city average (Figure 15). Figure 15 shows that some of the city's manufactured homes and affordable housing are in heat severity areas in the northeast and southwest areas of the city. In addition, many apartments, condominiums, and senior housing are in heat severity areas (Figure 15). These hot areas make residents more vulnerable if they do not have weatherized homes, air conditioning, or access to a cooling center. Similarly, energy utilities may face financial challenges if decreases in heating demand during warmer seasons affect their revenue, particularly those more reliant on winter sales.

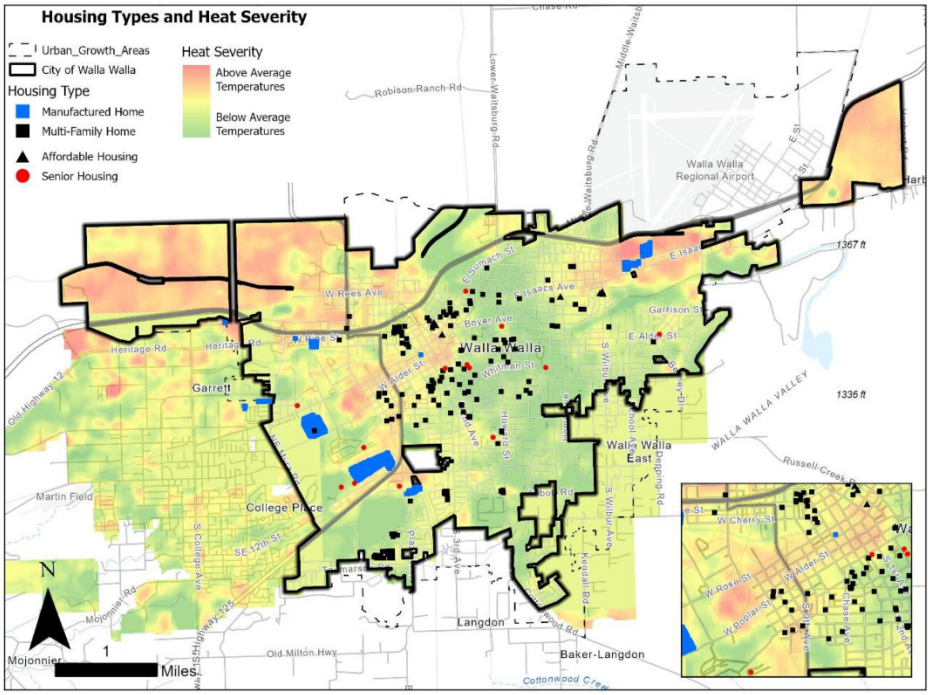


Figure 15. Locations of selected home types and extreme heat areas. Map by Cascadia (City of Walla Walla, 2025; Trust for Public Land, 2025).

Table 10. Houses in areas with above average temperatures, indicating risk of heat severity. Table by Cascadia. (City of Walla Walla, 2025)

Housing Type	Total Number of Houses	Number in Minimal Severe Heat Area	Number in Moderate Severe Heat Area	Number in High Severe Heat Area
Apartment	186	66	45	-
Manufactured Home	603	241	330	11
Multi-Family	162	51	27	-
Condominium	29	19	13	-
Single-Family	10,662	2498	863	12
Affordable Housing	8	2	4	-
Senior Housing	13	2	2	-
Total	11,634	2,879	1,284	23

Flooding and Extreme Weather

Flooding in Walla Walla is most severe in areas without flood control measures, like channelized streams, and can undermine the long-term social and economic resilience of residents. Rising insurance costs, driven by local climate hazards like flooding and wildfires, are making it harder for some residents to secure coverage, particularly in vulnerable areas like the South Ward, where development faces high risk in flood-prone zones south of Prospect Ave.

A February 2020 flood in the Upper Mill Creek impacted houses in Walla Walla County, forcing some residents to evacuate by helicopter and four-wheelers, as roads and bridges were also damaged (Walla Walla County, 2025).



Mill Creek Flood (Walla Walla County, 2025)

Wildfire

Residents in proximity to grassland and farms deal with wildfire evacuations from quick burning wildfires. Additional areas with wildfire risk include those where developments are built in close proximity to forested and prairie areas. The USDA's Wildfire Risk Reduction Zones model for Walla Walla shows that 82% of buildings are in the minimal exposure zone, with 11% (over 1,400 buildings) in the indirect exposure zone, primarily in the city's northwest. About 7% of buildings (978 buildings) fall in the direct exposure zone, located mostly along less urban areas and the city's edges (Walla Walla County, 2025).

Wildfire smoke can threaten the safety and health of residents in non-climate enforced housing (Chang, et al., 2023). Building design and codes can affect sensitivity to wildfire, including age, construction materials and degree of fire resistance. Older and less well-maintained buildings may be more affected by poor air quality from wildfire smoke due to poor insulation or older HVAC systems (EPA, n.d.).

The July 2022 Van Ausdle Fire burned 1,000 acres, causing minimal damage but forcing evacuations for some residents (Walla Walla County, 2025). More significantly was the potential for wildfire smoke to impact residents of Walla Walla.



Van Ausdle Fire 2022 (Lehman, 2022)

Adaptive Capacity

Several Comprehensive Plan policies seek to address housing sustainability and adaptability including those that encourage quality of life for residents and community vitality through aligning UGA development with sustainability standards, promoting public parks and green spaces, and supporting affordable housing. The Comprehensive Plan also establishes a housing

assistance program for low-income homeowners to support small-scale green remodeling projects (City of Walla Walla, 2024).

Renters are often left out of weatherization programs and do not get the associated economic and health benefits. Walla Walla may consider developing programs to update aging housing stock, especially rental houses, to increase their climate weatherization and reduce utility costs for renters. These programs may support landlords to make these improvements and ensure availability of affordable, safe, energy efficient housing.

The Regional Housing Action Plan (HAP) includes strategies and policies focused on affordable housing, housing retrofits for seniors, and reducing displacement for financial reasons (Cities of College Place, Dayton, Waitsburg, and Walla Walla, 2021). The HAP also encourages residential development that conserves water, reduces energy use, and uses sustainable materials.

Walla Walla also utilizes Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to provide microgrants for property owners to complete home repair projects (Cities of College Place, Dayton, Waitsburg, and Walla Walla, 2021). Since 2013, the City has received CBDGs to fund affordable housing, essential services, and job creation for low- and middle-income populations. The Blue Mountain Action Council provides a low income home weatherization program, the Sustainable Living Center offers weatherization services, and the Youth Housing Hub, built in 2018, provides healthcare, food, shelter, childcare, and more to support vulnerable community members. However, income and capacity restrictions limit participation and the full community impact of these programs.

The Home Repair Program in Walla Walla, funded by a Community Development Block Grant, provides low- to moderate-income homeowners with deferred zero-interest loans for essential repairs, including heating, plumbing, electrical systems, roofs, and insulation. The program also offers additional weatherization improvements at no cost, benefiting approximately five homes annually, particularly aiding disabled, elderly, and female head-of-household families.

Finally, the County's HMP policies do not address infrastructure resilience to extreme heat and do not require mitigation or resilience measures in the construction of over 440 new homes (Walla Walla County, 2025).

Water Infrastructure

Climate Risk

Mill Creek, running through the heart of Walla Walla, is highly susceptible to flooding events. To mitigate flooding risks and damage to the region, numerous infrastructure projects have been completed over the past few decades. In 1940, the US Army Corps of Engineers built a major flood control project and created Bennington Lake as a flood control reservoir. In addition, there is a 0.3 miles cut-and-cover tunnel through downtown directing Mill Creek's water flow.

Flooding and Extreme Weather

Extreme precipitation can saturate soil, reducing the amount of stormwater the ground can absorb and putting more pressure on stormwater systems to manage excess water. If stormwater systems fail, they can cause pollutants to enter waterways (IPCC, 2022). In

extreme precipitation and flooding events, Walla Walla has a levee system that protects 21,700 people and 9,600 structures (Walla Walla County, 2025).

The Mill Creek Dam, classified as Low Risk by the National Inventory of Dams, poses a hazard primarily due to the potential for failure or mis-operation, not its condition, while climate change may exacerbate these risks through extreme weather events. Similarly, the Cottonwood Sewage Lift Station, located within the 100-year floodplain, is a critical facility vulnerable to flooding, which could be intensified by increasing precipitation and changing flood patterns due to climate impacts (Walla Walla County, 2025).

The location of both the wastewater treatment plant and the water treatment plant may put them at risk of flooding related climate impacts (Walla Walla County, 2025). The wastewater treatment plant is next to Mill Creek on the city's western border and the water treatment plant is near the airport and just north of Titus and Mill Creeks (City of Walla Walla, 2025). The vulnerability of these facilities cannot be fully assessed until updated FEMA Floodplain maps are created.

Wildfire

As discussed in the Water Supply and Quality Section, wildfires can damage water infrastructure, especially aging facilities, and increase the risk of pollution and erosion affecting water sources. A severe wildfire could also raise water treatment costs (Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021).



Erosion In a Wildfire Damaged Area (USDA Forest Service).

Mill Creek, the city's main unfiltered water supply, is vulnerable to disturbances like landslides and wildfire contamination (Walla Walla County Emergency Management, 2023). Wildfires can degrade water quality for up to 10 years due to increased erosion, debris, and ash blocking streams and intakes, while flooding from rain and snowmelt further concentrates contaminants. Erosion rates are highest in the first-year post-fire, with elevated runoff and peak flows continuing for up to 10 years, increasing sediment, turbidity, and harmful substances like cyanide, nitrates, and metals. As a result, major wildfires could strain Mill Creek's ability to provide water to the city and critical infrastructure, such as hospitals.

Adaptive Capacity

Walla Walla is already implementing several programs and projects to improve the city's stormwater capacity through hard infrastructure upgrades and green infrastructure, including street trees. To date, City infrastructure improvement projects have likely saved the City an estimated $75 million in potential flood damage with the Mill Creek Channel and Bennington Lake Dam and $13,812 annually in stormwater management costs (Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, 2021).

In 2018, Walla Walla began using funds from the stormwater utility for the Parks and Recreation department to perform stormwater-specific facility and right-of-way maintenance. According to 2019 data, green infrastructure in Walla Walla includes 71 green infrastructure facilities and 7,052 street trees (City of Walla Walla, 2015). The City recognizes that trees can be an important tool for stormwater management and works to continue to grow the program, however, funding and liability make street tree maintenance difficult.

In addition to street trees, updates to the Stormwater Management Program include public education and outreach, illicit discharge detection and elimination, and construction site stormwater runoff control. The City runs a program providing water and sewer utility rate discounts to low-income citizens, supporting the resilience and adaptive capacity of at-risk Walla Walla residents (Cities of College Place, Dayton, Waitsburg, and Walla Walla, 2021). The City also requires mapping and reporting of potential pollution sources to the stormwater system to better assess impacts on the system (City of Walla Walla, 2015).



Downtown Walla Walla Street Trees (City of Walla Walla, n.d.)

The City completed an update to the 2009 Flood Response Plan and conducted a flood vulnerability assessment of Cottonwood Sewage Lift Station, which was identified as a critical facility located in the 100-year floodplain (Walla Walla County, 2025). As part of the City's road improvement projects, stormwater system upgrades are being incorporated. Notable examples include the 2024 Pioneer Park Pedestrian Improvements, which will add new water, sewer, and

stormwater infrastructure, and the Clinton Street Utilities Replacement project. Other projects, such as W. Pine Street reconstruction, Hobson-Division-Madison Water Project, and Poplar 5th to 14th reconfiguration, also focus on improving water, sewer, and stormwater facilities to enhance treatment and infiltration capacity.

Additionally, the Walla Walla Watershed Strategic Plan includes goals to expand stormwater monitoring and management, increase green infrastructure to better absorb stormwater, and develop a detailed forest management plan for the upper Mill Creek Watershed. The FEMA funded Walla Walla Watershed Resiliency Plan will also support providing high quality water and protecting valuable ecological and community resources in the Mill Creek Watershed.

The CTUIR places high importance on water, recognizing its vulnerability to climate change, with impacts on both surface and groundwater that affect all aspects of life. To enhance adaptive capacity, they have developed policies for water conservation, storage, habitat restoration, and water recapture, outlined in key documents such as the CTUIR Comprehensive Plan, Water Code, and Hazard Mitigation Plan (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, 2022).



Mill Creek Watershed.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Conclusion

The Walla Walla Climate Vulnerability Assessment highlights the city's exposure to increasing climate risks, particularly extreme heat, wildfire, drought, and flooding. Through analysis of historical trends, climate projections, City staff discussions, and community engagement, this assessment identifies vulnerabilities across key sectors and socially vulnerable populations. The findings underscore the need for proactive resilience strategies to protect residents, essential services, and critical infrastructure from future climate impacts.

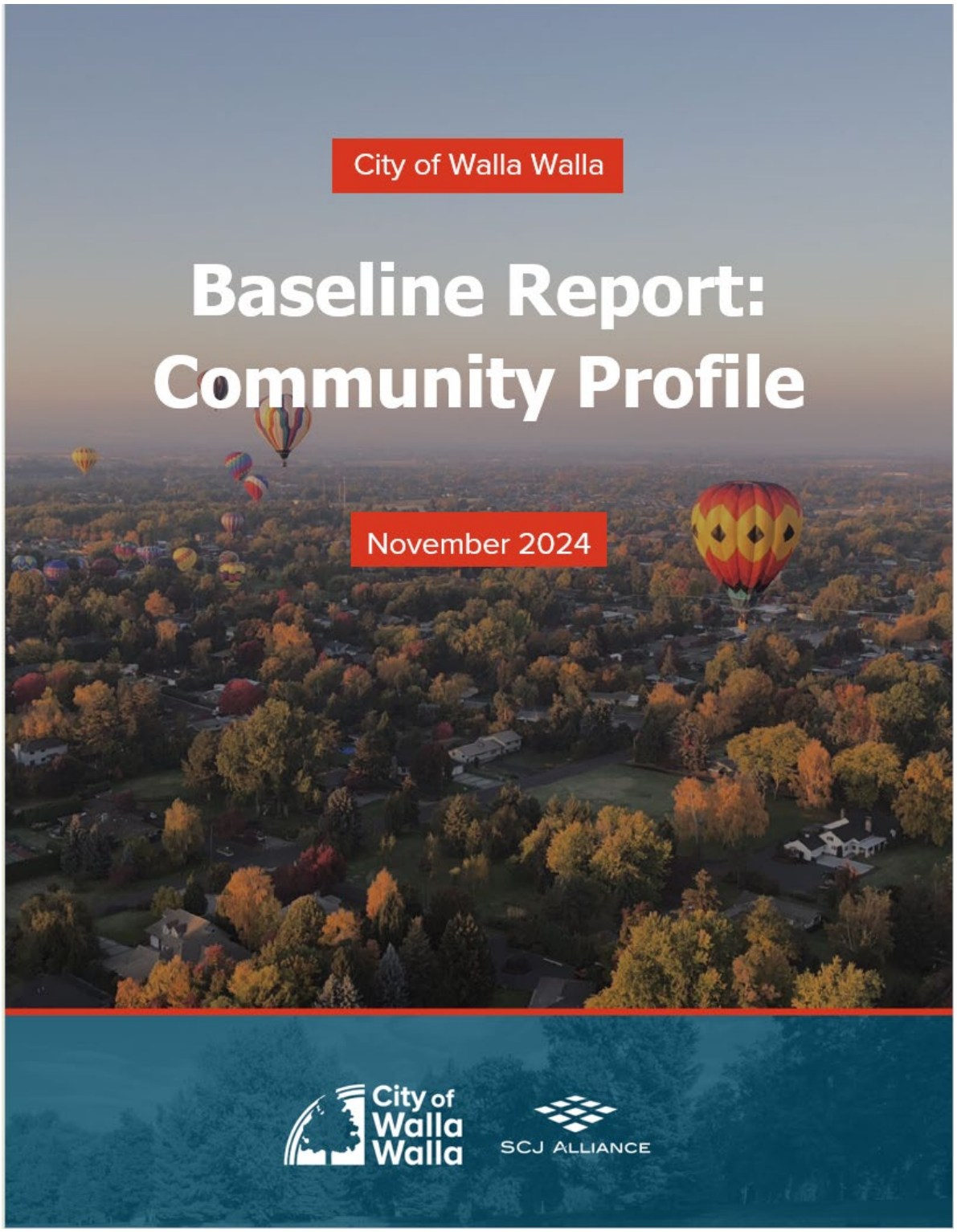
Walla Walla faces moderate to high climate vulnerabilities across multiple sectors, impacting community health, the natural environment, infrastructure, and housing. Extreme heat, flooding, and wildfire risks pose significant threats to vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, unhoused, and those with pre-existing health conditions. Wildfire smoke and flooding can disrupt daily life and strain emergency resources, while gaps in planning for human-focused water quality and drought impacts highlight the need for stronger, more comprehensive strategies. The natural environment and water resources are also at risk, with drought and rising temperatures threatening water availability, agricultural yields, and ecosystems, especially in the Mill Creek Watershed. While some measures like water conservation and wildfire protection are in place, more climate-resilient policies are needed for agriculture and habitat protection. Infrastructure, particularly transportation and housing in the South Ward, faces risks from extreme heat, flooding, and wildfire, requiring enhanced resilience strategies like improved stormwater systems and wildfire protection. Overall, while some adaptive measures are in place, more comprehensive planning and policy support are essential to address the growing climate challenges and protect the community's well-being, environment, and infrastructure.

This CVA builds on existing City and regional plans by addressing gaps in understanding. While these existing efforts support Walla Walla's ability to adapt to climate impacts, continued investment in climate resilience is essential. By incorporating this CVA into the City's Climate Resilience Element, Walla Walla can establish clear policies and actions to further enhance its climate resilience.

Next Steps

Next, the City will integrate findings from this CVA into the City's Comprehensive Plan Update, to both reflect the City's goals and priorities and comply with Commerce's Climate Element guidance. The City will develop policies to address areas of vulnerability outlined in this CVA, including protecting assets across the city, mitigating the social vulnerability of communities in Walla Walla, and integrating climate resilience considerations into planning. Additionally, this CVA may be used to inform future decision-making around climate change and land use, zoning, infrastructure, housing, and policy decisions. The report will serve as a resource to help decision-makers and the public identify priority communities, understand proposed changes, and guide future projects to improve climate resilience.

Appendix X. Community Profile





1.0 Introduction

This community profile is prepared to support the City of Walla Walla in its 2026 Comprehensive Plan update. This report articulates past and current characteristics of the community, as well as forecasts future conditions. It provides an update to the demographics and community data presented in the city's previous Comprehensive Plan document (2018) and includes key characteristics like population, economic indicators, and housing trends. Data and findings from this report will ultimately be incorporated into the updated Comprehensive Plan document.

Reviewing this data helps establish an understanding of where the city has been, where it is now, and where it hopes to go, and sets the foundation for Walla Walla's long-range planning efforts. Wherever possible, the data for Walla Walla is compared with data from Walla Walla County or Washington State, illuminating how the city compares with the larger surrounding regions.

1.1 Setting & History

The City of Walla Walla, located in southeastern Washington State, is nestled in the fertile Walla Walla Valley. Surrounded by the Blue Mountains to the southeast and the Columbia River to the west, the city is part of the Columbia Basin, known for its agricultural richness. Its semi-arid climate, characterized by warm, dry summers and cool, wet winters, makes the area ideal for growing crops like wheat and wine grapes, which play a significant role in its economy. Walla Walla is renowned for its thriving wine industry, with over 100 wineries contributing to the region's economic and cultural vitality.

Historically, the area was home to the Walla Walla people, part of the Plateau tribes that lived in the region long before European settlers arrived. The name "Walla Walla," meaning "many waters" in the Sahaptin language, reflects the abundant natural resources that supported the indigenous population. Tribes such as the Walla Walla, Cayuse, and Umatilla engaged in seasonal hunting, fishing, and trade. European contact began in earnest with the arrival of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805, marking the beginning of increased European-American influence. In 1836, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman established the Whitman Mission near present-day Walla Walla, aiming to convert Native tribes to Christianity and encourage European-style farming. However, tension between settlers and indigenous peoples, exacerbated by diseases brought by settlers, culminated in the killing of the Whitmans and others in 1847, which led to the Cayuse War and a heightened military presence in the area.

Walla Walla officially became a city in 1859 when it was established as a military post, Fort Walla Walla, to protect settlers and trade routes. It quickly grew into a major center of commerce during the gold rushes in nearby Idaho and Oregon, becoming the largest city in the Washington Territory by the late 1860s. When the gold rushes subsided, the city's focus shifted to agriculture, particularly wheat farming. The introduction of irrigation systems in the 20th century further solidified its status as an agricultural hub, with farming and food processing dominating the local economy.

In the modern era, Walla Walla has gained international recognition for its burgeoning wine industry, with the Walla Walla Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area) established in 1984. This has transformed the city into a destination for wine enthusiasts, boosting tourism and economic growth. Additionally, Whitman College, founded in 1882, plays a significant role in the city's educational and cultural life, while the Walla Walla State Penitentiary, established in 1886, remains a major employer in the area.

Today, Walla Walla is a city that balances its rich historical roots with its modern agricultural and wine-growing economy. Its downtown area has been revitalized, blending historic charm with contemporary attractions like boutique shops, restaurants, and wineries. Sites like the Fort Walla Walla Museum and the Whitman Mission National Historic Site continue to honor the city's past, showcasing its unique blend of Native American heritage, frontier history, and modern cultural development.





2.0 Community Characteristics

The following sections summarize the existing conditions within the City of Walla Walla, including demographics and population trends, economic indicators, and housing trends. Data sources include U.S. Census Decennial Data, U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 5-Year Estimates, and Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) housing data and population estimates.

2.1 Population

OFM issues annual population estimates for all cities and counties in Washington, which are the state's official population counts for long-range planning purposes. These annual estimates are based on the most recent Decennial Census counts. The official Office of Financial Management (OFM) 2024 population estimate for Walla Walla is 34,580

[1]. The 2024 population estimate for Walla Walla County is 63,375. The city of Walla Walla accounts for 54.56% of the county's population.

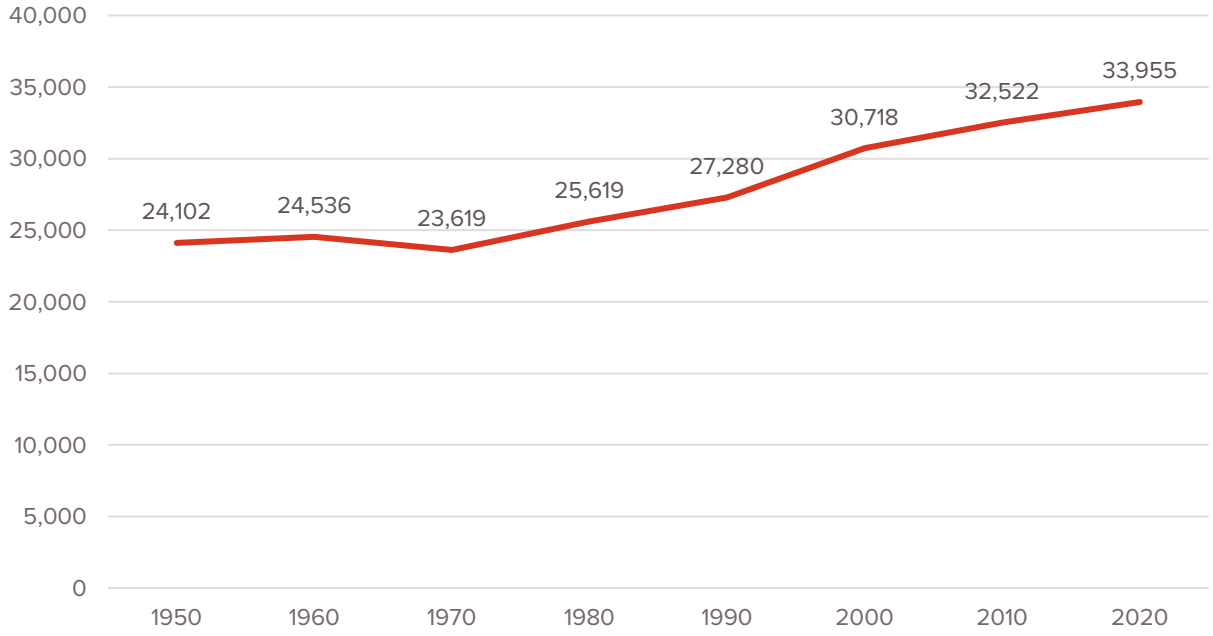
2.1.2 Historic Population Trends

Figure 1 illustrates the City of Walla Walla's historic population changes from 1950 through 2020, while Table 1 illustrates the city's population as a percentage of Walla Walla County's population over the same period. Decade over decade, Walla Walla's population has increased on average 5% every ten years, with some decades being higher or lower than others. Only once during this time has the population decreased, which occurred between 1960 and 1970. The most significant increase was between 1990 and 2000, when the city's population grew by nearly 13%.

Figure 2 also shows the city's population in recent years between 2014 and 2024. Looking at year-over-year estimates from 2014 through 2024, the city's population has averaged an annual growth rate of 0.8%. In total, the past decade has seen an increase of 8.4%, growing from 31,895 in 2014 to 34,580 in 2024.

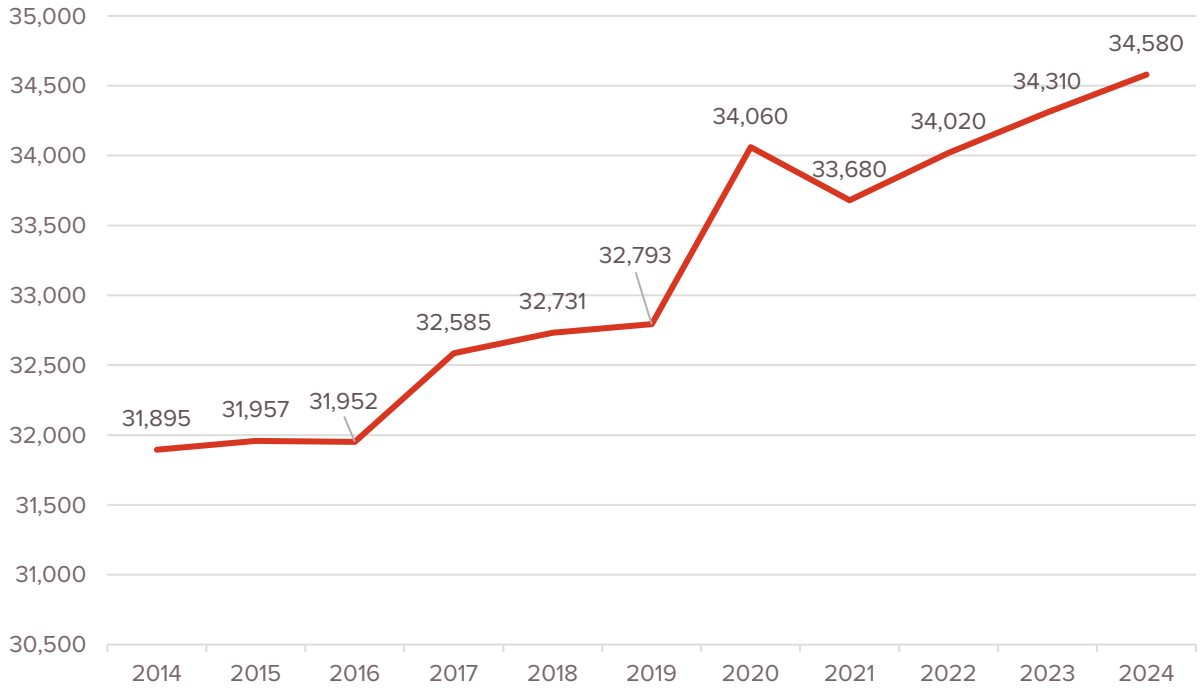
[1] https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/dataresearch/pop/april1/ofm_april1_population_final.pdf

Appendix X Figure 1. Historic Walla Walla Population (1950-2020)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Data.

Appendix X Figure 2. City of Walla Walla Population between 2014-2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2014- 2024 5-Year Estimates.

Appendix X Table 1. Percent of Walla Walla County Population

Year	City of Walla Walla Population	Walla Walla County Population	% of County Population
1950	24,102	40,135	60.05%
1960	24,536	42,195	58.15%
1970	23,619	42,176	56.00%
1980	25,619	47,435	54.01%
1990	27,280	48,439	56.32%
2000	30,718	55,180	55.67%
2010	32,522	58,781	55.33%
2020	33,955	62,584	54.26%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Data 1950-2020.

2.1.2 Race and Ethnicity

This section delves into the race and ethnicity dynamics in Walla Walla, Walla Walla County, and the State of Washington as a whole. Table 2 presents the percentages of Walla Walla's racial diversity, compared to those of Walla Walla County and the state of Washington.

It's important to distinguish that race generally refers to physical characteristics and genetic heritage, such as White, Black, Asian, and Native American classifications, whereas ethnicity refers to cultural factors, including language, national origin, and shared traditions. As such, individuals identifying as Hispanic or Latino may belong to any racial group while sharing a common cultural or linguistic heritage.

According to the social definition of racial categories used by the U.S. Census Bureau's ACS 5-Year Estimates, 60.8% of Walla Walla residents self-identified as white, compared to 63.4% in Walla Walla County overall, and 69.9% in the state of Washington. According to Table 3, about 23.6% of Walla Walla's residents self-identified as Hispanic or Latino, slightly higher percentage than that of both Walla Walla County (22.3%) and Washington state (14%).



Appendix X Table 2. Race Distribution

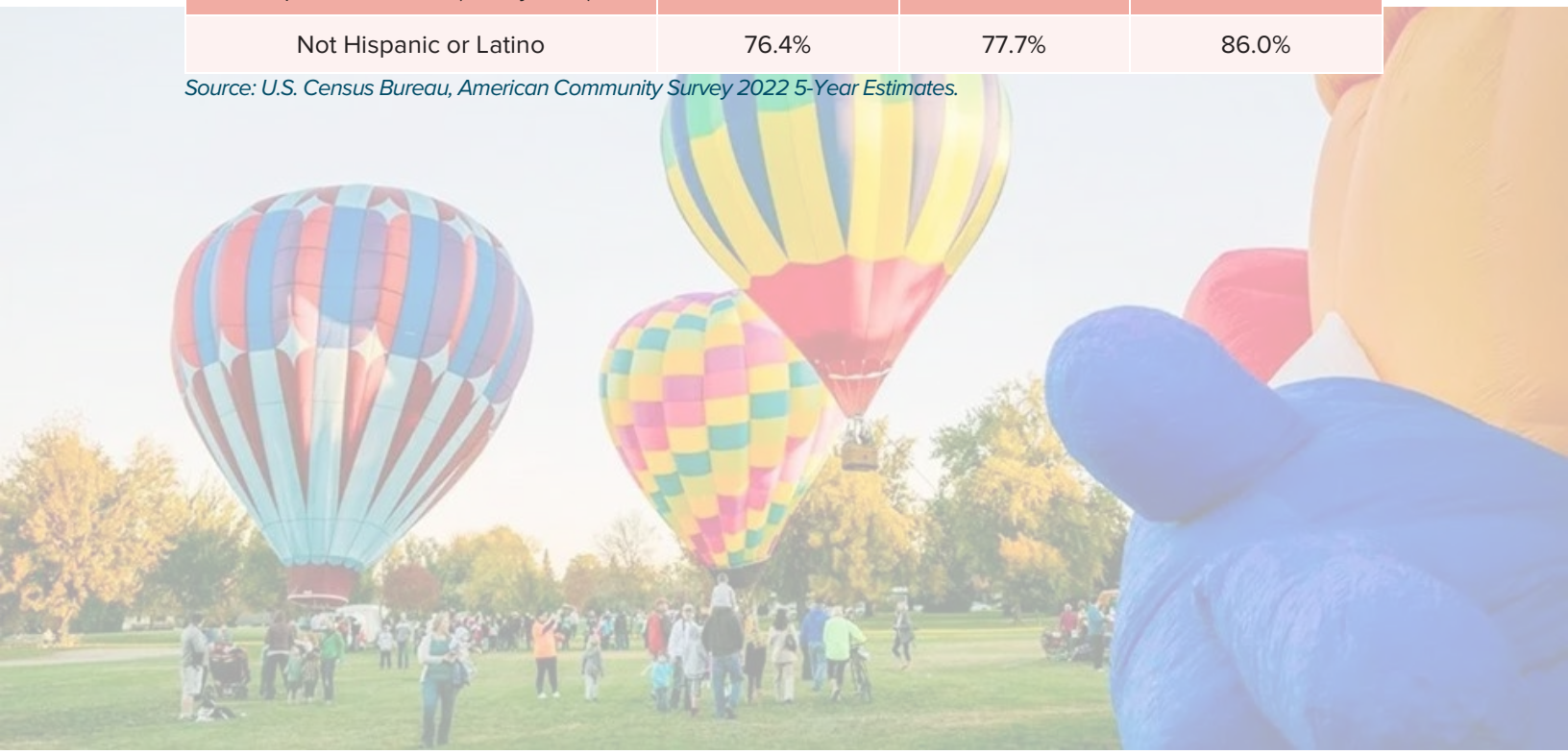
Race	% of City of Walla Walla Population	% of Walla Walla County Population	% of Washington Population
White alone *	60.8%	63.4%	69.9%
Black or African American alone *	2.4%	1.6%	3.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone *	1.7%	1.2%	1.2%
Asian alone *	2.0%	1.5%	9.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone *	0.3%	0.2%	0.7%
Some other race alone *	6.8%	7.0%	5.2%
Two or more races	7.0%	7.0%	9.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates.
(*) Includes persons reporting only one race.

Appendix X Table 3. Ethnicity Distribution

Ethnicity	% of City of Walla Walla Population	% Walla Walla County Population	% of Washington Population
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	23.6%	22.3%	14.0%
Not Hispanic or Latino	76.4%	77.7%	86.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates.



2.1.3 Age and Gender

The median age in Walla Walla is 37.2 years, which is slightly younger than Walla Walla County (38.0 years), and the state of Washington (38.0 years). About 15% of Walla Walla's population is under the age of 15, and 18.3% is over the age of 65. Table 4 provides Walla Walla's age distribution as compared to Walla Walla County and Washington State.

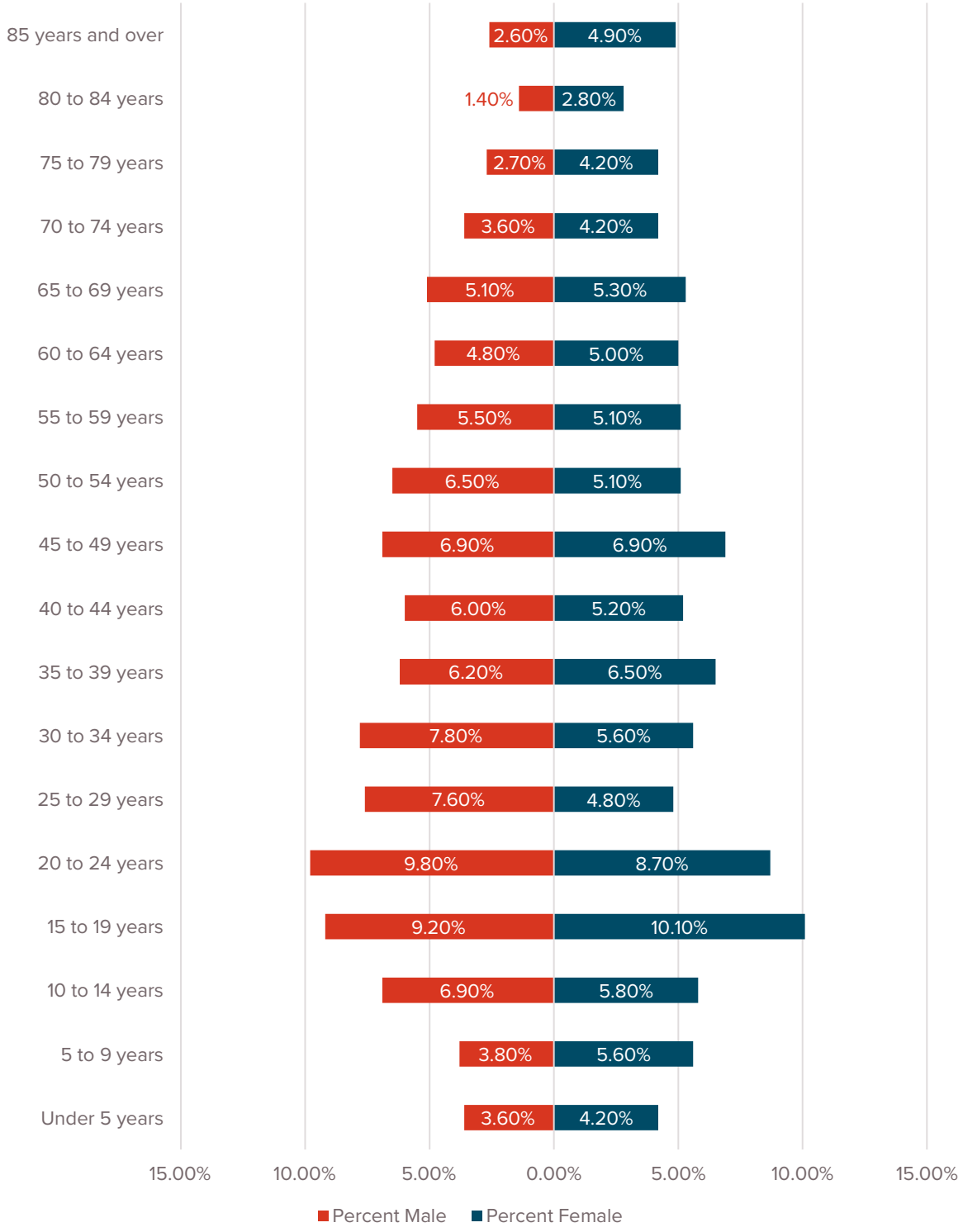
Appendix X Table 4. Age Distribution

Age Range	% of City of Walla Walla Population	% Walla Walla County Population	% of Washington Population
Under 5 years	3.9%	5.0%	5.7%
5 to 14 years	11.1%	11.7%	12.3%
15 to 24 years	18.9%	17.5%	12.4%
25 to 34 years	12.9%	12.1%	15.1%
35 to 44 years	11.9%	11.4%	13.9%
45 to 54 years	12.7%	11.1%	12.2%
55 to 64 years	10.2%	11.9%	12.4%
65 years and over	18.3%	19.2%	16.0%
Median age (years)	**37.2**	**38.0**	**38.0**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates.

Figure 3 on the following page is a population pyramid for the City of Walla Walla, which provides the breakdown of the city's population by age group for binary gender self-identifications (male and female). The city's population differential is fairly even by age group. The population pyramid indicates that for the age cohorts under 9 years, between 15-19 years, between 35-39 years, and for ages 60 and over, the female population is slightly higher than the male population; however, for the age cohorts between 10-14 years, 20-34 years, 40-44 years, and 50-59 years the male population is generally higher. The male and female populations are the same for ages between 45-49 years.

Appendix X Figure 3. City of Walla Walla Population Pyramid



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates.

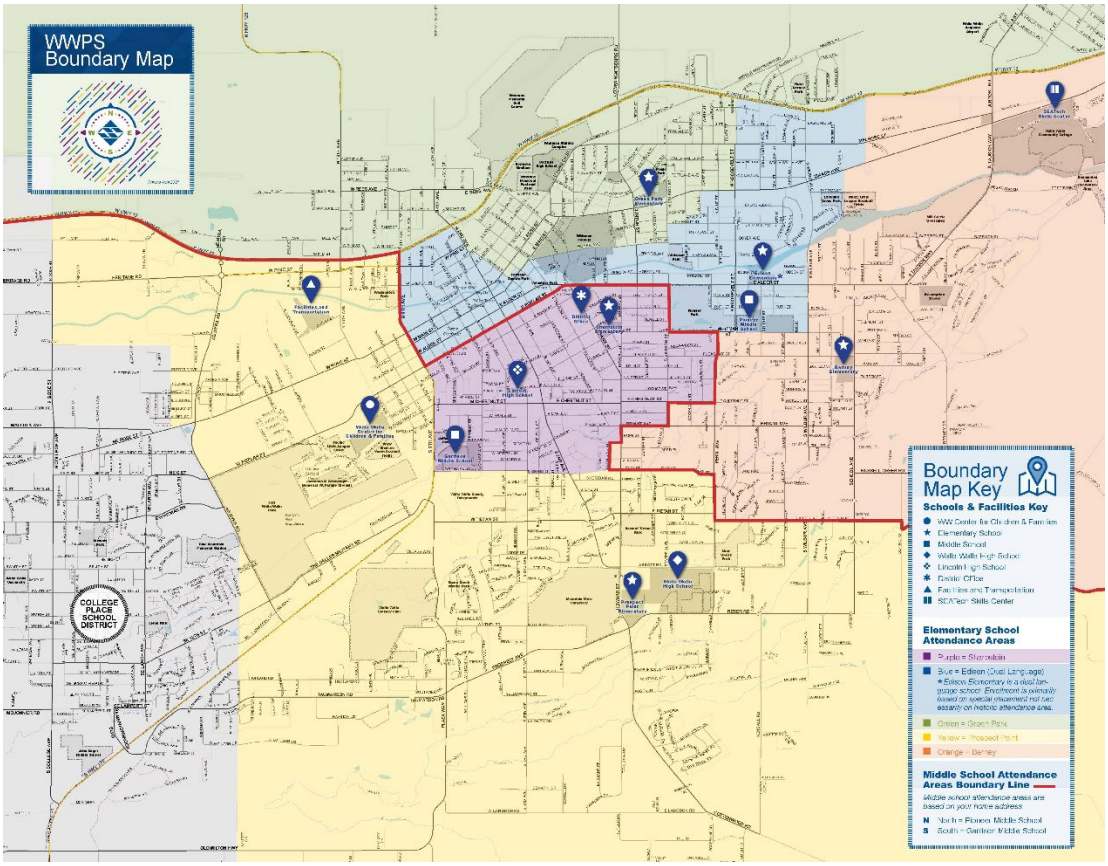
2.1.4 Education

Walla Walla Public Schools operates two high schools, two middle schools, and five elementary schools that serve Walla Walla students. For the 2024-2025 school year, the district's enrollment was 5,490 students, with 44.9% identifying as Hispanic/Latino and 6.6% identifying as racial minorities. There were 345 classroom teachers employed, for a student-to-teacher ratio of 15.9:1[2]. Walla Walla Public Schools' geographical coverage is shown in Figure 4.

Educational attainment for Walla Walla's population is presented in Table 5 and indicates the highest level of education an individual has attained. 22.2% of Walla Walla's residents have attained high school graduate or equivalent; 7.3% of Walla Walla's residents have attained 9th to 12th grade, no diploma; and 5.0% represent those who have achieved less than 9th grade.

Approximately 40.7% of Walla Walla residents have attained a college, graduate, or professional degree, compared with 41.6% of Walla Walla County residents and 48.1% of Washington residents.

Appendix X Figure 4. Walla Walla Public Schools Map



Source: Walla Walla Publiic Schools

[2] **Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) School District Report Card https://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/100283.**

Appendix X Table 5. Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	% of City of Walla Walla Population	% Walla Walla County Population	% of Washington Population
Less than 9th grade	5.0%	4.6%	3.4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	7.3%	6.5%	4.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	22.2%	21.9%	21.8%
Some college, no degree	24.9%	25.4%	22.2%
Associate's degree	11.4%	11.8%	10.1%
Bachelor's degree	16.2%	16.9%	23.3%
Graduate or professional degree	13.1%	12.9%	14.7%

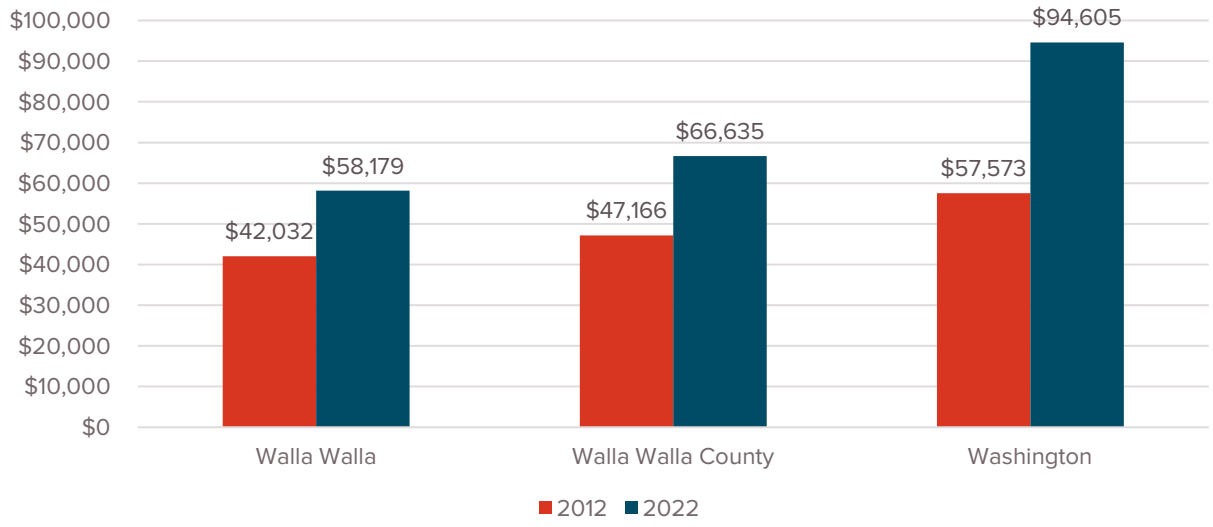
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates.

2.2 Economic Indicators

2.2.1 Income and Wages

Using the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, Figure 5 shows that households in the city of Walla Walla have a median household income of $58,179, which is lower than both Walla Walla County and the state of Washington as a whole. Washington's median income levels increased by approximately 64.3% between 2012 and 2022, while Walla Walla's median income levels increased by 38.4% during the same period.

Appendix X Figure 5. Median Household Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates.

2.2.2 Poverty and Unemployment

The federal poverty guidelines are an economic measure to determine the income level for households to qualify for certain federal benefits and programs, such as Medicaid, food stamps, family and planning services, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and National School Lunch Program. The poverty threshold defines what poverty is and provides statistics on the number of Americans who live in poverty. There are 7 Federal Poverty Levels (FPL) which are explained below:

- **100% FPL** – This is the official poverty line. People at or below this level are considered to be living in poverty.
- **138% FPL** – Used in determining Medicaid eligibility in states that have expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).
- **150% FPL** – Used for some public programs, such as certain utility assistance programs or reduced-fee healthcare services.
- **200% FPL** – Used to define a broader group of economically vulnerable people who might qualify for programs like the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) or subsidized childcare.
- **250% FPL** – Used in certain programs like cost-sharing reductions for healthcare coverage under the ACA.
- **300% FPL** – Some state-based programs use this threshold for eligibility in programs such as housing assistance or state-funded health programs.
- **400% FPL** – The upper threshold for subsidies under the ACA for health insurance coverage. Households earning up to this amount may qualify for tax credits to help reduce healthcare costs.

Cities often use 200% and 400% of the FPL instead when reporting poverty because these higher thresholds capture a broader range of economic vulnerability. The 100% FPL is considered a very low benchmark, and many households just above this level still struggle with basic expenses, especially in urban areas with higher living costs. The 200% and 400% FPL levels better reflect the challenges faced by people who are not officially in poverty but face financial

insecurity. Additionally, these levels are also relevant because they correspond to eligibility thresholds for many public assistance programs. For example, healthcare subsidies under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) extend to households earning up to 400% FPL, and programs like Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) often cover families earning up to 200% FPL. By reporting poverty at these higher thresholds, cities can better understand and address the needs of a larger portion of their population, including those who may not be officially classified as living in poverty but are still financially insecure. Table 6 on the following page shows the federal poverty level figures that were set by the US Department of Health and Human Services for 2022.



Appendix X Table 6. Federal Poverty Level Figures

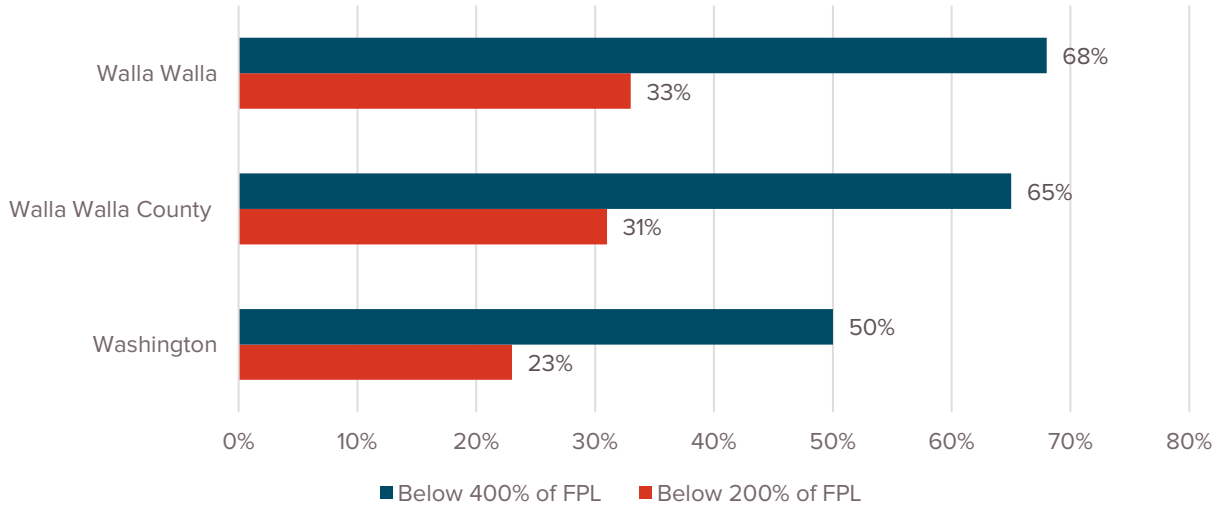
Household Size	100% FPL	200% FPL	400% FPL
1	$13,590	$27,180	$54,360
2	$18,310	$36,620	$73,240
3	$23,030	$46,060	$92,120
4	$27,750	$55,500	$111,000
5	$32,470	$64,940	$129,880
6	$37,190	$74,380	$148,760
7	$41,910	$83,820	$167,640
8	$46,630	$93,260	$186,520

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services.

Per the 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, approximately 33% of Walla Walla residents lived below 200% of the federal poverty level in 2022 which is only slightly higher compared to 31% in Walla Walla County, and 23% statewide. In other words, 33% of Walla Walla residents earned less than 200% of the federal poverty guideline, and 68% of residents earned less than 400%. As an example of what this means: a household of four in 2022 earning less than $55,500 annually would be considered living below the 200% federal poverty guideline and a household of four earning less than $111,000 annually would be considered living below the 400% federal poverty guideline.[3]

[3] *Federal poverty guidelines are updated annually and are published in the Federal Register.*

Appendix X Figure 6. Share of Population Below 200% and 400% Federal Poverty Level



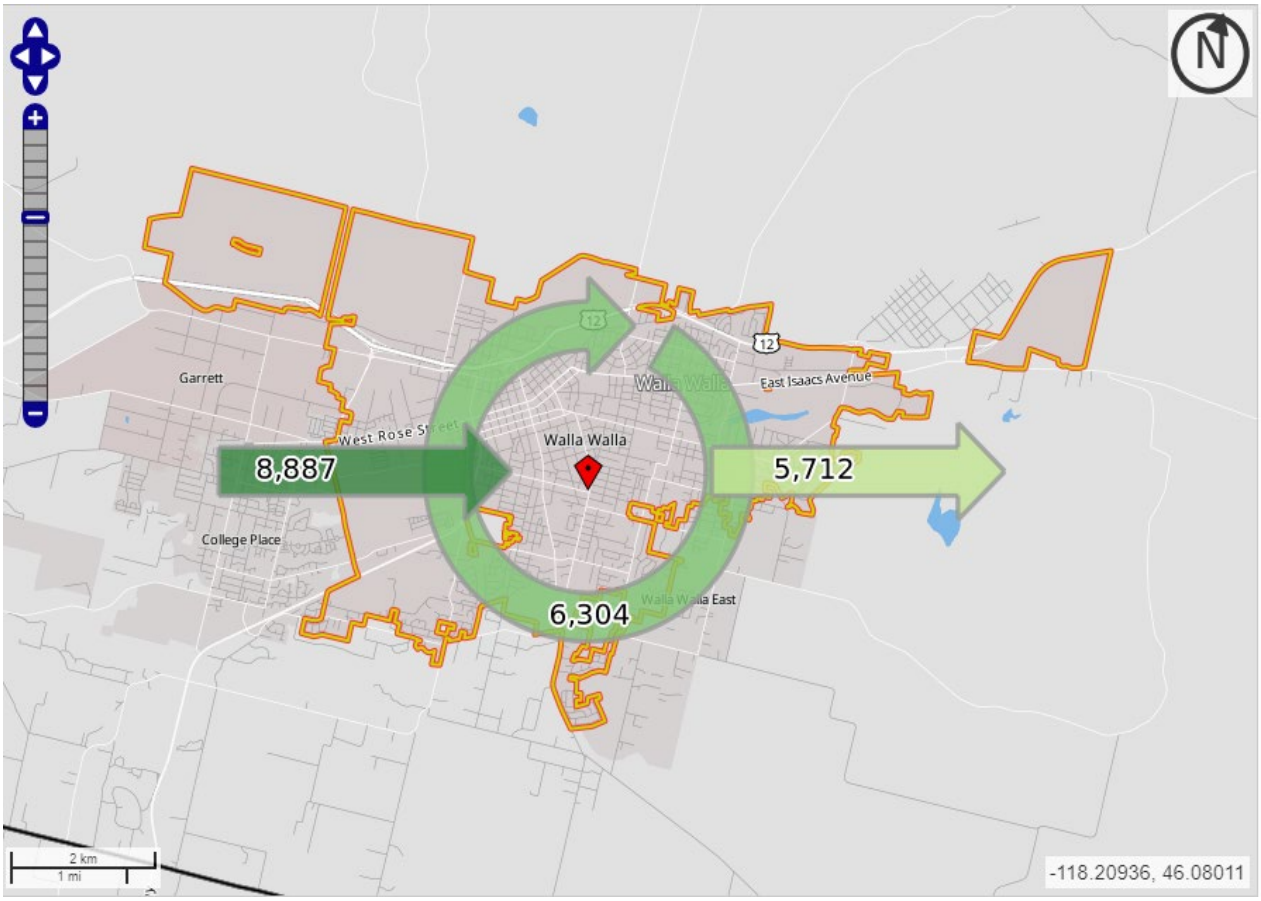
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701.

According to the 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the unemployment rate in the City of Walla Walla is 6.2%, while Walla Walla County's is 5.8%. These are both higher than that of Washington state (4.9%).

2.2.3 Workforce Profile

Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's tool, OnTheMap, Walla Walla had approximately 15,191 total jobs (2021). Additionally, approximately 47.5% of Walla Walla residents were employed outside the city limits. Among jobs within the city, 41.5% were held by Walla Walla residents, with the remainder held by residents from cities and jurisdictions elsewhere in the region. Figure 7 shows how many people remain in Walla Walla, travel out, or travel in for work.

Appendix X Figure 7. Commuting Patterns in Walla Walla



Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap, https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/.

The largest industries in terms of the number of jobs held by workers in Walla Walla businesses are:

- **Healthcare and Social Assistance** – 3,996 jobs (26.3%)
- **Public Administration** – 2,101 jobs (13.8%)
- **Educational Services** – 1,750 jobs (11.5%)
- **Accommodation and Food Services** – 1,488 jobs (9.8%)
- **Retail Trade** – 1,417 jobs (9.3%)

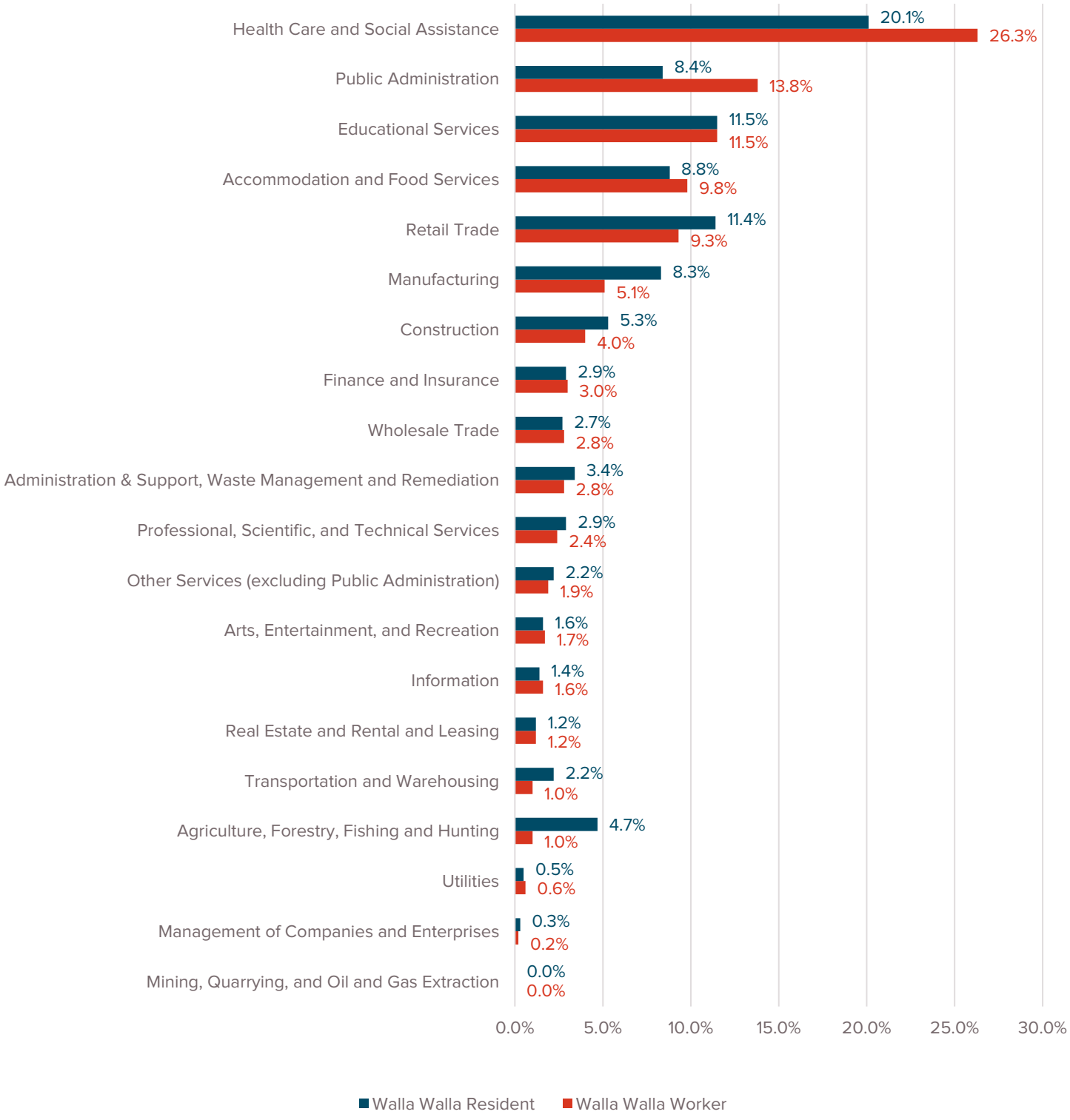
Walla Walla residents work primarily in the following industries, which are both inside and outside of the city limits:

- **Healthcare and Social Assistance** –2,413 jobs (20.1%)
- **Educational Services** – 1,383 jobs (11.5%)
- **Retail Trade** – 1,372 jobs (11.4%)
- **Accommodation and Food Services** – 1,062 jobs (8.8%)
- **Public Administration** – 1,008 jobs (8.4%)
- **Manufacturing** – 998 jobs (8.3%)

Figure 8 on the following page shows the distribution of jobs by industry for workers working inside of Walla Walla, as well as for Walla Walla residents working inside and outside of the city. Healthcare and social assistance is the biggest industry for those working in Walla Walla, as well as the largest industry employing Walla Walla residents.



Appendix X Figure 8. Employment by Industry



Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap, 2021.

2.3 Housing

2.3.1 Household Size

According to OFM's intercensal population estimates, Walla Walla's average household size was 2.38 persons in 2020, a decrease from an average of 2.43 persons per household in 2010. Walla Walla County's average household size in 2020 was 2.47, a slight decrease from its 2010 average of 2.49. Table 7 Presents Walla Walla's average household size as compared to that of Walla Walla County and Washington State for both 2010 and 2020.

Appendix X Table 7. Household Size

Year	City of Walla Walla	Walla Walla County	Washington
2010	2.43	2.49	2.51
2020	2.38	2.47	2.54

Source: OFM Intercensal Estimates, 2010-2020.

2.3.2 Housing Occupancy

Table 8 shows the percentage of occupied and vacant households; Table 9 shows the percentage of owner-occupied versus renter-occupied units in Walla Walla City as compared to Walla Walla County and Washington. OFM estimated the total number of housing units in the City of Walla Walla to be 12,514 in 2010 and 13,571 in 2020, an increase of 1,057 units (8.4%) over that decade. The percentage of occupied housing units decreased from 92.4% in 2010 to 90.1% in 2020. Of the city's occupied units, 60.4% were owner-occupied in 2022, while 39.6% were renter-occupied (a decrease from 40.2% in 2012).

Appendix X Table 8. 2010 Housing Occupancy

	# of Units in the City of Walla Walla	% Age of Total Housing Units in the City of Walla Walla	% Age of Total Housing Units in the County of Walla Walla	% Age of Total Housing Units in the State of WA
Occupied	11,723	92.4%	92.3%	90.8%
Vacant	968	7.6%	7.7%	9.2%
Total Units	12,691	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501.

Appendix X Table 9. 2020 Housing Occupancy

	# of Units in the City of Walla Walla	% Age of Total Housing Units in the City of Walla Walla	% Age of Total Housing Units in the County of Walla Walla	% Age of Total Housing Units in the State of WA
Occupied	12,414	90.1%	91.6%	90.8%
Vacant	1,359	9.9%	8.4%	9.2%
Total Units	13,773	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501.

Appendix X Table 10. 2012 Percent of Owner vs. Renter-Occupied Units

	City of Walla Walla	Walla Walla County	WA State
Owner-Occupied	59.8%	62.5%	62.3%
Renter-Occupied	40.2%	37.4%	37.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501.

Appendix X Table 11. 2022 Percent of Owner vs. Renter-Occupied Units

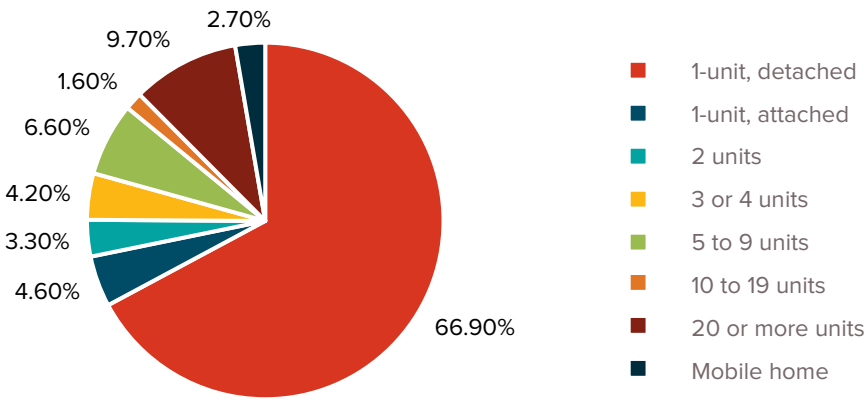
	City of Walla Walla	Walla Walla County	WA State
Owner-Occupied	60.4%	66.2%	63.8%
Renter-Occupied	39.6%	33.8%	36.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501.

2.3.3 Housing Types

A breakdown of Walla Walla's housing units by type is shown in Figure 9. Detached single-family units are by far the most prevalent housing type in Walla Walla, accounting for 67% of the city's existing housing stock. Single-family housing accounts for a smaller share of the housing units in Walla Walla when compared with Walla Walla County (73.5%). However, the city has a greater proportion of single-family housing units than that of Washington State (62.7%). Multifamily housing consisting of 3 or more units comprises nearly 23% of Walla Walla's housing stock, attached single-family homes account for about 4.6%, and two-unit/duplex homes account for 3.3%.

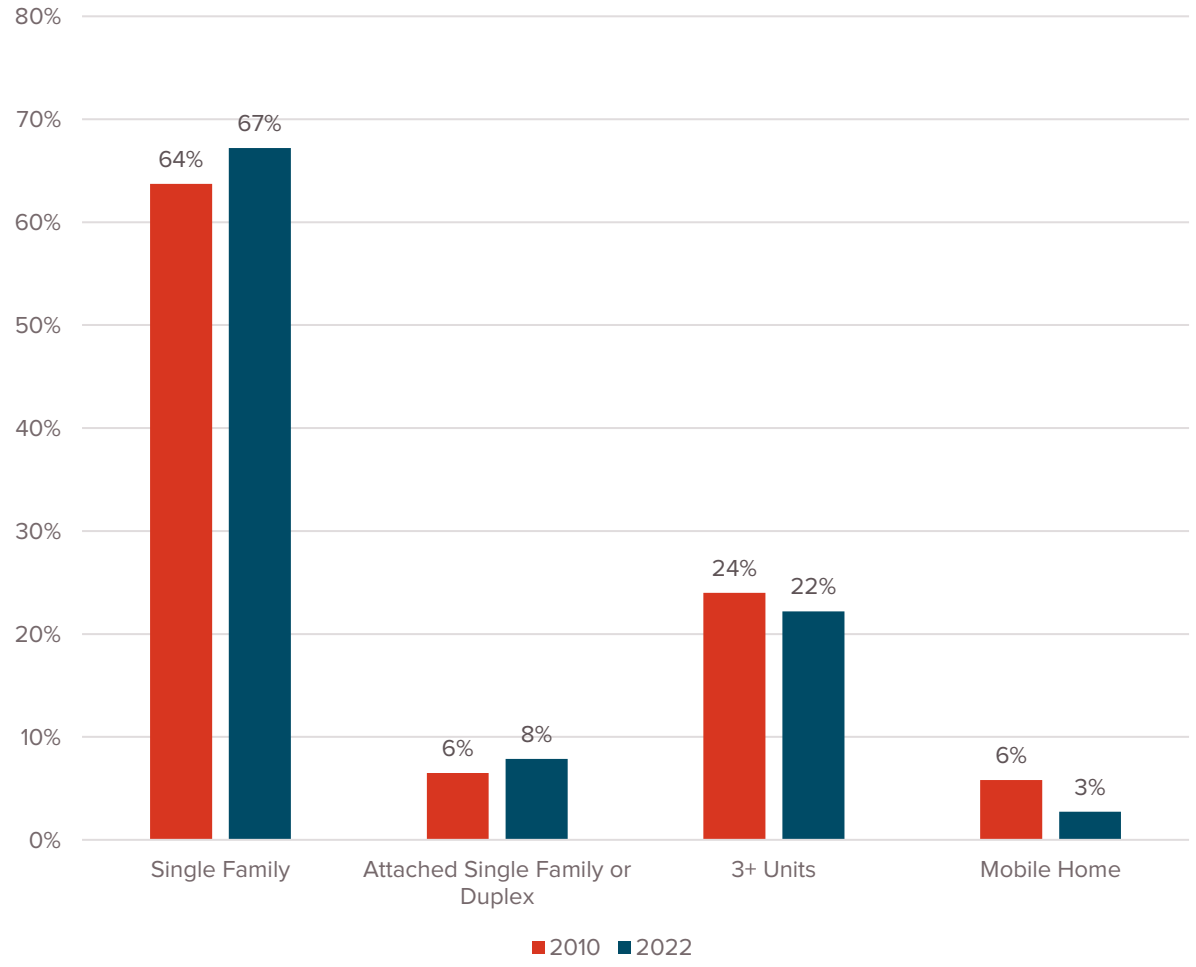
Appendix X Figure 9. Existing Housing Units by Type in Walla Walla



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04.

Figure 10 on the following page shows the change in the number of housing units between 2010 and 2022. While the total number of units increased, the variety of housing types stayed about the same. Single-family detached homes made up 64% of housing types in 2010 and 67% in 2022, whereas attached single-family or duplex housing units increased from 6% to 8% over the same time, while housing units with 3+ units actually decreased from 24% to 22% of all housing units. Mobile homes decreased from 6% to 3% of all housing units.

Appendix X Figure 10. Housing Units in the City of Walla Walla (2010-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04.

2.3.4 Age of Housing Stock

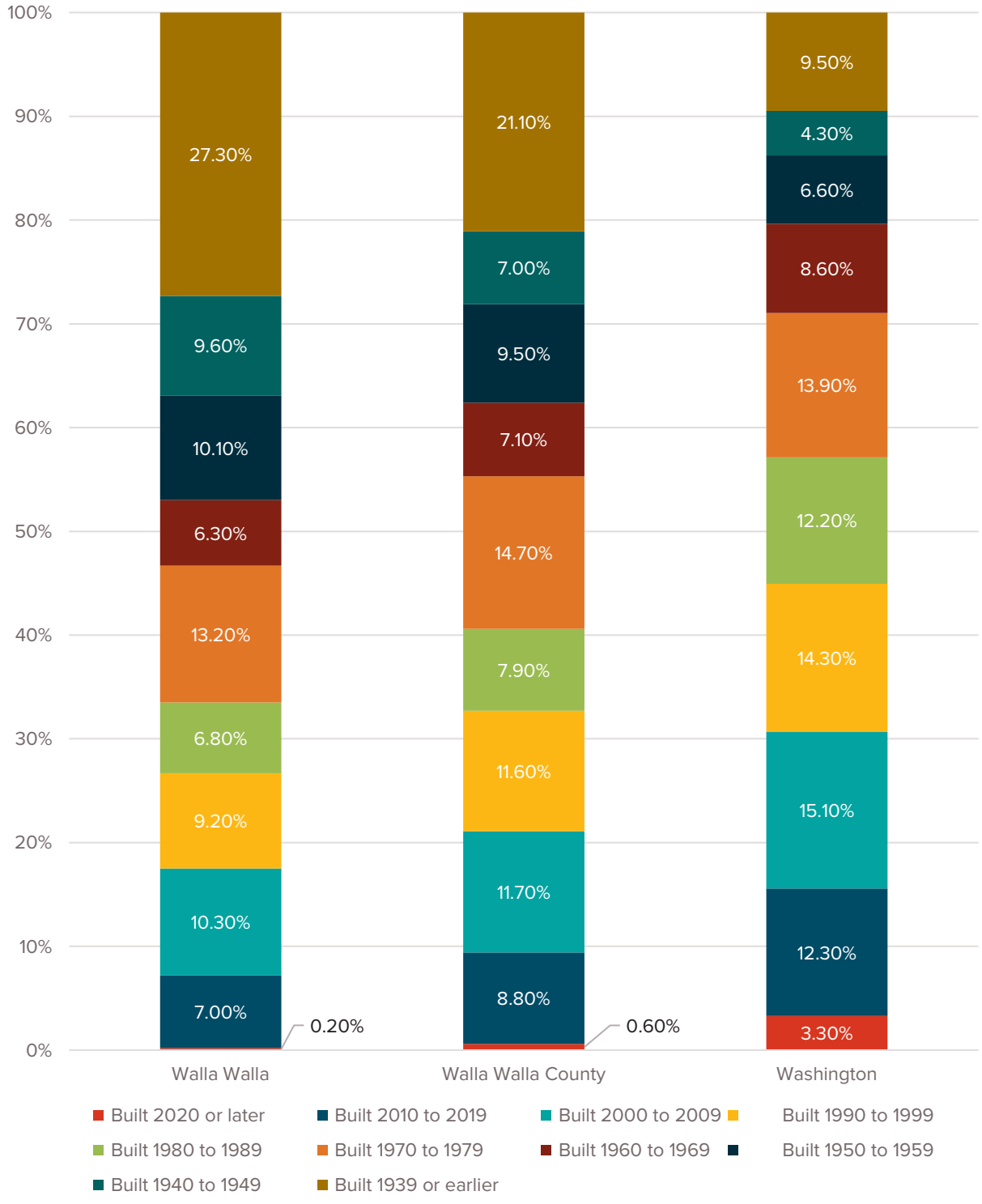
As shown in Figure 11, 7.2% of Walla Walla's existing housing stock has been constructed in the years since 2010. By comparison, 9.4% of the housing stock in Walla Walla County and 11.5% of that in Washington state as a whole was constructed in 2010 or later.

The highest percentage of houses in Walla Walla were built before 1940 (27.3%) with the second highest being houses built between 1970 and 1979 (13.2%). In Figure 11, the decades represented

account for the most significant increases in the city's population based on the available data from 1950 onward.

Walla Walla's housing stock tends to be older on average than that of Walla Walla County and that of Washington State as a whole.

Appendix X Figure 11. Existing Housing Stock in Walla Wall by Year of Construction



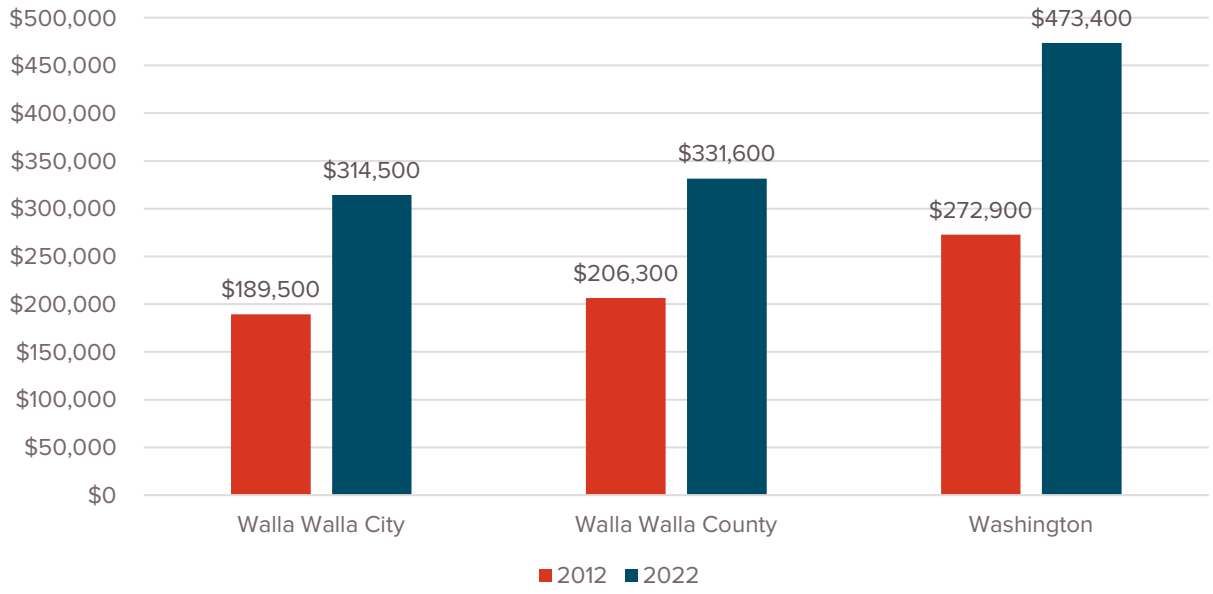
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04.

2.3.5 Housing and Rental Costs

As shown in Table 9 in the "Housing Occupancy" section above, approximately 39.6% of Walla Walla's occupied housing units are rentals and 60.4% are occupied by the owner. Walla Walla County has a much lower percentage of rental units, making up 33.8% of all occupied county housing units.

Rent prices are significantly more difficult to track than housing prices, particularly for smaller geographies. Census data on rent prices is both delayed and self-reported, and large real estate websites do not track rent prices at a granular level for smaller communities. However, the Census data shown in Figure 12 represents the median home value in Walla Walla in both 2012 and 2022. The median home value in Walla Walla in 2022 was $314,500, which is a 65.9% increase from the 2012 median home value of $189,500. During this same period, Walla Walla County saw its median home value increase by 60.3%, slightly less than Walla Walla. Both Walla Walla and Walla Walla County experienced a much lower increase in median value than Washington State (73.5%). The median home value in 2012 in Washington state ($272,900) was notably higher than that of Walla Walla County ($206,300) and the City of Walla Walla ($189,500).

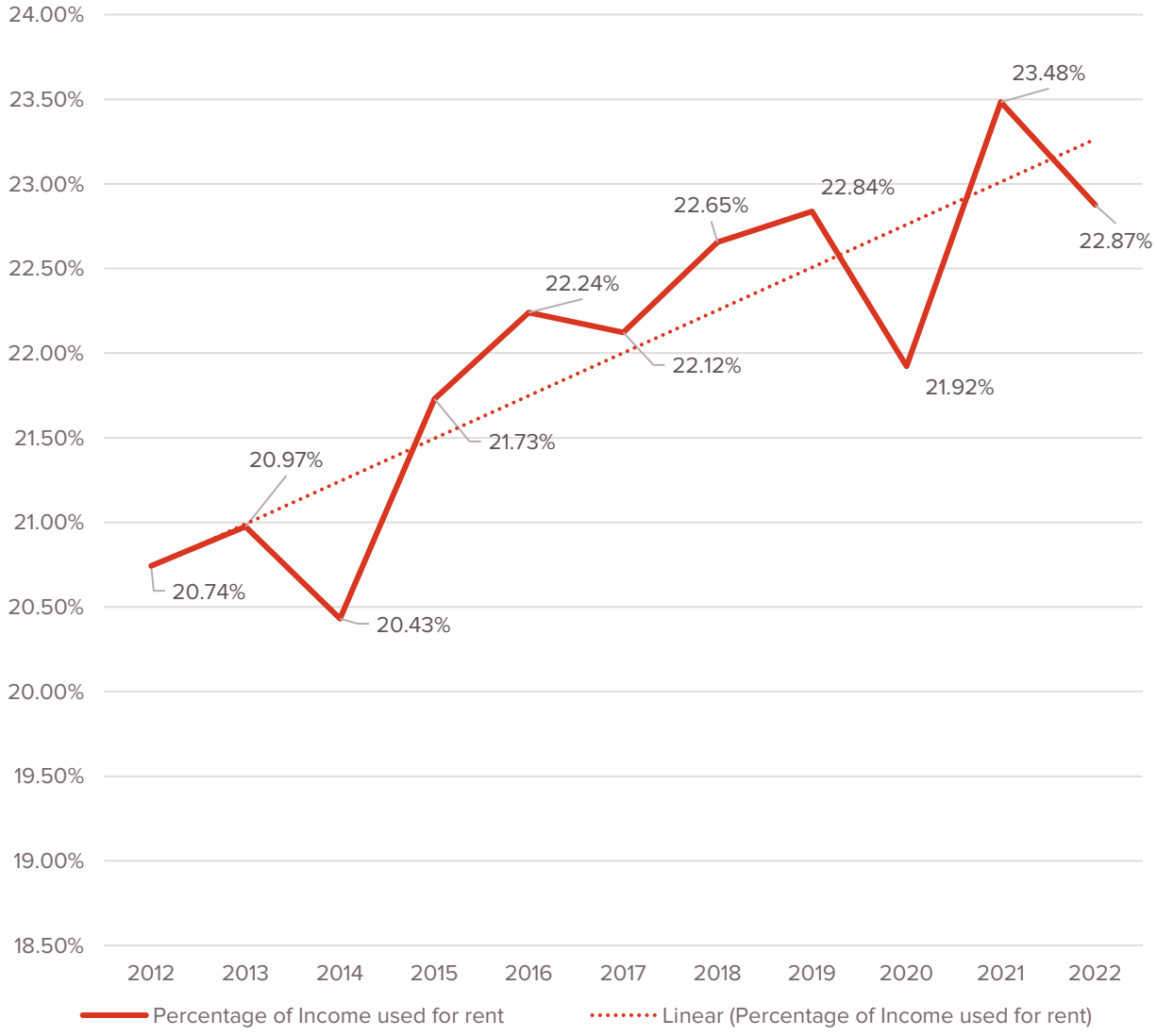
Appendix X Figure 12. Median Home Value (2012-2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04.

Like the rest of the state and much of the country, the cost of housing in Walla Walla has increased in recent years, and incomes have not kept pace with housing costs, as shown in Figure 13. When compared with a 2012 baseline, the percentage of income that is used for rent has been increasing in Walla Walla.

Appendix X Figure 13. Percentage of Income Used for Rent (2012-2022) in Walla Walla



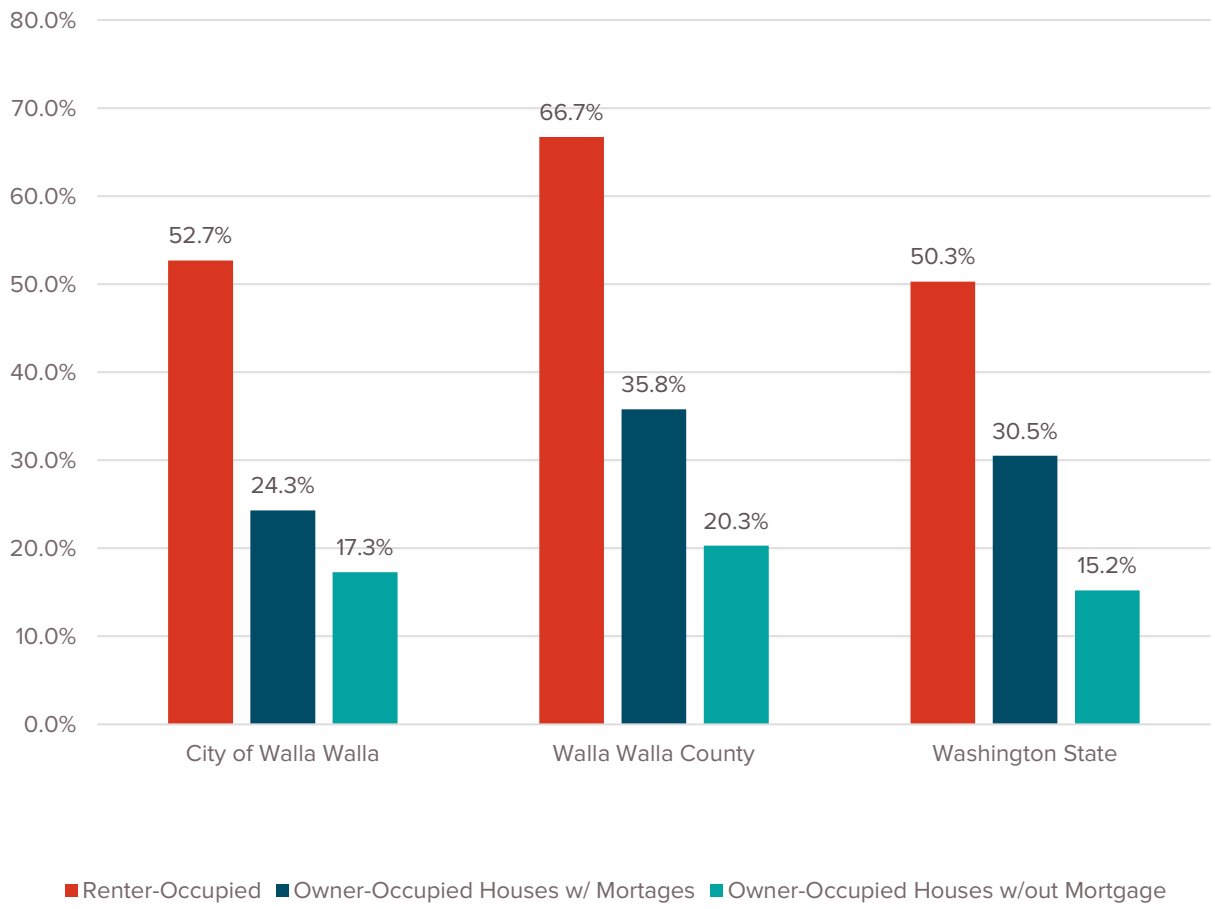
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Table DP04, S1901.

2.3.6 Cost-Burdened Households

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses a measurement of "cost burden" to determine which subset of a community's residents are most in need of housing support or most at risk of displacement or housing hardship. A household is "cost-burdened" if they spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing costs (including rent and utilities).[4]

[4] **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), https://archives.hud.gov/local/nv/goodstories/2006-04-06glos.cfm.**

Appendix X Figure 14. Households that Spend More than 30% of their Household Income on Housing Costs or Rent



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04.

Of the 12,865 households (2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1101) for which monthly housing costs were calculated as a percentage of income, this means about 31.4% of households in Walla Walla, 40.9% of households in Walla Walla County, and 32.0% of households in Washington State are considered cost-burdened by HUD standards.

2.4 Land Use

Examining the existing zoning and land uses in Walla Walla clarifies how the city can accommodate its anticipated population growth over the next 20 years.

2.4.1 Existing Zoning

Walla Walla's zoning code contains 14 districts. General descriptions of what is allowed in each zoning district can be found in Table 10 on the following pages, and a map of Walla Walla's existing zoning districts is shown in Figure 15 on Page 23. In general, the majority of the city is zoned for large lots of single-unit residential and low-density residential dwellings.

Appendix X Table 12. Zoning Districts in Walla Walla and their Descriptions

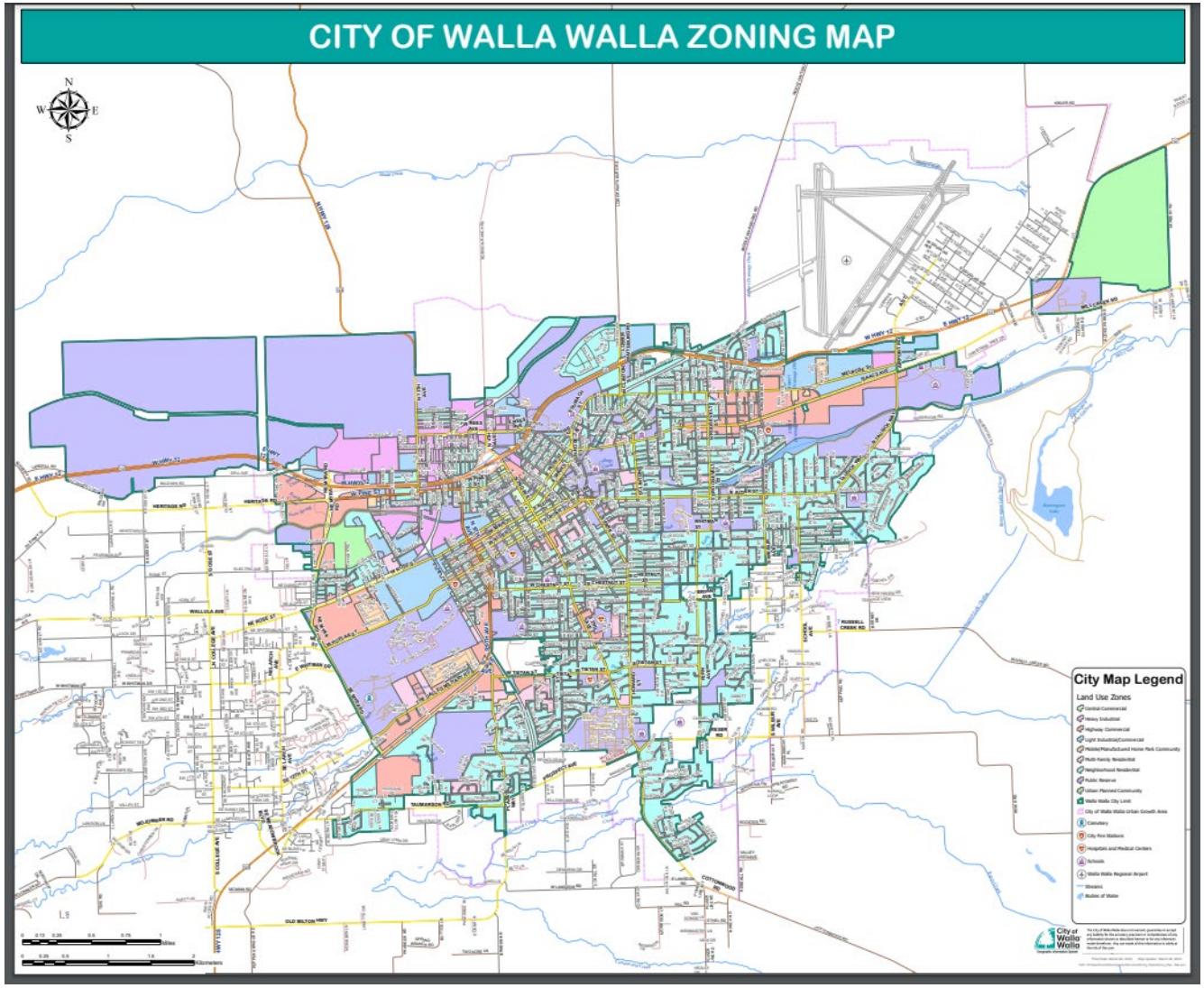
Zoning District	Description
RN- Neighborhood Residential	The Neighborhood Residential Zone is intended to provide for a variety of housing dwelling unit types including but not limited to single-family residential, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhomes, cottage housing, tiny homes, stacked flats, and accessory dwelling units.
RM- Multi-family Residential	The Multi-Family Residential Zone is intended to accommodate a compatible mixture of multifamily residential uses. Such areas generally serve as transition or buffer zones between major arterials or more intensively developed commercial areas and residential districts.
MHC- Mobile/ Manufactured Home Park Community	The Mobile/Manufactured Home Park Community Zone is intended to provide and protect affordable opportunities for the long-term occupancy of manufactured housing and mobile homes for residential purposes or rented or leased sites in mobile/manufactured home parks. Regulations are designed to establish, stabilize, and protect the residential character of the zone and to prohibit all incompatible activities. Certain essential and complementary uses are also permitted under conditions and standards which ensure the protection of the character of the zone.
CC- Central Commercial District	The Central Commercial Zone is intended to accommodate a wide variety of commercial activity (particularly those that are pedestrian oriented) together with compatible residential lifestyles and uses of upper story levels which will result in the most intensive and attractive use of the city's Central Business District.
CH- Highway Commercial	The Highway Commercial Zone is intended to accommodate a wide range of commercial activities which largely depend upon proximity to major streets and arterials for trade and transportation. The types of uses permissible in this zone are generally similar to the types permissible in the Central Commercial Zone, except that additional automobile-oriented businesses and land extensive commercial activities such as automobile sales lots, greenhouses and nurseries, lumber yards, etc., are permissible.
IL/C- Light Industrial/ Commercial	The Light Industrial/Commercial Zone is intended to: (A) provide for the development of areas near designated truck routes, highways and railroads in which certain types of industrial activities, which do not generate noise levels, light, or odor of fumes that would constitute a nuisance or hazard and which do not create exceptional demands upon public facilities and services, may be located; (B) permit in the same areas such commercial uses as may be compatible with the light industrial activities; and (C) protect such areas from other uses which may interfere with the stated purposes and efficient functioning of those purposes.
IH- Heavy Industrial	The Heavy Industrial Zone is intended primarily to provide adequate land area for the location of a broad range of industrial activities which may, by their nature, create a greater degree of hazard or annoyance than would be permitted in any other zoning district. Certain uses such as residential and retail businesses are not permitted in this zone in order to promote a viable heavy industrial area which will not be injurious to nor hindered by incompatible uses.



Zoning District	Description
PR- Public Reserve	The Public Reserve Zone is intended to: (A) protect and preserve certain areas of land devoted to existing and future use for civic, cultural, educational and similar facilities; (B) provide for the social needs of the community as those needs relate to public services, open space and institutions, whether publicly or privately sponsored; (C) enhance the identity and image of the community as a desirable place for human growth and development; (D) provide opportunities and facilities for the various activities and needs of a diverse and dynamic population; and (E) provide and protect parks, open space and other natural, physical assets of the community to improve the aesthetic and functional features of the community.
AD- Airport Development District	The Airport Development District Zone is intended for the development and use of land within the boundaries of the Walla Walla Regional Airport, primarily for aviation and industrial development. Public and quasi-public uses, agricultural development, and commercial activity which functions as a secondary support to aviation and agriculture are also permitted. Review of proposed development is to ensure compatibility with aviation facilities and adjacent properties, and to enhance the potential for future commercial, industrial, public and quasi-public development, and will include input from the management of the Walla Walla Regional Airport. The airport manager will be responsible for application of specific airport development standards and aviation related standards of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
AA- Airport Approach- Overlay Zone	The Airport Approach – Overlay Zone is intended to protect certain runway approaches of the Walla Walla City-County Regional Airport from land uses and structures which would tend to impair the full utilization of the runways. It is further the purpose of this overlay zone to protect the health and lives of the public by preventing the undue concentration of population subject to airport hazards. The rules of this overlay zone are imposed in addition to those of the underlying district. Developments must comply with the requirements of both zones, and the more restrictive of the two.
UPC- Urban Planned Communities	The purpose of the Urban Planned Communities (UPC) Zone is to provide greater flexibility and encourage more creative land planning solutions on large parcels of land than would be achieved by traditional lot-by-lot development using the other zoning districts in this code, while at the same time ensuring substantial compliance with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and permitting more advantageous and efficient use of sites and infrastructure through the location and arrangement of structures, circulation, parking, and open spaces. The purposes of this district also are to provide flexibility to achieve public benefits and to respond to changing community needs. (Ord. 2018-53 § 12(part), 2018: Ord. 2016-49 § 7, 2016: Ord. 2012-09 § 36, 2012. Formerly 20.50.105).

Source: Walla Walla Municipal Code Title 20 (Chapter 20.50).

Appendix X Figure 15. City of Walla Walla Zoning Map



Source: City of Walla Walla.

2.4.2 Existing Land Uses

Walla Walla's incorporated boundaries cover about 7,294 acres. A breakdown of the land uses for the 7,294 acres is shown in Table 11 and Table 12. 2,870 acres of land in Walla Walla are designated for residential purposes. 633 acres of land are designated for commercial purposes and 462 acres represent industrial purposes. Table 11 gives a complete breakdown of all the land uses and the acres of land occupied by each land use. Table 12 also shows the vacant and redevelopable acres in Walla Walla. This analysis will be updated as part of the 2026 Comprehensive Plan process, which will include a new land capacity analysis.

Appendix X Table 13. Land Uses in Walla Walla and the Acres of Land They Occupy

Land Use Designation	Acres In City	Acres In UGA	Total Acres
Residential	2,870	1,785	4,655
Public	2,863	99	2,962
Commercial	633	4	636
Industrial	462	386	848
Airport	—	2,006	2,006
Master Planned Community	353	—	353
Downtown	113	—	113
TOTAL	**7,294**	**4,279**	**11,573**

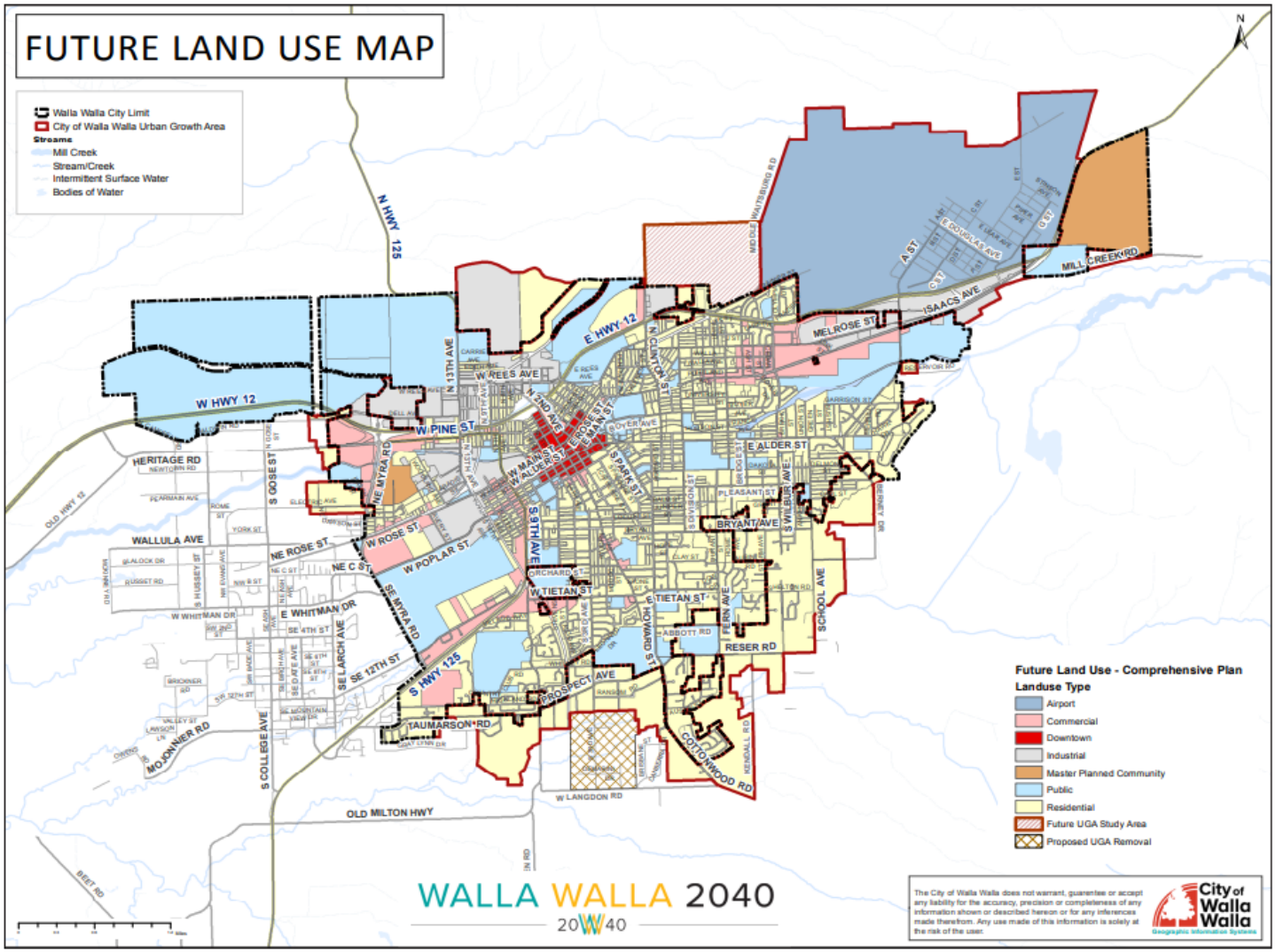
Source: Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan 2018.

Appendix X Table 14. Vacant and Redevelopable Lands in Walla Walla

Zoning Type	Vacant Acres	Redevelopable Acres
Central Commercial	1	5
Light Industrial/Commercial	79	12
Heavy Industrial	382	21
Highway Commercial	9	31

Source: Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan 2018.

Appendix X Figure 16. Future Land Use Map of City of Walla Walla



Source: Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan 2018.



3.0 Findings & Conclusion

Population Trends:

- Walla Walla's population has steadily increased, reaching 34,580 in 2024.
- The city accounts for 54.37% of Walla Walla County's total population.
- The growth rate has remained modest, with significant growth observed between 2000 and 2010 (+5.87%) and from 2010 to 2020 (+4.4%).

Demographics:

- The racial composition of the city reveals that 60.8% of residents identify as White, which is categorized as a race. In addition, 19.1% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, an ethnicity that may span various racial backgrounds. The remaining population includes smaller percentages of other racial groups, each contributing to the diversity of the city's demographic landscape.
- The city has a median age of 37.2 years, and 18.3% of the population is over 65.

Economic Indicators:

- Median household income in 2022 was $58,179, lower than both Walla Walla County and Washington State.
- The poverty rate is relatively high, with 33% of residents living below 200% of the federal poverty level.
- The unemployment rate in the city (6.2%) is higher than the state average (4.9%).

Employment:

- Healthcare and social assistance are the largest employment sectors within the city, followed by public administration and educational services.
- A significant portion of the workforce (47.5%) works outside of Walla Walla.

Housing Trends:

- Walla Walla has seen an 8.4% increase in housing units from 2010 to 2020.
- Homeownership is prevalent, with 60.4% of housing units being owner-occupied and 39.6% being renter-occupied.
- The cost of housing has risen, with median home values increasing by 65.9% between 2012 and 2022.
- Over half (52.7%) of rental households are cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

Land Use and Zoning:

- The city is predominantly zoned for residential use, with a focus on single-family homes.
- Zoning districts include a variety of residential, commercial, and industrial zones, reflecting the city's diverse economic activities.

Forecast Conditions:

- The population is expected to continue growing, which will require careful planning for housing, employment, and infrastructure needs.



Appendix XI. Capital Facilities Plan

City of Walla Walla

FINAL

2026 – 2031

Capital Facilities Plan

December 3, 2025

Page 1

Introduction

Capital Facilities Plan

City of Walla Walla

INTRODUCTION

The City's Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) provides a list and schedule of capital expenditures for City Facilities. Anticipated funding sources include local funds, as well as State and Federal grants. Expenditures included in this plan have largely been identified through other planning efforts such as:

- The Downtown Master Plan
- Water System Plan
- General Sewer Plan
- Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan
- Landfill Master Plan
- Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Program
- Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2040 Plan
- Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan

The reader is referred to these plans for additional details.

Why is it important for a city to develop and keep a capital facilities plan up to date? In particular, the following three compelling reasons drive the development and update of the City's capital facilities plan:

1. City health and long term stability in terms of quality of life and its economy require replacement and repair of existing infrastructure, investment in new infrastructure, and correction of deficiencies.
2. The City receives many State and Federal grants for infrastructure. For example, a significant portion of street improvement projects are funded with grants. The majority of infrastructure grants and loan programs require that projects be identified in an adopted plan.
3. The Washington State Growth Management Act of 1990 requires that capital facilities plans be adopted and consist of (1) an inventory of existing capital facilities; (2) a forecast of the future needs for such facilities; (3) the proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new facilities; (4) at least a six-year plan that will finance such facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies sources of public money for such purposes; and (5) a requirement to reassess the land use element if funding falls short of meeting existing needs.

The purpose of the CFP is to ensure the City plans for adequate facilities that are (1) consistent with the goals and policies of the Walla Walla Urban Area Comprehensive Plan; (2) consistent with the projected population growth and land use plan; (3) concurrent with, or within six years of the impacts of new development in order to achieve and maintain adopted level of service standards; and (4) based on sound fiscal policies for the city.

This document is intended to be updated annually. Projects funded in the first two years of the plan are intended to be consistent with the City's biennial budget. This document in conjunction with the aforementioned individual public facility plans provide the information required by RCW 36.70A.070(3).

The city-owned public facilities encompassed by the plan include:

- streets
- sidewalks, paths and trails
- street lighting systems
- traffic signals
- domestic water system
- fire
- sanitary sewer system
- stormwater system
- parks and recreation facilities
- general administrative facilities
- cemetery
- landfill
- wastewater treatment facilities
- water treatment facilities
- police
- library
- bridges
- parking lots

This plan does not include Operations and Maintenance budgets (internal labor, supplies, materials, equipment, vehicles, etc.). The process and procedures for establishing and adopting Operations and Maintenance budgets is done through the bi-annual budget adoption.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions will help in understanding how this Capital Facilities Plan is put together and read.

Capital Facilities: Capital facilities are structures, improvements, equipment (excluding fleet vehicles) or other major assets (including land) with a useful life of at least ten (10) years. Capital improvements are projects that create, expand, or modify a capital facility. The definition applies to projects that cost more than ten thousand ($10,000) dollars.

Level of Service: Levels of service are usually quantifiable measures of the amount of public facilities that are provided to the community. Measures of levels of service typically are expressed as ratios of facility capacity to demand by actual or potential users. Sometimes, levels of service (LOS) standards are based on the public service, such as police protection, rather than on the facility that houses the service (e.g. police station).

Concurrency: This is a term that requires public facilities and services necessary to serve development to be in place at the time of development or a financial commitment is made to provide the facility within a certain period of time. The Growth Management Act requires concurrency on transportation facilities, while all other public facilities must be "adequate."

CFP ORGANIZATION

This Capital Facilities Plan is organized around each of the public facilities provided by the city. Because the city wants to make sure that the Capital Facilities Plan is based on sound fiscal policy, all capital facilities for which city funds would be expended are included in the CFP, not just those facilities required to accommodate future growth. The CFP is based on the following categories:

- Transportation
- Transportation Benefit District (TBD)
- Infrastructure Repair & Replacement Plan (IRRP)
- Water
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- Landfill
- Sanitation
- Public Facilities (Service Center & City Hall)
- Library
- Parks & Recreation
- Fire Department
- Police Department

LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

The Level of Service Standards for Public Facilities are as follows:

Fire Protection
Department goal is to have a response of less than 6 minutes 90% of the time.

Police Protection
All calls for assistance will be answered within a reasonable time consistent with the nature of the call.

Water Supply
Based on International Fire Code requirements for fire flow and Washington State Department of Health requirements for a safe supply of potable water.

Sanitary Sewer
Daily load demand times 2.5 for collection system
Daily load demand for treatment capacity

Transportation
LOS "D" for intersections along any collector or arterial roadway, except for intersections along the following arterial segments where LOS "E" is applied:

- Myra Road
- Poplar Street (Myra Road to Ninth Ave.)
- Rose Street (Myra Road to Ninth Ave.)
- Second Ave.
- Isaacs Ave. (Wilbur Ave. to Airport Way)
- Tietan Street

LOS "E" for all critical movements at local roadways.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

The first two years of the capital facilities plan is typically consistent with the City's adopted biennial budget. However, since capital expenditures sometimes impact multiple years after funding has been committed, it is prudent to plan ahead for the expenditure of funds for at least three years and in some cases longer. In addition, some of the City's adopted plans include longer term expenditure plans in which resources are actively being pursued when opportunities arise. Often grants become available for certain types of projects resulting from changing public policy at Federal, State, and local levels. The City of Walla Walla monitors these opportunities and puts forth funding applications for projects consistent with Federal, State, and local funding objectives.

Transportation

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation System
The City of Walla Walla's transportation system inventory covers a variety of multimodal system elements including streets, transit lines, air transport, rail transport and non-motorized traffic (pedestrian and bicycles). Traffic signals, City owned street lights, and bridge facilities are also included as street facilities. The review of all available modes of transportation in Walla Walla must provide consistency with state, regional and county plans to meet objectives of the Growth Management Act (GMA).

Planning Documents
In June 2018, the City developed a City specific Transportation System Plan as part of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan update. The following is a list of historical transportation planning documents:

- Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2040 plan
- City of Walla Walla's Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Walla Walla Regional Airport: Airport Layout Plan Update
- Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP), also known as the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the City of Walla Walla
- 2004 Walla Walla/College Place Traffic Circulation Study
- Walla Walla/College Place UGAs Long Term Arterial Plan – 2007 - County Map TR-2
- 1994 ADA Compliance Plan

Roadway Classifications
The City of Walla Walla's street system consists of National Highway System roads, Highways of Statewide significance, Heritage Corridors, Regional Transportation System roads and city streets.

The City has three roads within the National Highway System: US 12; SR 125; and Airport Way, from US 12 to the Walla Walla Airport. Highways of Statewide Significance include US 12 from I-182 to the Columbia County Line and SR 125 from Oregon State Line to US 12.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization/Regional Transportation Planning Organization (MPO/RTPO) determines which roads are designated as part of the regional transportation system. All principal arterials, as well as some selected minor arterials in the City of Walla Walla are a part of the regional transportation system.

All streets are classified within the Federal Functional Classifications. The classifications define four different types of streets: principal arterials, minor arterials, collector streets and local streets. The classification of the street reveals the purpose or function the street serves. The functional classifications serve as a hierarchy of streets with principal arterials as the major urban or regional routes at the top of the hierarchy.

The function of a principal arterial is to carry the greatest amount of travel volume, transporting through traffic around the central city, between central business districts and outlying residential areas, between major inner city communities or between major suburban centers.

Minor arterials serve to supplement the principal arterials, interconnecting the street system by collecting and distributing traffic to collector or local streets or directly to destinations. Local bus routes tend to follow the minor arterials. Collector streets provide a link between residential neighborhoods and the arterial system. Local roads function as access to adjacent land uses and to higher road classifications.

Pavement Maintenance and Rehabilitation
A Street and Roads Task Force was formed by the City Council in 2002. The Task Force hired a consultant to complete a Pavement Maintenance and Rehabilitation Plan in 2003. The study was a comprehensive evaluation to look into solutions to improve the conditions of the entire City street network, excluding state routes and alleyways.

Roadways are evaluated on a number of criteria that result in an Overall Condition Index (OCI) which represents the average surface condition of each segment of roadway. The rating is based on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is failed and 100 being a newly constructed roadway.

The average overall OCI rating of City streets in 2002 was 59. The average score for principal arterials was 71, while minor arterials scored 66, collectors scored 61 and residential or local access roads were 56. These scores indicate that historically, most dollars for roadway improvements have been spent on the arterial roadways.

WSDOT considers triggering corrective action on any highway at an OCI rating of 85. The study provided funding scenarios which range from doing nothing to improving all of the streets. The study recommended that an optimized approach with an annual budget of $2.75 million be applied over a 10-year period. This would result in an average OCI of 86. The study indicated that the 10 year, "Do Nothing" option would result in an OCI rating of 26. The study concluded that just to maintain the OCI at 2003 levels; the City would need to invest over $1.5 million per year.

This Pavement Management System (PMS) budget was substantially more than the City could afford with the ($600,000 to $700,000) annual proportionate share of the gas tax revenues received from the State. Due to insufficient funding, pavement conditions in the city steadily declined. However, beginning in 2010, the City pursued avenues to renew pavement conditions beginning with the creation of the Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Program, formation of the City of Walla Walla Transportation Benefit District (TBD) and passage of the voter approved 0.2% sales tax for streets initiative in 2012 (sunsets in 2022), and most recently (2015), the Council approved 2% utility tax increase on public utilities. These local sources are helping to rebuild and fund preventative maintenance efforts.

Beginning in May of 2019, a re-evaluation of all roadways is being performed to update the OCI scores. From this data, a comprehensive pavement maintenance plan will be developed. This plan is expected to be completed in 2023.

City of Walla Walla citizen surveys have consistently shown that improving and maintain streets is a top priority. Pavement Management is a systematic approach to planning pavement maintenance and rehabilitation to maximize the pavement condition at the lowest cost. This is composed of applying the right treatment, to the right road, at the right time.

One dollar of preventative maintenance keeps a road in good condition, saving $10 of rehabilitation, or $20 for reconstruction in the future. The City has 145 centerline miles of road, or enough lane miles to complete a 2-lane road from Walla Walla to Portland, Oregon. If the City had to reconstruct their entire road network, it would cost about $250 million, so managing this asset is critical.

In 2019, the City conducted a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) assessment of every City street. The rating is based on a scale of 0 to 100 where 70-100 is very good, 50-69 is good, 25-49 is poor, and below 25 is very poor. The City's overall network PCI scored at a 62, principal arterials 78, minor arterials 70, collectors 64, and local roads, which are the majority of City streets, 58. The analysis also included parking lots, which scored a 66. Preventative maintenance is typically applied to PCI's of 60 or higher. Scores below 60 are either rehabilitation or outright reconstruction.

The City ran through 15, 6-year budget scenarios ranging from doing nothing to meeting all network needs at a cost of $13.4 million per year. Staff presented options to Council on June 8, 2020. Maintaining the current PCI score was presented as a cost of $5.7 million per year. As this funding ask was viewed as too high, staff presented Council with options for annual budgets of $1, 2, and $3.7 million per year.

At the August 24, 2022, Council Work Session, the formation of a Pavement Management Program task force was discussed with the idea of this group reviewing and recommending to Council, funding sources, options, and a recommended budget.

Level of Service

One way to determine whether a street is functioning well is to identify the street's level of service (LOS) rating. Defined by the Transportation Research Board's Highway Capacity Manual, LOS ratings range from "A" to "F", with LOS "A" roads generally having the greatest amount of travel ease and LOS "F" roads generally having travel delay issues. The travel ease is in reference to travel times, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, convenience and safety.

The standard acceptable LOS for urban areas is LOS "D."

Public Transportation
Valley Transit, a separate taxing district led by elected representatives from Walla Walla County, City of Walla Walla and City of College Place provides bus service for the general public. Valley Transit runs nine different routes throughout the City plus a connector route for those areas outside of the service area. General bus service runs from 6:15 a.m. to 5:50 p.m. Monday through Friday. Service extends from the Walla Walla Regional Airport to College Place. The transfer center is located along Fourth Avenue in downtown Walla Walla between Main Street and Rose Street.

The bus provides additional services including: a Para-transit service for ADA-certified individuals; persons aged 70+ years; others unable to use the fixed-route bus system; and Job Access program employees. This service is fare-free for transportation to work and employment related activities. The bus service also runs a more limited evenings and Saturday schedule for the general public.

Walla Walla Regional Airport
The Port of Walla Walla owns and operates the Walla Walla Regional Airport. This facility consists of more than 2,400 acres located about three miles northeast of the City's Central Business District. The airport operates three runways, connecting taxiways, a passenger terminal and general aviation facilities. Commercial service at Walla Walla Regional Airport serves the Seattle market through Alaska Airlines, operated by Horizon Air.

Rail Transportation
Rail Transportation in the City of Walla Walla includes a shortline railroad provided by the Blue Mountain Railroad (BLMR). BLMR transports mainly grain, forest products, frozen foods and other farm products. A train generally runs each day in one direction or another. There is no direct rail passenger transportation through Walla Walla. Amtrak provides regional passenger train service from the Tri-Cities.

Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP)/Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)
The City reviews, conducts a public hearing and adopts an updated Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Program/Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) each year in accordance with RCW 35.77.010. However, amendments of the TIP may need to be addressed to match state or other local project needs.

The Six-Year CTP/TIP is divided into two parts:

- Current Six Year Cycle
- Long Range Program

The first four years of the TIP are intended to be definitive, specific and include those projects that have secured or expect to have secured funding. The last two years include projects that have a high probability of receiving funding.

Projects in the years beyond the first six years are listed in the Long Range Program as "Planned." These listings are intended to be more flexible and may be accelerated, delayed or canceled as funding opportunities arise or circumstances change. Projects in the Long Range Program may be advanced to a higher level of priority should circumstances dictate that necessity.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA
The evaluation system is designed to provide the guidance in reviewing projects and determining their feasibility and applicability in the Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Program. This plan assigns priority to projects that:

- Address high risk and collision locations – for motorist, bicyclists, and pedestrians;
- Assist in completing a transportation network that serves all modes of transportation;
- Allocate resources towards streets that do not provide adequate service;
- Leverage opportunities and have a positive impact on other planned projects in the City;
- If not funded would result in a lost funding opportunity or partnership, costly future construction, or costly repair; and
- Allocate resources to achieve parity of infrastructure among neighborhoods over time.

The Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Program goal and strategies are consistent with the direction of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The State's

Growth Management Act (GMA) required local governments to develop and adopt Comprehensive Plans covering land use, housing, capital-facilities, utilities and transportation by July 1, 1993. The City of Walla Walla adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1999 and completed an update in 2008 and in 2018.

ARTERIAL STREET PROJECTS

Walla Walla's principal and minor arterial streets make up about 32 (about 26%) of the 138 miles of roadways. Over 75% of the total volume of vehicle miles traveled each year is made on these arterial streets. These streets are typically multi-lane sections with higher posted speed limits and traffic signals at key intersections to improve the flow of traffic, while reducing accidents.

All federal and state transportation funding sources are limited to application on principal and minor arterials and collector street projects.

STREET SIGNALS

Walla Walla operates and maintains 43 street signals for traffic flow and control. Efforts since 2010 have been to upgrade control systems to current technology and pursue upgrades for safety and efficiency.

STREET LIGHTING

The City owns and maintains approximately 800 street lights. Most of the city owned lights were retrofitted in 2010-11 to induction lights through a Department of Commerce grant. With the advancement in LED technology, all new installations are LED. Through a cooperative project with Pacific Power, all street lights within the City owned by Pacific Power were retrofitted to LED in 2020.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN

The goal of the City of Walla Walla is to develop a walkable, pedestrian friendly, ADA accessible and bike friendly community. Goals include connectivity between downtown, colleges, schools, parks, shopping centers and Bennington Lake Recreation Area.

The city has been collecting inventory information on the sidewalk network for the past several years as resources are available with the goal of updating the City's 1994 ADA Compliance/Transition Plan. Data collection is expected to be completed in 2016.

BRIDGES

The City has 30 National Bridge Inventory (NBI) bridges. Many of the City of Walla Walla's bridges were constructed in the early 1900's to the mid 50's. While some of these bridges have been upgraded or replaced, several bridges have exposed rusty rebar, spalling concrete, show signs of continued deterioration, exhibit channel scouring, and are in need of repair. Other Mill Creek bridges are not part of the transportation system or are privately owned, but still may need substantial improvements or maintenance to be safe.

The City has updated the ratings and postings of City owned bridges and completed an inspection of City owned off R/W bridges.

While 2/3 of the City's bridges have exceeded their 50-year designed life-span, below are the structures recommended prioritizations for renovations or replacements:

1. **Howard-Bryant Bridge over Garrison Creek (Project Complete - Replaced in 2019)**
   a. This bridge is located at the intersection of a minor arterial and collector. Built in 1936 and renovated in 1948, it has a sufficiency rating of 57.89, it is load posted/restricted and is both structurally deficient and functionally obsolete.

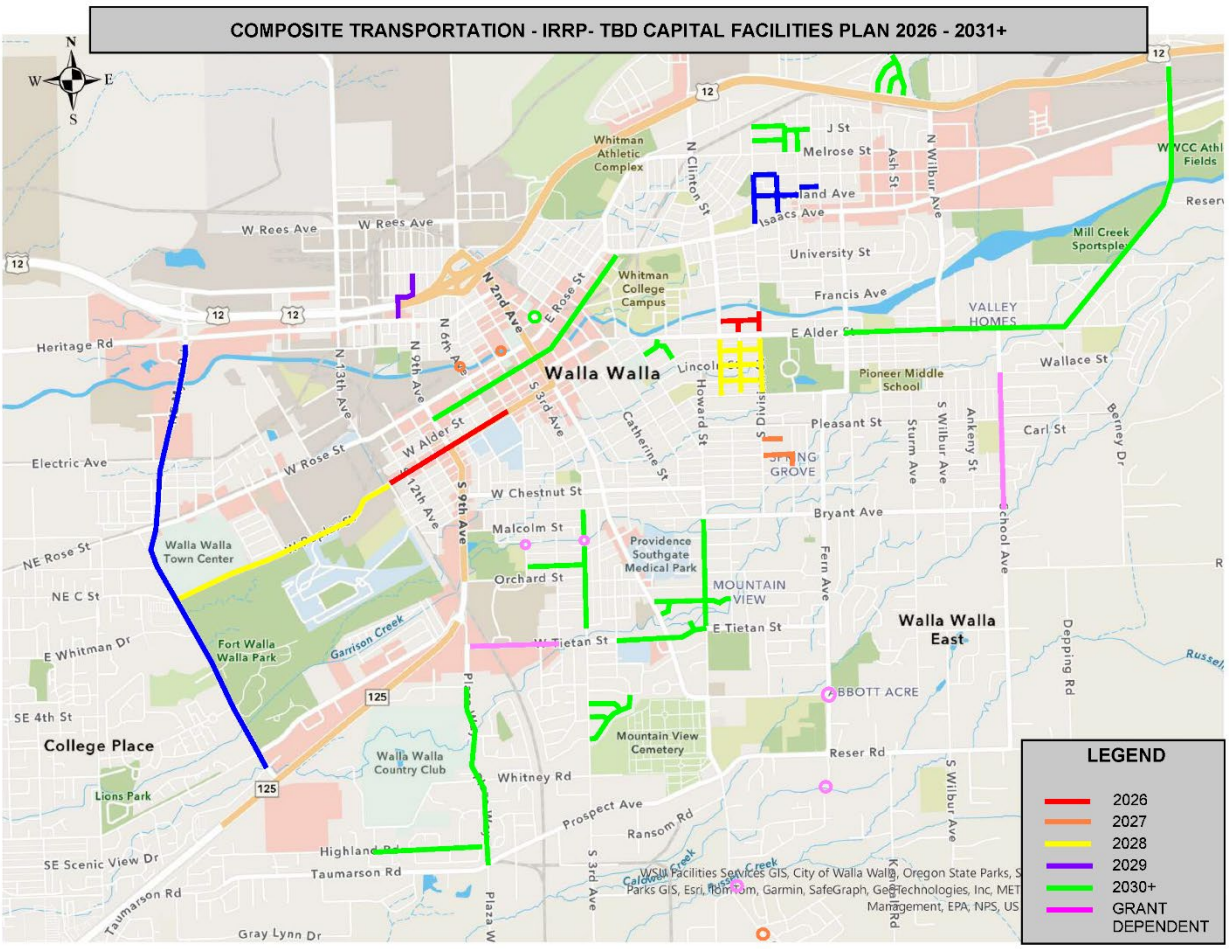
2. **Rose Street – Third Avenue over Mill Creek (Project Complete – Replaced in 2021)**
   a. This bridge dates from 1911 and is located at the intersection of a primary arterial and local street. It has a sufficiency rating of 54.49, it is load posted/restricted and is functionally obsolete.

3. **Main Street over Mill Creek**
   a. Built in 1902 and renovated in 1950 this structure is in the heart of downtown. While the sufficiency rating is 67.03, this bridge is load posted/restricted and is both structurally deficient and functionally obsolete.

4. **Spokane Street over Mill Creek (Project Complete – Replaced in 2020)**
   a. The City's oldest bridge, dating from 1905, this structure has a sufficiency rating of 53.29, it is load posted/restricted, and is structurally deficient.

The City is currently working to prioritize the 30 National Bridge Inventory (NBI) bridges for major renovation or replacement. The list above may change as a result of that effort.

Note - The sufficiency rating is the primary criteria for WSDOT's bridge program grant funding. The most recent call for projects required bridges have a rating below 40.


COMPOSITE TRANSPORTATION - IRRP- TBD CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN 2026 - 2031+
N
W
E
S
Walla Walla
College Place
Walla Walla East
Whitman Athletic Complex
Whitman College Campus
Pioneer Middle School
Providence Southgate Medical Park
Mountain View Cemetery
Walla Walla Country Club
Walla Walla Town Center
Fort Walla Walla Park
Lions Park
Mill Creek Sportsplex
VALLEY HOMES
SPRING GROVE
MOUNTAIN VIEW
ABBOTT ACRE
W Rees Ave
Heritage Rd
Electric Ave
NE Rose St
NE C St
E Whitman Dr
SE 4th St
SE Scenic View Dr
Taumarson Rd
Gray Lynn Dr
Highland Rd
Whitney Rd
Prospect Ave
Ransom Rd
Reser Rd
Melrose St
Isaacs Ave
University St
Francis Ave
E Alder St
Wallace St
Carl St
Pleasant St
Bryant Ave
W Chestnut St
Malcolm St
Orchard St
E Tietan St
W Alder St
W Rose St
N 2nd Ave
N 6th Ave
N 9th Ave
N 13th Ave
12th Ave
S 9th Ave
S 3rd Ave
Catherine St
Howard St
Division St
N Clinton St
N Wilbur Ave
S Wilbur Ave
Ash St
Sturm Ave
Ankeny St
Fern Ave
School Ave
Berney Dr
Depping Rd
Garrison Creek
LEGEND
2026
2027
2028
2029
2030+
GRANT DEPENDENT

Transportation Benefit District (TBD)

Transportation Benefit District (TBD)

In 1987, the Legislature created TBDs as an option for local governments to fund transportation improvements. In 2005, the Legislature amended the TBD statute to expand its uses and revenue authority. In 2007, the Legislature amended the TBD statute to authorize the imposition of vehicle fees and transportation impact fees without a public vote. In 2010, the Legislature amended the TBD statute again to clarify project eligibility, the use of impact fees, and sales tax expenditures, and make TBD governance more flexible.

The City Council established the Walla Walla City Transportation Benefit District by Ordinance 2011-19 following a public hearing at its November 2, 2011 regular meeting. The principal purpose of the TBD was for raising revenues to preserve, maintain and operate existing and planned transportation infrastructure in the City of Walla Walla. The TBD Ordinance acknowledged that while dedicated revenues have decreased, the ongoing annual costs to preserve and maintain the City's Transportation infrastructure continue to rise, leaving the City unable to continue to adequately preserve and maintain the transportation facilities.

The establishment of the Walla Walla TBD, along with voter approved funding, would provide a dedicated, annual funding mechanism for transportation improvements. Further with the certainty of TBD funding in place, the City enhances its competitive ability for additional State and Federal grant funding.

All funds raised through the TBD shall be expended only for such construction, preservation, maintenance and operational efforts in protecting the transportation infrastructure, reduce the risk of facility failure, improve safety, continue the cost-effectiveness of infrastructure investments, and continue the optimal performance of the transportation system.

After following the necessary procedural actions that accommodate the TBD funding option, the TBD Board placed the 0.2% sales and use tax on the February 14, 2012 ballot for the voters to determine the viability of TBD funding. 6,929 votes were received, with 4,475 residents voting yes and 2,654 voting no. With 61.7% voter approval, the 0.2% sales tax increase passed, and Ordinance TBD-2012-01 was adopted, imposing the 0.2% sales and use tax within the City limits for a period of ten years. The TBD could be extended an additional 10-years by voter approval exceeding 50%.

In 2012, City staff updated the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) of the 25 Top Citizen Ranked Projects. PCI is a pavement rating of 0-100 with a perfect 100 given to a brand new road. A weighted prioritization of TBD projects was established and adopted by the Advisory Committee that used citizen votes as the highest weighting, and also included street classification, traffic volume, and the PCI score. The result is a prioritized list of the top 25 TBD streets.

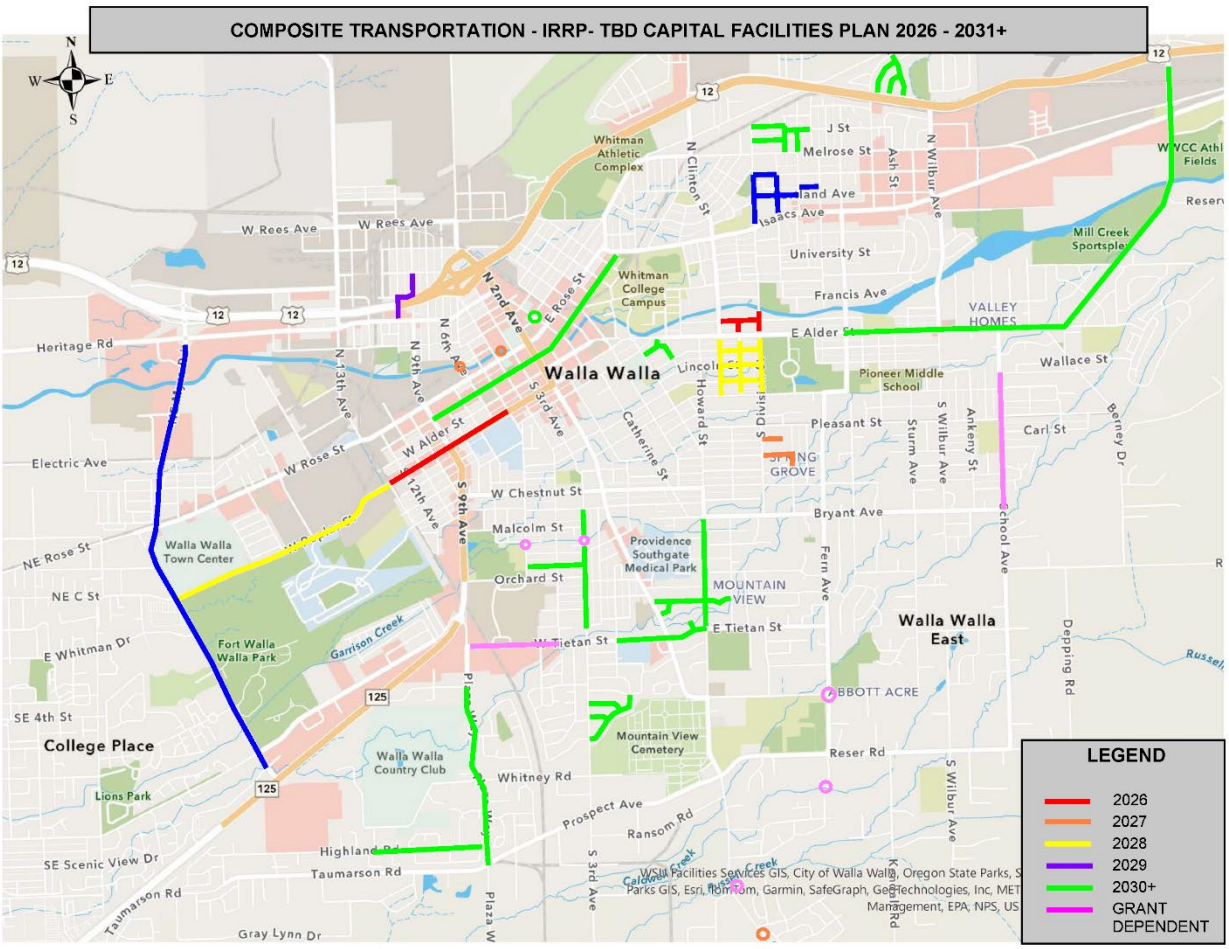
This ten-year term of the TBD sales tax began on July 1, 2012. Revenue generated to date:

2012 = $347,000	2019 = $1,463,400
2013 = $1,022,500	2020 = $1,469,300
2014 = $1,048,600	2021 = $1,820,300
2015 = $1,135,800	2022 = $1,980,000
2016 = $1,225,000	2023 = $2,063,000
2017 = $1,248,100	2024 = $2,112,200
2018 = $1,426,400	

On July 14, 2021, the City Council approved a ballot proposition for voters to authorize the continuation of the 0.2% TBD sales tax for an additional 10-year term.

In August 2021, the City conducted a statistically valid streets survey through Cobalt Community Research which included a new citizen priority list of the top 25 streets to be fixed should the TBD be extended.

On November 2, 2021, 7,840 votes were received with 5,804 residents voting for continuation, and 2,036 voting to end the TBD. With 74.03% voter approval the 0.2% sale tax for TBD is continued for an additional ten-year tern, from July 1, 2022, till June 30, 2032. This voter approval was adopted by City Ordinance No. 2022-05 on March 10, 2022.


COMPOSITE TRANSPORTATION - IRRP- TBD CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN 2026 - 2031+
LEGEND
2026
2027
2028
2029
2030+
GRANT DEPENDENT
Walla Walla
Walla Walla East
College Place
Whitman Athletic Complex
Whitman College Campus
Pioneer Middle School
Providence Southgate Medical Park
Mountain View Cemetery
Walla Walla Town Center
Fort Walla Walla Park
Walla Walla Country Club
Lions Park
Mill Creek Sportsplex
VALLEY HOMES
MOUNTAIN VIEW
W Rees Ave
Heritage Rd
Electric Ave
NE Rose St
NE C St
E Whitman Dr
SE 4th St
SE Scenic View Dr
Taumarson Rd
Gray Lynn Dr
Highland Rd
Whitney Rd
Prospect Ave
Ransom Rd
Reser Rd
Bryant Ave
Pleasant St
Carl St
Wallace St
Francis Ave
University St
Isaacs Ave
Melrose St
J St
E Alder St
W Alder St
W Rose St
W Chestnut St
Malcolm St
Orchard St
E Tietan St
W Tietan St
Garrison Creek
Mill Creek
Russell
Calowell Creek
Ash St
N Wilbur Ave
S Wilbur Ave
Ankeny St
Sturm Ave
Fern Ave
School Ave
Depping Rd
Berney Dr
Howard St
Catherine St
N Clinton St
S 3rd Ave
S 9th Ave
N 2nd Ave
N 6th Ave
N 9th Ave
N 13th Ave
12th Ave
Plaza Way
Kendall Rd
125
12

Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Plan (IRRP)

Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Plan (IRRP)

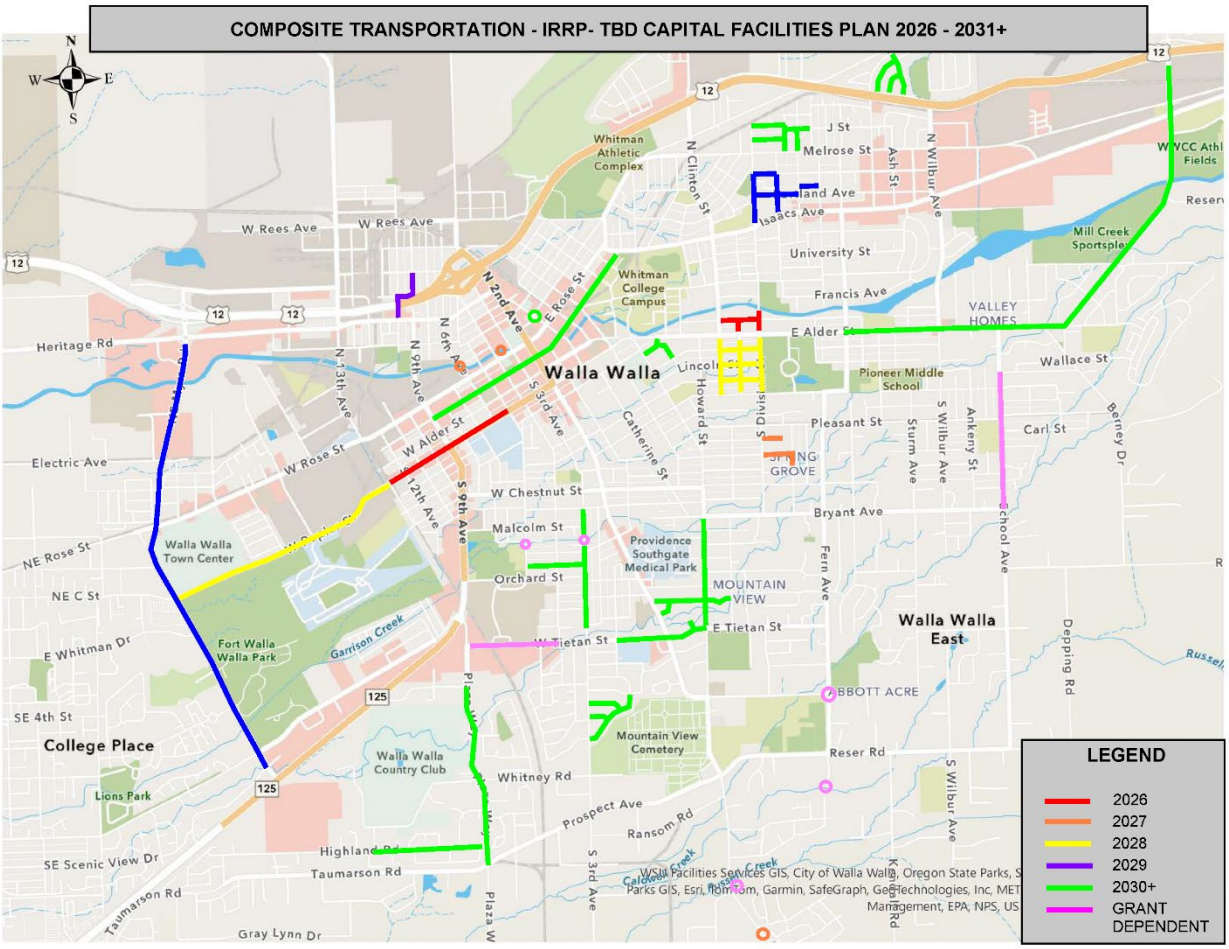
Walla Walla and much of the nation is facing a failure of three critical infrastructure systems: water, sewer and streets. The City has 115 miles of failing facilities and there are approximately 40 miles where all three are failing in the same stretch of road. To avoid costly consequences to human health and safety, the environment, and the local economy, the City adopted a systematic approach to the replacement of the infrastructure in this category referred to as the failing trifecta.

Established by the City Council in April 2010, the IRRP program was funded by a six-year stepped utility rate increase. Program funding included an $8.82M revenue bond that was re-paid over the first six-year period (2010 – 2015). With the bond paid off and the stepped utility rate increase fully implemented, the IRRP program generates approximately $5.1M per year in total revenue. This translates to approximately 1.3 linear miles of infrastructure (water, sewer, street) replaced per year in 2016 dollars. This predictable revenue source lends itself to provide matching funds for outside grant/loan funding sources. This funding has shown and will continue to show its ability to be leveraged against outside funds.

Project selection for IRRP is based on an equally weighted quantitative scoring system for street, water, and wastewater. Street scoring is based on the Transportation Benefit District (TBD) scoring criterion, which accounts for roadway classification, Average Daily Traffic (ADT), roadway condition rating, and citizen votes.

The water system scoring is based on leak history, pipe material type, age, and size.

The sewer system scoring is based on pipe material, maintenance history, claim history (back-ups), size limitations, age, and structural deficiencies.


COMPOSITE TRANSPORTATION - IRRP- TBD CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN 2026 - 2031+
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Walla Walla East
College Place
Whitman Athletic Complex
Whitman College Campus
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Providence Southgate Medical Park
Mountain View Cemetery
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Water

Walla Walla Water System

The City of Walla Walla operates a group A community water system, providing service to approximately 33,000 residents via 10,500 connections. The City's Mill Creek surface water supply is classified as an unfiltered supply and currently utilizes ozone for primary disinfection and chlorination to maintain distribution system residual disinfection. The Mill Creek Water Treatment Plant has a capacity of 24 Million Gallons per Day (MGD) and produces roughly four billion gallons of water per year.

Water System Planning (WSP)
A Comprehensive Water System Plan (WSP) update was prepared by HDR Engineering and adopted in 2013 by City Council (Resolution 2013-113).

The WSP did not note any system deficiencies related to the supply, storage, fire flow, or with the distribution capacity portions of the water system.

In 2020, the WSP was updated by Murray Smith & Associates.

Other documents pertinent to the City's Water System include:

- 1999 City of Walla Walla Urban Growth Area Water and Wastewater Study (Economic and Engineering Services, Inc.)
- 1994 Walla Walla/College Place Coordinated Water System Plan (Economic and Engineering Services, Inc.)
- 2006 Mill Creek Oregon and Washington Community Wildfire Protection Plan (Community Wildfire Protection Plan Steering Group, James H. Hulbert)

The emphasis of the Water System Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) is focused on addressing state regulatory requirements of the Washington Water Use Efficiency (WUE) rule and to upgrade the Mill Creek Water Treatment Plant to meet EPA requirements for the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT2).

Sources, Treatment and Storage
Water is conveyed from 36 square mile Mill Creek Watershed at the city's the city's Mill Creek diversion structure in Oregon (1865 Oregon Water Right) down a 14.5 mile 30-inch diameter transmission line to the Mill Creek Water Treatment Plant. At the plant, energy is generated from the water by a 2.2 megawatt hydroelectric generator producing approximately 13,500 megawatts of electricity per year (roughly enough for 1,500 homes).

Seven deep basalt wells provide supplementary and secondary capacity during summer high use periods and emergency supply when surface water quality exceeds allowable quality standards (turbidity).

The Mill Creek Treatment Plant disinfects raw water from Mill Creek using ozone and stores finished water in the two 7 million gallon reservoirs at the plant and in the 10 million gallon Clinton Street reservoir. The capacity of the water treatment plant is 24 MGD, which is considered adequate to meet the demands through 2031. City well sources will be used to supplement the remainder of the demands.

Continually changing regulations for drinking water, as well as source vulnerability has influenced the City's treatment facility plan. In 2020, the City completed an Ultraviolet (UV) disinfection plant project to provide a cost effective, long-term treatment and operating solution to meet LT2 requirements.

Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)
The City began the ASR program in the late 1990s and after a decade of pursuing a permit received one from the Department of Ecology in 2016. The ASR program provides the City the ability to draw, treat, and store more water during times of surplus and use it during times of unavailable surface water.

The City presently operates two ASR wells and hopes to expand ASR capabilities further.

Distribution
88 miles of the City's 191 miles of water mains in the distribution system are considered to be facing failure due to age, condition and material type. 38 miles are considered to be IRRP eligible putting the other 50 miles in the Water System's capital replacement program.

There are four pressure zones in the system isolated by 24 pressure reducing valves (PRVs).

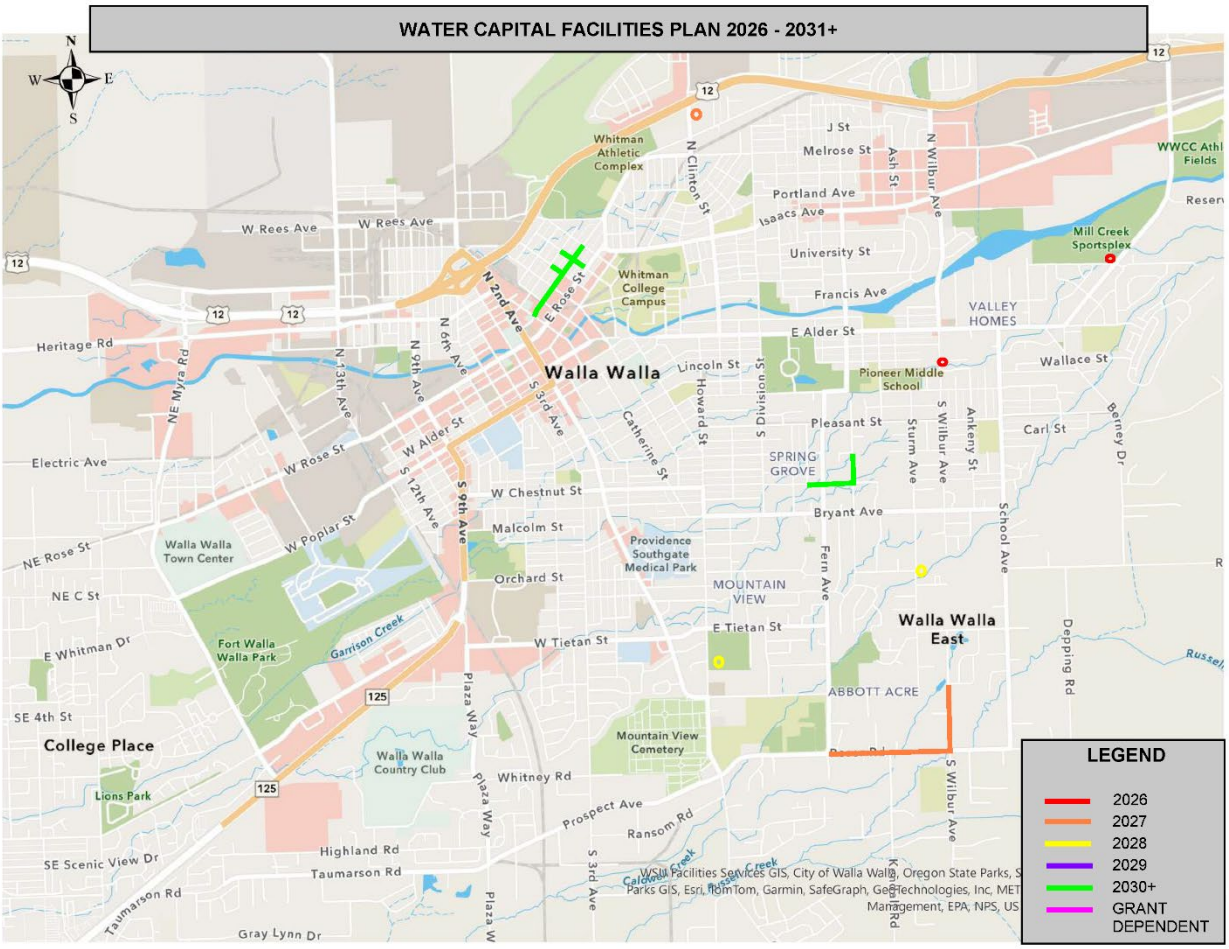
WUE and Water Loss Control Plan
Due to the age of the distribution system, water loss through system leaks has been a problem at least since the 1950s. Walla Walla's unaccounted for water exceeds 10%, so implementation of a Water Loss Control Plan is mandated by WAC 246-290-820(4).

Currently, water use efficiency goals and programs that deal with major capital improvements and operation and maintenance expenses include:

- Meter testing program
- Capital Improvement Program – replacement of failing distribution piping
- Leak detection and repair
- Reduce water loss by 1% per year
- Leak notification to customers
- Development of a customer portal

Many of the projects in the Capital Facility Plan have been prioritized to replace leaking water mains and services. In 2018, the City completed the installation of a new advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) system that replaced all large and small water meters throughout the City. The AMI system provides more reliable usage data to improve water usage monitoring, and assist in reducing unaccounted water through more accurate metering.

Financial
In December 2015 and December 2021, City Council adopted a 6-year utility rate increase to in part, provide increased funding for the replacement of the City's failing water system.


WATER CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN 2026 - 2031+
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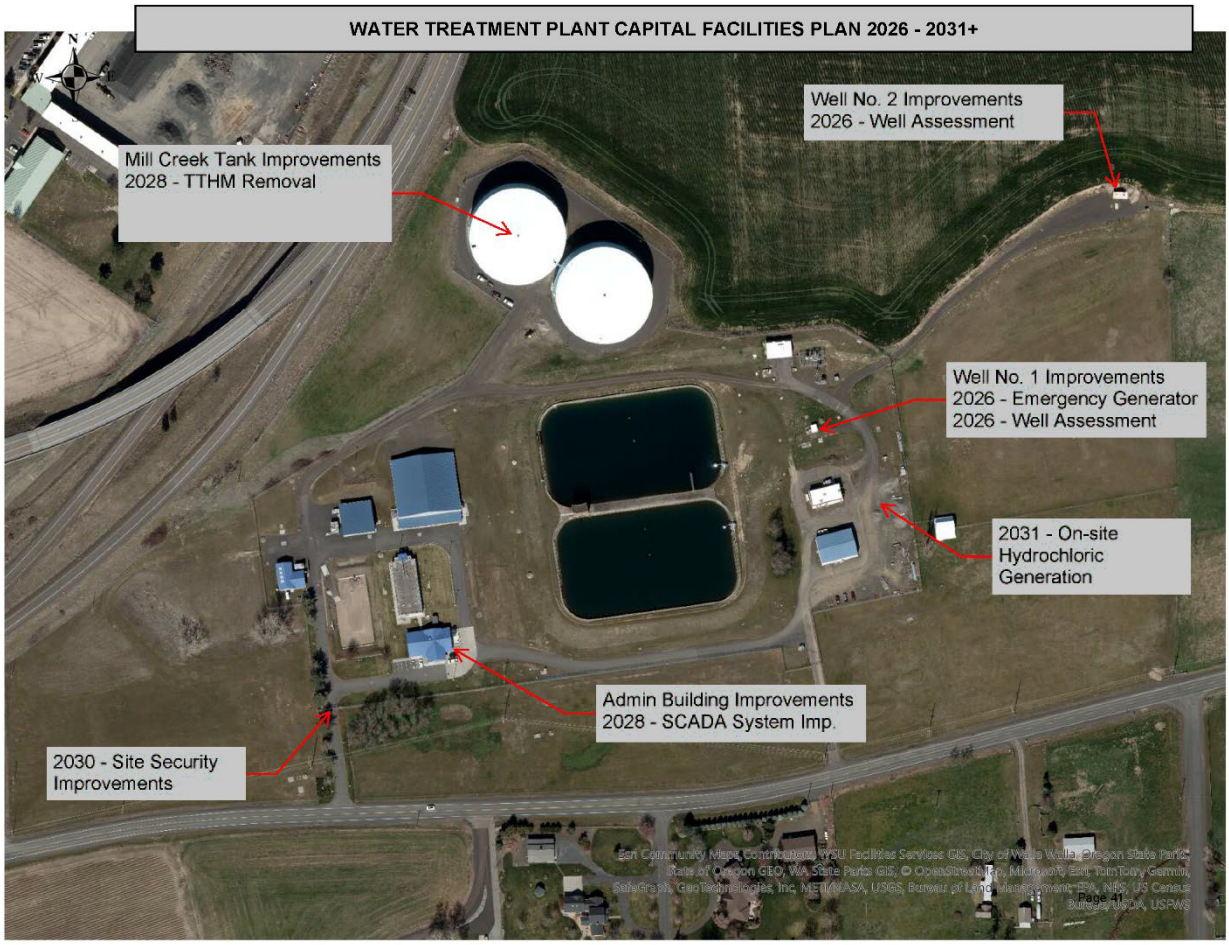

WATER TREATMENT PLANT CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN 2026 - 2031+
Well No. 2 Improvements
2026 - Well Assessment
Mill Creek Tank Improvements
2028 - TTHM Removal
Well No. 1 Improvements
2026 - Emergency Generator
2026 - Well Assessment
2031 - On-site
Hydrochloric
Generation
Admin Building Improvements
2028 - SCADA System Imp.
2030 - Site Security
Improvements
Esri Community Maps contributors, WSU Facilities Services GIS, City of Walla Walla, Oregon State Parks, State of Oregon GEO, WA State Parks GIS, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USPWS

Wastewater

Wastewater

Planning Documents

- 2020 Amendment No. 1 to the 2015 General Sewer Plan Update (JUB Engineers)
- 2015 General Sewer Plan Update adopted by City Resolution 2015-129 (JUB Engineers)
- 1999 City of Walla Walla Urban Growth Area Water and Wastewater Study (Economic and Engineering Services, Inc.)
- 1997 Wastewater Treatment Facilities Plan (CH2M Hill)
- 1998 Wastewater Treatment Facilities Plan Addendum No. 1 (Kimball/Esvelt)

Treatment

The City of Walla Walla owns an advanced secondary domestic wastewater treatment plant, which provides Class A effluent. The facility is permitted by the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) under Permit WA-002462-7.

Construction of the facility began in 1928, with several expansions and/or modifications being constructed since its inception.

A 1927 court-ordered water rights agreement obligates Walla Walla to provide reclaimed water to two irrigation districts, Gose and Blalock. Prior to 1996, the effluent from the Wastewater Treatment Plant received only secondary treatment and disinfection before it was received by either of the irrigation districts. Since this reclaimed water was being used to irrigate food crops, the City's treatment facility had to be upgraded to meet the state's new Class A reclaimed water standards or the City had to provide the irrigation districts with an alternative source of water. Per court actions and previous agreements, Gose Irrigation District is entitled to 1.77 cubic feet per second (cfs) or 1.14 million gallons per day (MGD). Blalock Irrigation District's water right is 9.38 cfs or 6.06 MGD.

In 1996, Walla Walla and Ecology agreed that the preferred alternative would be to upgrade the facility to meet Class A reclaimed water standards for food crop irrigation. It was determined that the necessary upgrades to enhance water quality would be constructed under a three phased plan to meet the following criteria:

Walla Walla Water Reclamation Project – Summary of Improvements By Phase

Phase/Date	Description	Objective
Phase 1 12/31/2000 $19,829,000	*Fine Screening *Install Activated Sludge Advanced Secondary Treatment – Aeration Basin, Anoxic Basins, Clarifiers, RAS/WAS Pumps *Improved Sludge Treatment – Thickening, Upgrade Digestion, Dewatering, Storage facilities *Improve Disinfection System *Control Building & SCADA Upgrades *Standby Generator *Septage Receiving	*Remove Plastics, etc. *Effluent CBOD limits and interim effluent NH3 limits *Treat additional sludge from added BOD/NH3 removal processes *Eliminate toxic gas spill hazard *Upgrade lab & control system *Added reliability – backup power *New facility to accept septage
Phase 2A 12/31/2003 $1,128,000	*Added Fine Screening Unit *Effluent Filter Improvements *Added Sludge Dewatering	*Added reliability – screening *Ambient water quality NH3 limits *Sludge handling and treatment
Phase 2B 05/17/2005 $3,360,000	*Effluent & Irrigation Flow Meters *Sludge Mixing & Storage *Overflow and SCADA Improvements *Disinfection Improvements - UV	*Flow control/measurements *Sludge handling and storage *Control system upgrade *Improve pathogen removal
Phase 3 12/31/2008 $6,523,000	*Storage Lagoon (18 MG – 3 days) *Effluent Filter Additions *Side Stream Treatment Equalization *Waste Gas Scrubber	*Emergency Secondary Containment *Meet Class A Reclaimed Water Standards – improve effluent quality – NH3 limits *Accurate distribution of flow to Irrigation Districts *Reduce pollutants/corrosion – Improve air quality and reliability

Table taken from the City of Walla Walla Wastewater Facility Plan, Addendum No. 1, July 2003, Kimball Engineering/Esvelt Environmental Engineering

The updated wastewater treatment facility produces an advanced secondary treated Class A effluent that is discharged either to the Gose and Blalock (#3) Irrigation Districts or directly to Mill Creek. The discharge to Mill Creek is limited to the winter months (December through April), or when the irrigation districts don't elect to use the water.

Treatment Plant Operations
In 2000, the City contracted operation and maintenance of the plant and five sewage pump stations to the private plant operations firm CH2MHILL/OMI (now known as Jacobs).

Jacobs provides an annual report to the City summarizing plant activities and operations for the prior year.

Class B Biosolids
Approximately 520 (dry) tons of Class B biosolids are land applied at the Landfill property.

Future Growth and Permit Compliance Limitations
With the completion of Walla Walla's Class A-Water Reclamation Facility, the City is able to accommodate growth and treatment requirements within the Urban Growth Area well beyond 2032. The average daily flow design capacity of the treatment facilities is 9.6 MGD and current average daily flows are less than 6 MGD. The design population equivalent is 48,000 with a current City population estimated at about 33,000.

The two parameters of concern for future compliance with permit limitations include Total Nitrogen and PCBs. PCB concentrations are being monitored, and at times, have exceeded the identified limit of 0.0062 grams per day. The City, in partnership with Jacobs, monitor PCB concentrations and work with the public through the wastewater pretreatment program. The future Total Nitrogen Load, expressed as TKN in pounds per day (lbs/day) may exceed the NPDES permit that establishes the maximum average daily load to be less than 1,871 lbs/day, with the three maximum month average being less than 1,590 lbs/day. The current average TKN daily load is about 1,400 lbs/day.

The average daily load of TKN is expected to be less than 1,871 lbs/day until a population of 48,000 is reached (estimated 2070+/-). However, if the actual flow or waste load of TKN reaches 85% (1,590 lbs/day in 2032) of any one of the design criteria for three consecutive months, then a plan to address the objective of maintaining the plant capacity would be required to be prepared by the City per WAC 173-240-060. This would allow the City ample time to evaluate the facilities, various conditions, to schedule any necessary improvements, and to continue to achieve the conditions of the permit.

The Wastewater Treatment portion of the Capital Expenditure Plan focuses on improvements needed to upgrade some of the obsolete/aging equipment and to extend the operational life of certain facilities. Enhanced treatment needs are yet to be determined.

Collections System
Sewage generated in the City is collected and transported to the treatment plant via gravity service laterals, collection sewers, lift stations, force mains, and pump stations. The system contains approximately 144 miles of sewer mains and 2,700 manholes. The City has current contracts to accept sewage from the Port of Walla Walla and the US Veterans Medical Center. Both agencies have non-City water systems but transport their sewage into the City collection and treatment systems.

In 1978, the City realized that due to extended age, many of the collection system components have outlived their useful life and are beginning to fail. After recognizing that high inflow and infiltration (I/I) of rain and groundwater was a partial source of high treatment costs, the City initiated a sewer line replacement program. The initial six year program started in 1979 with funding set at $200,000 for replacement work per year. In 1993, the funding was increased to $400,000 per year for 1994 to 1998. The sewer replacement budget in 1998 was set at $631,000 for projects in 1999.

The investment for replacement of 81,600 feet of sewer mains from 1979 through 1993 totaled $2,800,000. From 1994 through 1997, 24,600 feet of mains were replaced for about $1,600,000. In 1998, approximately 5,200 feet of sewer main was replaced for the budgeted amount of $631,000. Between 1978 and 2011 about 45.8 miles of sewer mains have been installed, which represents about 32% of the total length of the collection system. This leaves about 2/3 of the collection system being over 35 years old.

Several portions of the sewer collection system consist of older, undersized 6" clay sewer mains that have exceeded their useful life. Over 12,100 LF of the collections system has structural damage, and needs to be replaced in the near future.

In 2013, several manholes along Cherry Street and other locations were chemically grouted with a polyurethane material to seal the infiltration of groundwater from entering the collection system. Other mains along Bryant Creek and Frazier Drive were lined with Cured-In Place-Pipe (CIPP) trenchless pipe technology. Initial reduction in infiltration from these projects and the IRRP program indicates that yearly average flows at the WW Treatment Plant have been reduced by about 0.8 million gallons per day (5.98 to 5.28 MGD).

Due to rapid growth and development from 2003 to 2008, the City developed a sewer model to better understand the impact of growth on downstream sewer collection main capacities. This model has helped to assure concurrency of necessary collection system improvements with potential growth in these underdeveloped areas.

City crews have been compiling a comprehensive library of videos of the sewer mains for the past several years. With the system televised, each pipe segment was evaluated and rated on a scale of 0 to 100 with 0 being a great condition pipe segment. Videos of over 2,050 sewer mains have been reviewed and scored based on the condition of the pipe. 319 of the 2,050+ mains reviewed have been scored between 75 and 100. 108,000 feet of the total sewer collection system (of 761,000 feet) is in need of major repairs or replacement. There were 34 sewer mains that scored 100, representing that 12,140 feet of the City's mains have serious defects. Over 45,000 feet of main scored over 90 and need to be addressed in the near future. Replacement of this portion of the system would require a total investment of approximately $27,000,000.

With the pipe segment scoring complete, a General Sewer Plan Update was able to take that data and finalize the Sewer Collection portion of the new General Sewer Plan, which will complement the Wastewater Treatment Facility Plan completed in 1996.

The General Sewer Plan Update included calibration of the existing sewer model to address flow capacity deficiencies, while the sewer videos document the extent of failing pipe conditions. Combined with known high maintenance sewer mains and recent sewage overflows, the prioritization of planned improvements has been scheduled to match available funding with the most efficient replacement program. Prevention of future sewage overflows are also a primary focus of this program.

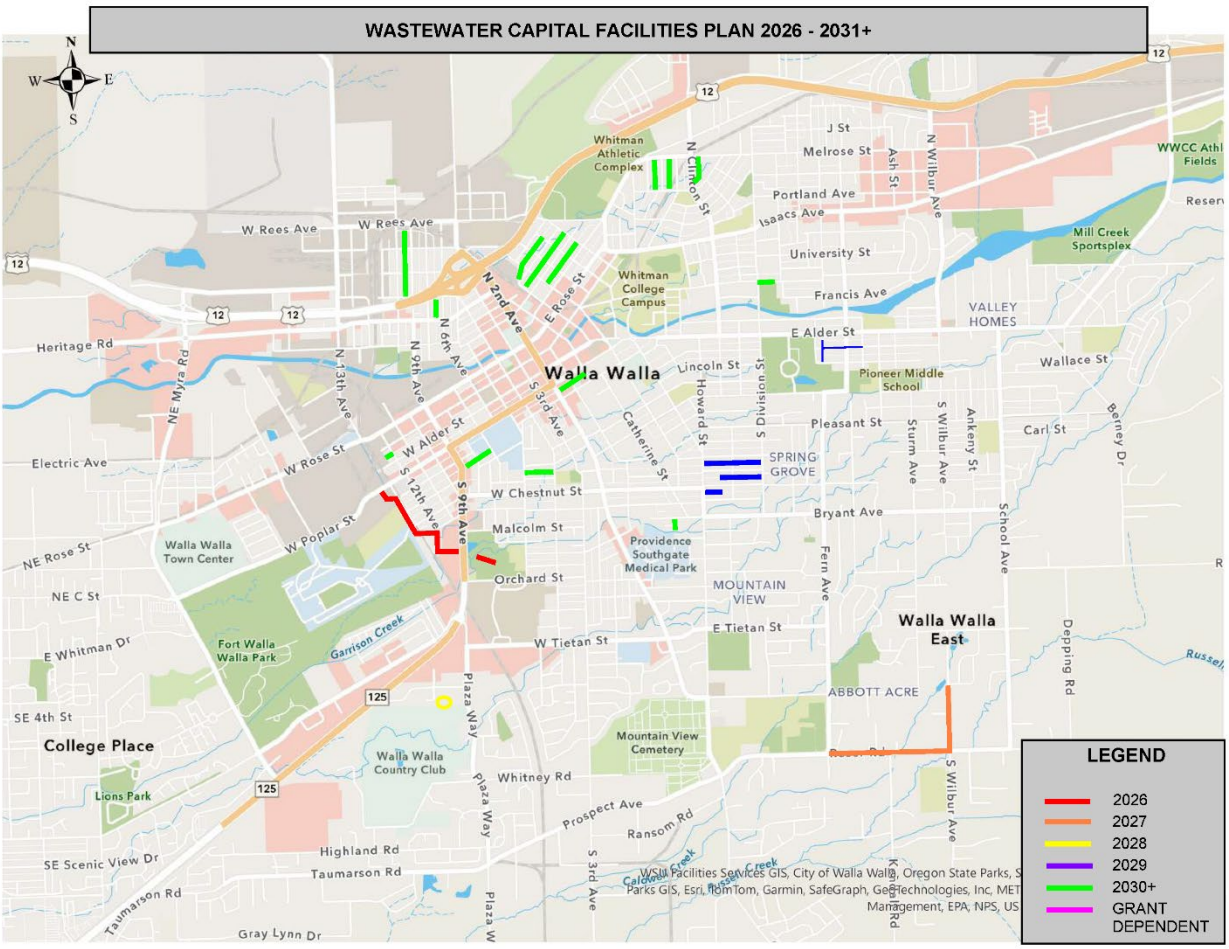
In 2010, the City initiated an Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Program (IRRP) sewer rate increase to be utilized to replace the sewer system in areas that also have failing water, stormwater and roadway facilities.

Several areas in the City have sewer mains in the alley, with water and storm facilities in the streets. This has precluded these areas from IRRP consideration and therefore, other funding sources must be dedicated towards addressing these alley sewer collection systems.

While Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) has been greatly reduced with the installation of almost 46 miles of collection mains since 1978, I/I remains a concern. Ecology requires the City file an annual report that addresses I/I flows by comparing the low flow (dry) season with flows during the high flow (wet) period. In 2000, Ecology established a base I/I of 2.7 MGD or 28% of the average design flow of 9.6 MGD at the treatment plant. In 2011, I/I was 23% of the average design flow, a decrease of 5%. Continued efforts to identify and replace the worst sewer mains has reduced this to 12%, a reduction of 16% below the 2007 mark (note: total rainfall in 2013 was 12.2" vs average of 19.3"). As the volume of I/I is decreased, pumping and treatment expenses are reduced, capacity for future growth will be increased and the need for future treatment facility expansion (flow capacity) will be delayed.

Financial

In December 2015 and December 2021, City Council adopted a 6-year utility rate increase to support on-going repair and replacement of wastewater facilities.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Stormwater

Stormwater

Walla Walla means "many small streams" as many small tributaries and spring-fed creeks flow through the valley. Many of these creeks are considered to be valued amenities in some neighborhoods, while in some areas they can be nuisances with overgrown vegetation, fences and other obstructions. These creeks are known to cause minor, localized flooding and property damage during heavy rainfall and peak snow melt runoff events. As the fifth oldest incorporated city in Washington State, much of the existing infrastructure of the community has been in service for over 100 years.

The City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) serves a population of approximately 33,000 people within approximately 13.2 square miles (650 impervious acres). The system consists of approximately:

- 800 manholes
- 2,400 catch basins/inlets/bubble-ups
- 400 drywells
- 50 stormwater management facilities (ponds, bio-swales, oil/water separators)
- 50 miles of storm pipe
- 36 miles of open conveyance channels (ditches, streams, etc.)
- 200 outfalls
- 300 culverts

Planning Documents

- 2008 Walla Walla Watershed PCBs, Chlorinated Pesticides, Fecal Coliform, Temperature, pH & Dissolved Oxygen TMDL Water Quality Implementation Plan (Washington State Department of Ecology)
- 2009 Stormwater Program Implementation Plan (Otak, Inc.)
- 2011 Public Involvement and Education Plan (URS Corporation)
- 2011 Outfall Reconnaissance Inventory and Assessment for Mill, Yellowhawk and Garrison Creeks (URS Corporation)
- 2011 Underground Injection Control Inventory (URS Corporation)
- 2013 Outfall Reconnaissance Inventory and Assessment for Bryant, Butcher, Lincoln, Barber, Stone and remaining smaller creeks (URS Corporation)
- 2013 Underground Injection Control Facilities Assessment (URS Corporation)
- 2011 Service Center Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (URS Corporation)
- 2011 Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Program Manual (URS Corporation)
- 2011 Stormwater Pollution Prevention Operations and Maintenance Plan (URS Corporation)
- 2015 Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan (URS Corporation)

Mill Creek Flood Control

Mill Creek flood control falls under the purview of the USACE though control of the Mill Creek diversion dam and Bennington Lake flood storage reservoir. Walla Walla County oversees the Mill Creek Flood Control District though the city.

NPDES Phase II Permit

The Phase II Permit outlines various stormwater program activities and implementation milestones that the City must follow to comply with the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). Walla Walla is expected to implement a SWMP that includes the required activities (minimum control measures), implement those activities within the required timeframes outlined in the permit term, and submit annual reports to Ecology each year to document compliance with permit requirements.

The Phase II Permit is broken down into the following components:

1. Public Education & Outreach
2. Public Involvement
3. Detect and Eliminate Polluted Illicit Discharges
4. Construction Site Pollution Prevention
5. Post-construction Pollution Prevention
6. Municipal Operations and Maintenance
7. Comply with Clean-up Plans for Polluted Waters
8. Record Keeping & Reporting
9. Pay Permit Fees and Program Costs

The initial Phase II Permit was issued in January 2007, reissued in August 2012, 2014, and in August 2019. The current permit expires July 31, 2024.

City of Walla Walla Stormwater Management Program (SWMP)
The City's SWMP consists of constructing the following elements:

1. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – Ongoing capital repair and replacement program;
2. Operating & Maintaining Functional Stormwater Utility – Core management, maintenance, and operation functions necessary to provide a properly functioning utility to the public and;
3. Compliance with Minimum Regulatory Requirements – Required for the City to legally discharge stormwater to surface and ground waters.

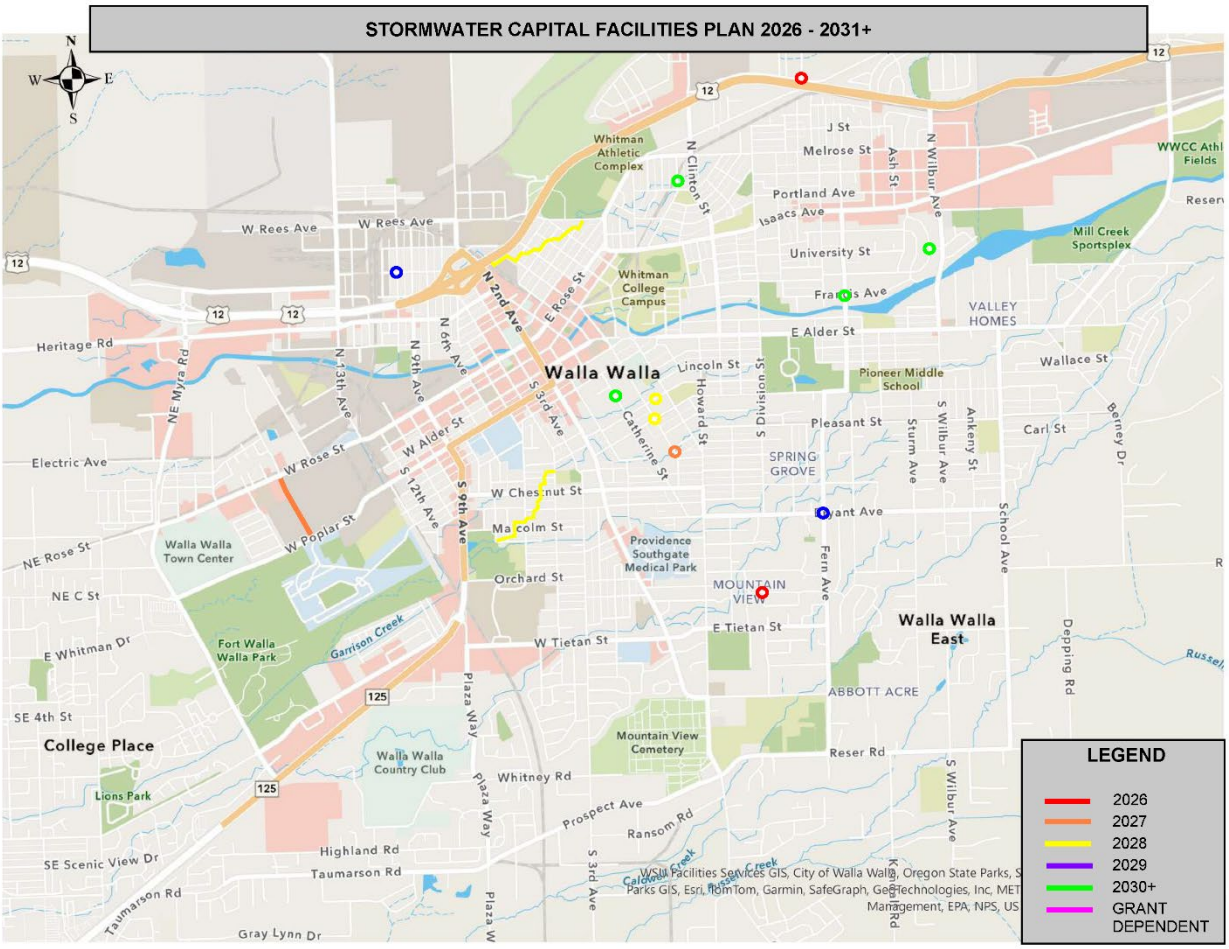
- Underground Injection Control (UIC) Rule, as required by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and the Washington State Underground Injection Control Program (Chapter 173-218 WAC)

Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program
In addition to the Phase II Permit, Walla Walla must also address the requirements of Washington's UIC Program (RCW 90.48 and UIC Rule (Chapter 173-218 WAC)). The state's UIC program is designed to protect underground water sources from contamination by infiltration of pollutants from stormwater or other potential sources of spills or runoff.

To comply with the UIC Rule, URS Corporation was retained by the City to conduct risk-based UIC assessments for all existing (pre-2006) UIC wells to determine if they pose a potential threat to ground water quality. UIC wells that are determined to be a high threat to groundwater must be retrofitted or decommissioned to be protective of groundwater quality. High risk UICs require retrofits and are part of the Stormwater Capital Program.

An additional 89 UIC facilities (49 existing, 40 new) were estimated to be completed in, or within one foot of the seasonal high groundwater based on GIS based data. Site specific groundwater data and other site information will be compiled for these UIC's to determine the risk associated with these facilities. Following this, UIC's determined to be of high or moderate risk will be evaluated in more detail. Based on available funds, a more detailed program that accomplishes the retrofit or decommissioning program will be developed and implemented thereafter.

Financial
In December 2015 and December 2021, City Council adopted a 6-year utility rate increase to support on-going repair and replacement of stormwater facilities.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Solid Waste – Landfill

Solid Waste – Landfill

Solid Waste Management Plan
An update to the 1994 Solid Waste Management Plan was completed in 2014 with the City of Walla Walla (City) acting as the lead agency in accordance with the 2008 interlocal agreement with Walla Walla County.

The 2014 Walla Walla County Comprehensive Solid Waste and Moderate Risk Waste Management Plan (2014 Plan) provides background and guidance for a long-term approach to solid waste and moderate risk waste management in the region. This 2014 Plan comprises the combined comprehensive solid waste management plan (SWMP) and Local Hazardous Waste/Moderate Risk Waste (MRW) Plan for the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Walla Walla County.

An update to the 2014 Plan began in 2021 and is expected to be complete in 2023 once the landfill master plan update is finalized.

Sudbury Road Landfill (SRL) Master Plan
The City recently developed a comprehensive solid waste master plan (2024). The master plan produced a solid waste management alternatives analysis, looking at long-term needs over the next 50+ years, and developed a detailed 20-year capital improvement project list.

Sudbury Road Landfill (SRL)
The Sudbury Landfill is owned and operated by the City and receives approximately 60,000 tons of waste per year. All landfill facilities are permitted by the Walla Walla County Health Department with annual updates required.

The SRL was opened in 1978. The potential capacity of the existing landfill site is sufficient for at least another 200 years (HDR capacity evaluation, January 24, 2014).

Presently, the active landfill area is occurring in Cell 3 of Area 7. Area 7 is a lined landfill unit. Construction of a liner in the Cell 3 was completed in 2017. A gas collection and flare system was installed with the closure of Area 6, but presently landfill gas is only being flared.

Waste received by the landfill includes medical waste, household hazardous waste (HHW), municipal solid waste (MSW), tires, white goods (e.g.- refrigerators), concrete, and asbestos. The landfill does not accept hazardous wastes other than that from households.

A compost facility was constructed in 2009 to process green waste into compost. Approximately 6000 cubic yards of compost is produced each year. Sales have fluctuated greatly from year to year due to the types of construction or farming projects occurring at that time. Average sales fall into the 3000 - 3500 cubic yard range, which results in excess compost being surplused some years.

The HHW Facility at the SRL accepts and processes (for shipment/disposal) household hazardous waste for Walla Walla County residents. HHW products include motor oil, antifreeze, paint, solvent, gasoline, automotive and household batteries, pesticides, herbicides, household cleaners and white goods. Smoke detectors, ammunition and explosives are not accepted.

The Landfill has a staff of 12 FTEs that operate the scale house, hazardous waste facility, composting facility, and municipal solid waste facilities. Equipment used to manage the landfill operations includes a D8 Dozer, 23-yard scraper, 90-ton landfill compactor, road grader, two front end loaders, , drop box roll-off truck, water truck and several other small equipment items (compost mini loader, UTV, pickup trucks, etc.).

SRL Financial Assurance
Financial Assurance is a requirement of WAC 173-351-600. These regulations require that financial assurance is provided for closure of the largest area of all landfill units ever needing final cover, and that post-closure care financial assurance is prepared for all landfill units. The current Financial Assurance plan, dated February 12, 2015, was completed by HDR Engineering, Inc. (HDR) and then amended in 2016 by Environmental Information Logistics, LLC. (EIL) as part of the permit modification for Cell 3 of Area 7.

SRL Closure/Post-Closure Plan
HDR also prepared a revised Closure/Post-Closure Plan for SRL (October, 2015), which was amended in 2016 by EIL, and was used as the basis for the financial assurance estimates.

SRL Groundwater Remediation
The City has operated the SRL since 1977. In 2001, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) were detected in a monitoring well just west of unlined landfill Areas 5 and 6. In 2004, the City prepared a historical study and draft Independent Remedial Investigation Work Plan (Work Plan). The 2004 Work Plan was not fully implemented due to budget constraints, but interim closure actions including grading, cover and drainage improvements were performed to protect groundwater.

On May 6, 2010, the Department of Ecology (DOE) sent the City a Potentially Liable Person (PLP) notice for the SRL. This notice prompted the City to explore implementation of an Agreed Order with DOE to address liability concerns.

On February 24, 2011, by Resolution No. 2011-21, the City retained Schwyn Environmental Services, Inc. (Schwyn Environmental Services) to perform consulting services associated with the proposed Agreed Order remediation work. City staff, in partnership with consulting attorney William Joyce of JOYCE, ZIKER, PARKINSON, PLLC, and Schwyn Environmental Services negotiated the details of the proposed Agreed Order with DOE. On May 26, 2011, the City entered into Agreed Order No. 8456 with DOE to address the matter of Remedial Action at the SRL.

The Remedial Investigation – Feasibility Study (RI/FS) was completed in September 2014, and in August 2015, the City (Resolution 2015-058) entered into a Consent Decree (No. 152005368) with DOE for clean-up actions. The Clean-up Action Plan was prepared in 2015. Design plans were prepared and construction completed in 2016. Monitoring extended through 2022, at which time cleanup goals were met. DOE has since reviewed the compliance history and reduced the monitoring that must be completed.

Funding for the remediation work at SRL has been provided by a Remedial Action Grant from the DOE, Landfill reserves, and some participation from a prior insurance policy of the City's. The City will continue to bill the insurance company for reimbursement of costs related to the remediation work.

SRL Historical Documentation
Schwyn Environmental Services prepared a Historical Study Report on behalf of the City for the SRL (January 2006). The report describes the historical activities that occurred at the landfill from its inception in the mid-1970s through 2005.

Tausick Way Landfill (TWL)
From approximately 1935 up until the mid-1970s, MSW was disposed at the City's Tausick Way Landfill (TWL) in the northeasterly portion of Walla Walla. The TWL site consists of 78 acres of previously excavated gravel/rock mining operations that was filled with MSW and capped with a soil cover. The site was closed in 1979, under WAC 173-304.

Isaacs Inert Waste Landfill (IIWL)/Burdine property
The 15-acre Burdine property, also known as the Isaacs Inert Waste Landfill (IIWL) is located north of the TWL and fronts the south side of Isaacs Avenue. This site was reportedly encroached upon by TWL and was purchased by the City in 1999.

The City completed a remedial investigation of the Burdine property in 2005, and worked with DOE to address the contamination in compliance with the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) requirements. The remedial action plan approved in 2006 included construction of a cover over the MSW using inert waste from City construction projects. An Inert Waste Landfill Permit was applied for in 2006 to allow the City to place the inert waste cover on the site.

In 2011, the City applied for and was awarded a $200,000 Integrated Planning Grant (IPG) for the Burdine property to complete the following:

- Complete site characterization studies
- Consolidate existing planning documents, summarize potential site uses, identify property development challenges, and create a comprehensive site vision

- Prepare several site development scenarios

Schwyn Environmental Services completed the IPG study of the Burdine site in 2013.

In 2021, the City completed filling the site with inert waste and provided notification to the Walla Walla County Department of Community Health of the closure of the landfill for inert filling purposes.

Sanitation

Sanitation

The City operates a Sanitation Division utilizing a fleet of 14 vehicles providing waste collection for:

- Residential refuse;
- Optional residential green waste;
- Commercial refuse;
- Rented drop boxes; and
- Medical waste

Residential Recycling
Basin Disposal is contracted by the City to operate the residential curbside recycling program within the City Limits.

Operations Overview

Residential
The residential routes consist of daily collection, Monday through Friday. Each daily route is divided into three sections, with one automated side loader collection vehicle and operator servicing that sector. Approximately 8,815 accounts are serviced each week, with a total of roughly 10,000 containers of various sizes being emptied. Each truck averages about 125 service calls (dumps) each hour and makes two roundtrips to the landfill each day.

Green Waste
The green waste program runs from March through October. There are roughly 1266 participants that subscribe to this voluntary program. The program is seasonal due to difficulty of emptying wet or frozen waste from the containers during the winter months. The green waste containers are picked up on the same day of the week that the participant's regular and recycling containers are serviced. While participation in the Green Waste program is becoming more popular each year, the service does cost $25.50 per month, with less than 15% of the accounts currently subscribing to this service.

The Green Waste truck is a side loader collection vehicle and operator that averages about 45 dumps per hour, as the customers are further apart. Due to fewer dumps to make, one truck is able to service all three sectors on that daily route and it makes a single roundtrip to the landfill.

Commercial
The commercial route services over 505 accounts, many of these accounts are serviced multiple times a week and many have multiple containers. The number of accounts serviced per day ranges from 106 to 115 stops. Two crews consisting of two employees and one rear load collection truck for two routes work Monday through Friday (and holidays) and dump 127 to 145 bins per day. Bin sizes range from 1 to 8 cubic yards, with a few 30-gallon cans that are manually dumped for the smaller waste accounts.

Drop Box
The drop box route has 35 scheduled service calls each week. In addition, there are 42 accounts that are unscheduled on-call. The City has 21 spare boxes that are available for temporary commercial, industrial and residential use. One crew and truck service this route each day.

Medical Waste
The Medical Waste route has 30+ accounts, with some being collected weekly, while others only require collection once or twice a year. Medical pickups are scheduled each Friday.

Community Programs
In addition to the daily servicing of various waste collection routes, the Sanitation Division also supports a variety of programs that benefit residential and commercial customers, including:

- Downtown Bird Control: control of bird and tree rodent populations in the Downtown area
- Annual Leaf Collection Program: City wide leaf collection by the Street Division
- Landfill Pass Program: residential customers receive one free landfill pass each year
- Downtown Trash Collection: collect and dispose of trash from the Downtown area

Facilities

City Hall

Walla Walla's City Hall, located at 15 North 3rd Avenue, houses several general governmental offices including:

- City Council Chambers
- City Attorney's office
- City Manager's office
- City Clerk's office
- Finance/Payroll/Utility Billing
- Human Resources
- Technology Services
- Communications

The building was constructed in 1910 and has three floors of general office space totaling 22,170 square feet. Prior to 2012, the basement/garden level served as the City's Police Headquarters.

There have been a number of various changes made to the building over its 100+ years. However, in 2016 the City commissioned a seismic/fire suppression study to identify critical life safety upgrades. Implementation of those upgrades will be phased over serval years along with a number of other cosmetic, restorative and technology improvements needed in the building.

Service Center

General

The City of Walla Walla Service Center is located on an 8.7 acre site at 55 East Moore Street. The facility is a former cannery that the City acquired and consolidated many of their operations at this site in 1986. Several improvements were made in 1999, including the construction of the 14,750 sq ft main office building and upgrades to other maintenance facilities.

There are seven buildings that total about 106,680 square feet. There are 85 full-time, (and several part time/temporary), employees that utilize these facilities as their base of operations.

- Public Works
  - Administration (4)
  - Engineering (15)
  - Sanitation (11)
  - Streets/Wastewater Collections/Stormwater (18)
  - Water Distribution (12)
- Parks & Recreation
  - Administration (1.5)
  - Parks (7)
  - Recreation (2)
  - Facility Maintenance (3.5)
- Fleet Services (5)
- Development Services (8)
- Finance (1)

Activities that are currently supported at these facilities include equipment storage; vehicle repair, maintenance, and washing; heavy equipment and vehicle parking; welding shop; storage of construction materials; bulk ground maintenance supplies; decant facility; fueling station for city fleet vehicles; archive record storage; police evidence and impoundment storage; conference and meeting rooms; and various offices for administrative activities.

On April 1, 2003, a fire burned much of the central section of Building 65, where Sanitation was housed at the time. Ten sanitation trucks were destroyed in the fire. This section of the building was reconstructed in the months that followed.

This newer portion of the shop building was remodeled in 2010 to include offices and fleet maintenance facilities.

The Police Evidence Storage building was remodeled in 2011/2012 to improve security and address other building and electrical deficiencies.

In 2012, a structural assessment was completed for the space occupied by the Water Distribution Division (Building 65A). The engineer recommended several structural repairs, which were completed in 2013. However, the Structural Engineer also

recommended a follow up structural assessment be performed within ten years (2022). That follow up structural assessment was completed in 2020 and identified a roof replacement and additional structural repairs, which are completed in 2021.

In 2015, Street Operations (Streets, Wastewater Collections, Stormwater, Traffic and Supervisory offices) were consolidated to Service Center Building 65D. Prior to this, supervisory and admin support offices were located with the Fleet Services offices on the second floor of Building 65B, Traffic was located in Building 75B, and operations was located in Building 65D/E. Office space was constructed in Building 65D and the shop area reconfigured to minimize vehicle operations within the shop area of Building 65D/E. Street operations also utilizes the Barrel Building (65F) to protect equipment subject to freezing (sweepers, vactors, etc.).

Sanitation has largely consolidated operations in Building 75A, constructing break and meeting room space within the building. However, Sanitation's welding shop is still located in Building 65C. Sanitation intends to expand the existing covered parking area on the east side of the Service Center site to provide covered parking with engine block and hydraulic system heaters for collections equipment.

Parks operations is largely located in Building 75D including the space formerly occupied by Traffic Operations 75B. This space provides restrooms and office/meeting/breakroom space for Parks personnel.

Facilities Maintenance is located in Building 75C.

Stormwater Pollution Prevention

Since diesel fuel and gasoline are stored in underground storage tanks (UST's) and other solvents, oils, and hazardous fluids (that are regulated by EPA) were stored in tanks and drums at various locations throughout the site, the City was required to have a Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) Plan. The SPCC Plan was prepared by EMCOM/OWT, Inc. in 2004, in accordance with 40 CFR 112 of EPA's regulations effective August 16, 2002. The SPCC Plan established the procedures and equipment required to prevent discharge of oil and hazardous substances in quantities that violate applicable water quality standards.

In January, 2011, City Engineering staff re-evaluated the 2004 SPCC Plan utilizing the EPA's December 2006 SPCC Rule Amendments – Streamlined Requirements for Regulated Facilities. Many of the 2004 recommendations have been addressed by replacing critical single wall tanks with double walled tanks and storing the tanks inside.

In February, 2009, Northwest Pump and Equipment Company inspected, tested and found the three UST fuel storage tanks and piping to be in compliance with Chapter 173.360 W.A.C. The two 10,000 gallon oil storage tanks 17 and 18 were declared as surplus, sold, and removed from the site in 2013.

Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) issued the City of Walla Walla, NPDES Permit # WAR04-6508. This Permit required that Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) be completed for City owned material storage, heavy equipment storage, and maintenance areas by August of 2011. The Service Center SWPPP of the overall site was completed July 6, 2011 by URS Corporation.

The 2011 site assessment evaluated the following areas for compliance with Best Management Practices: 1) Building and ground maintenance; 2) Floor drains; 3) Loading and unloading of materials; 4) Outdoor storage of raw materials; 5) Storage of liquids, solid waste, and hazardous materials; 6) Vehicle and equipment (V&E) Cleaning; 7) V&E Fueling; 8) V&E Maintenance and Repair; 9) V&E parking and storage; and 10) Vegetation Management. No major problems were observed in 5 of the 10 categories listed. Other problems identified were fairly minor items, such as a trash

receptacle was found with its lid left open, or equipment axes were laying on top of a floor drain.

Decant Facility

The Service Center site includes a decant facility located along the western side of the property. The decant facility contains a concrete pad that is separated onto decant bays #2, #3 or #4 (for WSDOT use) and the northerly smaller bay #1 for storage of potential "hot loads" (contaminated). These decant pad(s) allow liquids to drain from the solids that are generated from street sweepings and vactor waste collection. Solids remaining on the concrete pad are allowed to dry, stockpiled, and then hauled to the landfill for disposal.

Liquid drained from stored material is decanted through clarifiers, then into an oil/water separator prior to being discharged into the sanitary sewer. As oily water flows through the separator, the lighter-than-water oil wastes rise to the surface and are trapped in the exit chamber. Sediments settle to the bottom of the entrance chamber. Both chambers are vactored out during regular scheduled cleaning of both chambers.

The decant facility is permitted in accordance with Chapter 70.95, WAC 173-304 and 173-350 as issued by the Walla Walla County Health Department. The Washington State Department of Ecology permits the discharge of these liquids into the sewer system by a State General Discharge permit.

Service Center Improvements

In 2004, a master plan for the service was prepared that developed a circulation plan for the expansion of the Service Center.

The main administrative building houses:

- Water Distribution Supervisory and Administrative support personnel
- Cross-connection/FOG personnel
- Public Works Administration
- Parks & Recreation Administration
- Development Services
- Engineering

Additional office space is needed within the main building as follows:

- Water Distribution – Have 7 – Need 8
- Engineering – Have 15 – Need 17
- Development Services – Have 9 – Need 10
- Additional Conference Rooms

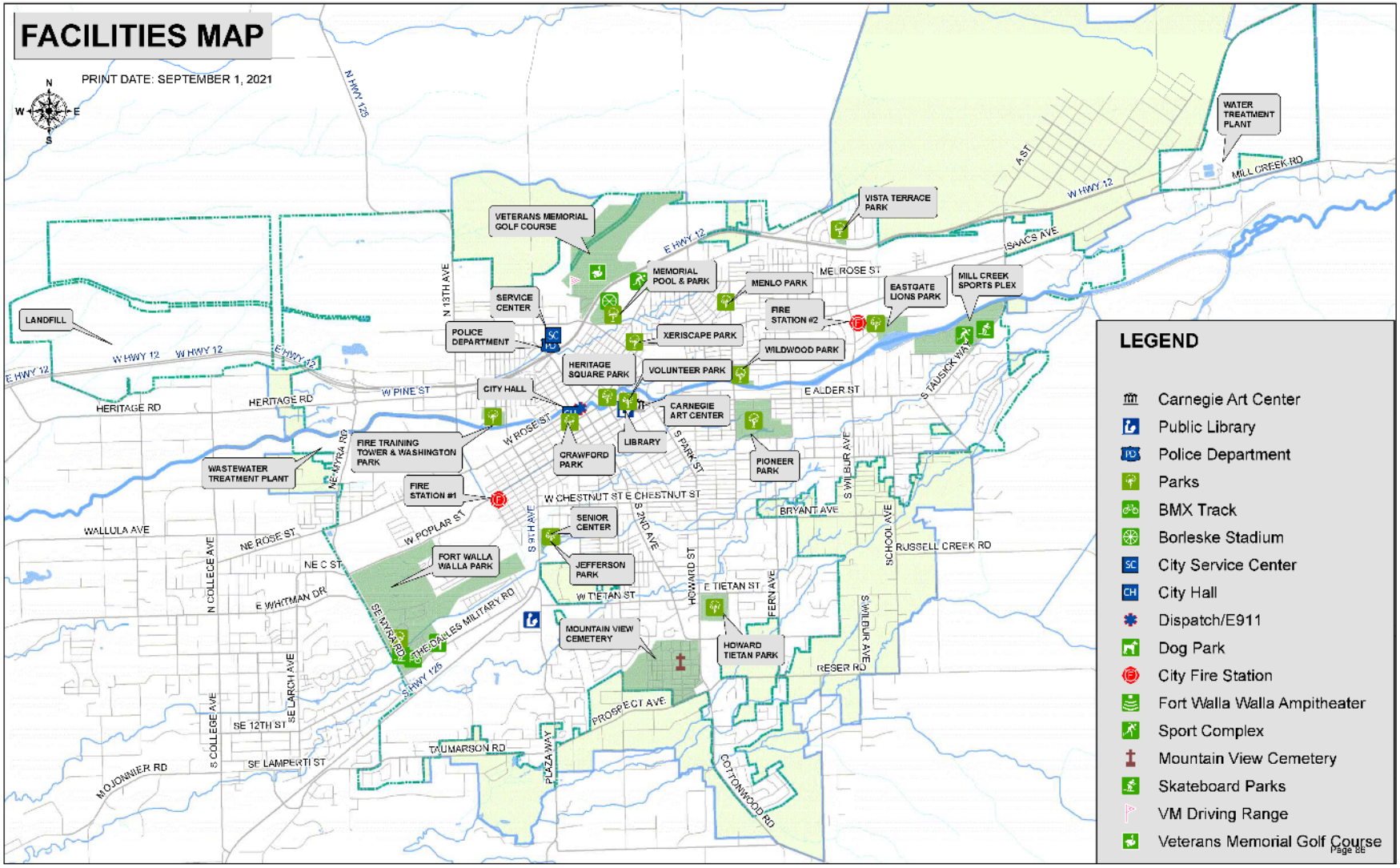
The City hired BLRB Architects to perform design of a service center remodel. That design is complete and construction is pending.

Carnegie Center

The Carnegie Center, located at 109 South Palouse Street was built in 1905 and originally served as the Walla Walla Public Library. The building consists of 8,000 square feet on two floors.

Senior Center

The Senior Center, located at 720 Sprague Avenue was built in 1996, consists of 15,000 square feet and serves as a gathering social place and offers meals for seniors during the daytime.


FACILITIES MAP
PRINT DATE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2021
N
W
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LANDFILL
VETERANS MEMORIAL GOLF COURSE
SERVICE CENTER
POLICE DEPARTMENT
MEMORIAL POOL & PARK
XERISCAPE PARK
HERITAGE SQUARE PARK
VOLUNTEER PARK
CITY HALL
CARNEGIE ART CENTER
LIBRARY
CRAWFORD PARK
FIRE TRAINING TOWER & WASHINGTON PARK
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT
FIRE STATION #1
SENIOR CENTER
JEFFERSON PARK
FORT WALLA WALLA PARK
MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY
HOWARD TIETAN PARK
PIONEER PARK
MENLO PARK
FIRE STATION #2
WILDWOOD PARK
VISTA TERRACE PARK
EASTGATE LIONS PARK
MILL CREEK SPORTS PLEX
WATER TREATMENT PLANT
N HWY 125
E HWY 12
W HWY 12
HERITAGE RD
W PINE ST
W ROSE ST
NE MYRA RD
WALLULA AVE
NE ROSE ST
NE C ST
E WHITMAN DR
SE MYRA RD
THE DALLES MILITARY RD
SE HWY 125
N COLLEGE AVE
S COLLEGE AVE
SE LARCH AVE
SE 12TH ST
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HOWARD ST
S PARK ST
FERN AVE
S WILBUR AVE
BRYANT AVE
E ALDER ST
SCHOOL AVE
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RESER RD
PROSPECT AVE
TAUMARSON RD
PLAZA WAY
COTTONWOOD RD
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ISAACS AVE
MILL CREEK RD
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LEGEND
Carnegie Art Center
Public Library
Police Department
Parks
BMX Track
Borleske Stadium
City Service Center
City Hall
Dispatch/E911
Dog Park
City Fire Station
Fort Walla Walla Ampitheater
Sport Complex
Mountain View Cemetery
Skateboard Parks
VM Driving Range
Veterans Memorial Golf Course

Fire

Fire & Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The Walla Walla Fire Department (WWFD) dates back to 1903, when three separate volunteer fire departments were joined together. WWFD endeavors to minimize the loss of life and property, pain and suffering by residents of the City of Walla Walla and surrounding areas as a result of accidents or natural disaster.

The Walla Walla Fire Department operates two fire stations with a full time staff of 47 employees, many of whom are cross trained as firefighters and paramedics.

The current long-term debt for the 2004 General Obligation (GO) bond for construction of Station No. 2 was approximately $4.5M, which was refinanced in 2013 for $2.84M with payments of approximately $335,000 due each year until the bond is retired in 2023.

Services Provided

- Fire Department Administration
- Suppression
- EMS response
- Training
- Public education
- Prevention
- Inspection
- Technical response team (TRT) with capabilities including:
  - Hazardous materials response
  - High/low angle rope rescue
  - Swift water rescue
  - Confined space rescue

The City's EMS and TRT service emergency calls throughout Walla Walla County, with a total coverage of approximately 1,200 square miles. The Department also responds to emergency medical calls in a portion of Umatilla County: Ambulance Service Area #6, Mill Creek.

Level of Service

The WWFD responds to between 5,500 and 6,000 medical emergency calls each year, over 60% of these responses end with a patient being transported to a medical facility.

Facilities

Walla Walla operates two fire stations that house the emergency response equipment and on-duty responding members of the Department. The main 14,220 sq ft administration station (Fire Station No. 1), located at 200 S. 12th Avenue, was officially dedicated in 1975. The second station is a 15,260 sq ft facility located at 170 N. Wilbur Avenue. Station No. 2 is a fairly new facility completed in 2006, as a result of the bond levy that was approved by voters in 2004.

The department also maintains a drill and training facility at 300 Cayuse Street. The facility was also dedicated in 1975 and is an older four story masonry training tower with separate props which provide hands-on training for ventilation, high/low angle rope rescue, confined space rescue and hazardous materials response. The Walla Walla Fire Department partnered with Fire District #4 and the College Place Fire Department to replace the drill tower in 2022.

Equipment

WWFD operates several pieces of specialized equipment, the largest vehicles being:

- Engine 3911: 2018 Pierce Enforcer Pumper
- Engine 3951: 2008 Ford C4500 Type V Wildland Pumper
- Engine 3912: 2021 Pierce Enforcer pumper
- Ladder 3911: 2011 Rosenbauer Ladder Truck pumper
- Engine 3913: 2002 Pierce Quantum pumper

EMS

- 2016 Dodge D4500 Braun NW Ambulance
- 2013 Dodge D3500 Braun NW Ambulance
- 2014 Dodge D4500 Braun NW Ambulance
- 2011 Ford F-350 Braun NW Ambulance
- 2010 Ford F-350 Braun NW Ambulance

Facility Needs

Continued growth through annexation of the City's Urban Growth Area (UGA), particularly to the South of the City and areas north of US 12 will increase the

distribution of the WWFD resources. To ensure proper response standards are maintained, the City may need to address additional fire stations, equipment and staff to serve this growth. A smaller two bay satellite station with living quarters to service the south end of the City where most of the growth and annexations have been and are expected to continue to occur.

The training tower is also showing signs of wear. Repairs to address ongoing heat damage were completed about 18 years ago, however, those repairs are failing, rendering the tower unusable for live fire training. To provide long term life safety status of the structure in compliance with WAC 296-305 – Safety Standards for Firefighters and safe operational needs for firefighter training, the City of Walla Walla, Fire District #4 and the City of College Place partnered to replace the training tower in 2022. This regional facility is a more prudent solution for the long-term training needs of communities in the area.

The Fire Department has numerous support vehicles, response trailers and light/generator plants that are not currently stored undercover due to inside storage constraints. There is a need to build a covered parking structure at fire station #1 to keep these vehicles out of the weather and provide the ability to keep heated during the winter months.

Future Equipment Needs (items not included in the City's Vehicle Replacement Fund, 518)

As fire suppression vehicles require a large investment, ongoing replacement of the fleet will continue to be a financial challenge. A new ladder truck was added in April 2012 at a cost of $801,500 and a two engines have been replaced since 2018.

Attempts have been made to fund the replacement of these large vehicles including grant applications. Due to extensive competition from other communities, recent grant application attempts have not been successful. Establishment of a similar replacement fund for the fire suppression equipment has been discussed to assure a cost-effective rotation of these expensive vehicles.

Fleet Services

Vehicle and Equipment Replacement

In 1999, the City established a vehicle and equipment (V/ER) replacement program (fund 518, Ordinance 99-06, WWMC 3.21.050), to annually set aside funds for the planned replacement of vehicles and equipment included in the fund. Replacement costs are established for V/ER and then adjusted for inflation (presently using 3% per year) for a future replacement date as established by Fleet Services.

There are approximately 315 vehicles included in the replacement schedule. Each Department/Division annually deposits funds for the future replacement costs for V/ER. Fleet Services manages the schedule in partnership with the Departments/Divisions and City's Finance Department. Fleet Services establishes and monitors replacement cycles and costs providing a systematic approach for replacements.

Departments/Divisions are encouraged to review the schedules annually or biannually with Fleet Services to ensure schedules and the types of equipment continue to meet Department/Division needs in the future, and where feasible, to extend the "planned" life of equipment.

In 2015, a review process was established with Public Works to ensure input was received from Supervisors, front-line staff, Managers and Directors, before a purchase was made. The goal of this process was to make certain the V/ER met the needs of the direct users. Demonstrations are also sometimes scheduled to review new features/capabilities.

Starting in 2012, rebuilds for certain types of equipment are also being considered. Examples of equipment benefiting from rebuilds include the landfill's compactor, grader, dozer and scraper, which are high cost, critical, but non-emergency equipment. A one-time rebuild extends the life of a piece of equipment at a lower cost than replacement and helps ensure continued operational reliability. When considering a rebuild, the life cycle plan (set-aside plan) for that equipment should include the rebuild cost and the full future replacement following the rebuild.

Including these two expenditures (rebuild + replacement) in the lifecycle and then spreading the costs over the full lifecycle provides a stable, balanced annual set aside with little cost fluctuation.

Rebuilds are also subject to the joint recommendations of Fleet Services and the Department/Division based on the historical reliability of that particular piece of equipment.

In cases where actual purchase and/or outfitting costs come in higher than projected, the gap can either be covered by a Department/Division's 518 contingency fund or by seeking a balance transfer from the Department/Division's operating fund/fund balance, subject to approval by the Department Director. It is recommended that each Department/Division establish a 2-5% contingency fund for the equipment in the 518 fund to address unforeseen costs.

There are some vehicles that are not included in the V/ER fund, namely fire engines. These items are included as part of the Fire Department's overall Capital Facilities needs and are funded through the Fire Department's own capital plan.

Vehicles that are included in the V/ER fund are not listed in this plan but are instead accounted for in the Operations and Maintenance bi-annual budget.

Library

Walla Walla Public Library

Serving the people of Walla Walla as a community information and lifelong learning center, the Walla Walla Public Library (WW Public Library) acquires, organizes, provides, and promotes informational, educational, recreational, and cultural materials for people of all ages. Located at 238 East Alder Street, the Library serves the Walla Walla area providing free Library cards to individuals owning property or living within the City limits.

In 1905, the WW Public Library opened the doors of a new building built by funding from Andrew Carnegie. The Library outgrew the Carnegie Building and moved into the new 16,000 square foot facility in 1970. Since that time, the Library has continued to grow. In 2006, a 3,067 square foot Young People's addition was completed. Today the Library circulates over 350,000 items annually, including books, cds, dvds, downloadable books and magazines.

Services Provided
The WW Public Library staff focus on providing guidance and assistance for people to obtain the information they seek. They initiate programs and exhibits that stimulate the use of Library materials, promote literacy and encourage lifetime learning for people of all ages.

The WW Public Library provides free programs throughout the year including youth and adult reading programs, preschool story times, elementary school-age story times, day care story times, internet access, internet classes, classes for downloading audible and e-books, word processing and document scanning.

The maker-space and media lab, CrewSpace, provides both instruction in and access to the latest in technology which enables both children and adults to share information using various mediums such as music and video production. Acquiring these skills will increase employment opportunities and will support creative expression and lifetime learning.

Existing Facilities
The original 16,000 square foot Library was constructed in 1970. With continued growth and increases in programs, computer based information sources, quantity and breadth of materials, the facilities were unable to accommodate the demand.

In June 2004, a Library Expansion Master Plan for the WW Public Library was completed. The expansion plan addressed a variety of issues including capacity constraints, available funding and phased implementation of proposed improvements. Phase I improvements included Young People's Services Renovation and Addition. Phase II addressed the Maximization of Interior Space and Phase III was Library Expansion to achieve the goal of a 33,000 square foot facility to accommodate growth to serve an estimated population of 68,000 (by 2020).

In 2005, the Sherwood Trust awarded the Library a $300,000 grant toward the renovation and expansion of the Young People's department. This grant represented about one half of the estimated $713,000 required to fund the project. The community provided the necessary funding match and the 3,067 square foot facilities expansion to the northwest corner of the Library was completed in 2006.

A media lab, CrewSpace, was built in 2014 in the existing Board Room space. It was built with a grant of $136,000 from the Paul Allen Family Foundation.

A replacement of the Library's original HVAC System with an energy efficient system was completed in 2016.

The WW Public Library added two study rooms in 2013 to address the need for small groups to meet in a quiet area.

Level of Service
With the 2006 expansion, the Library has 19,067 square feet, serving a City population base of about 32,237 for a Level of Service (LOS) ratio of 0.59 square feet per capita. Comparable LOS for other single outlet municipal libraries in similar sized communities in Washington have a ratio of 0.84 square feet per capita (source: Washington Public Library Statistical Report, 2014).

Future Needs

The 2004 Library Expansion Plan did not predict the recent advancements in technology, nor the current use and future growth needs for the WW Public Library. In 2016, the WW Public Library serves an average of 771 people daily. An update to the plan is needed to address the daily use, the changes in the way we use the WW Public Library and to re-examine future needs.

The current Plan for Phase II improvements, which includes interior space maximization, will be included in the Phase III portion which is the expansion and renovation of the entire Library, maximizing the use of the existing site and increasing the area of the Library from 19,000 to 20,000 square feet.

Many of the deficient conditions of the existing facility that were identified in the 2004 evaluation remain to be addressed.

There are a total of 5 emergency exists now, including one in the adult reading area of the Library with was added in 2016.

The Young People's addition provided needed shelf space for books and other materials, but the increase in programming makes the need for a designated program space crucial for both adults and young people. There is little expansion space due to the limits of the facility's present site.

The lack of a designated program space has caused wear and tear to both the carpeting and the furniture. As the tables are pulled across the carpet to make room for programs, not only is the furniture weakened, but the carpet is showing wear. The furniture (tables and chairs) were purchased by the Sherwood family in 1970, nearly 50 years ago, and is in need of replacement. The chairs were replaced in 2018 but there was not enough money to cover the cost of the tables. The carpet has been replaced in stages over the last 20 years and the design is not cohesive. The carpet on the east side of the Library is showing extreme wear.

Lighting within the Library is inadequate. The ceiling is original and the component tiles are no longer replaceable. It does not allow for improved and energy efficient lighting to be installed. A replacement of the ceiling and new lighting is needed.

To increase security at the Library, the existing security cameras have been updated and additional cameras have been added to the exterior perimeter of the building.

The Library's landscape plants are 50 years old and need to be replaced. The irrigation system has been patched and added on to and has reached the state where it is both inefficient and can no longer accommodate additions. It has been assessed for its ability to be upgraded and for plantings to be replaced. The Parks Department has stated that the irrigation system must be replaced along with most of the landscaping plantings. The estimated cost in 2018 costs would be $100,000.

Rapid changes in technology are evident in library services where acquisition, organization and retrieval are all dependent on technology. Predicting future changes in technology is difficult, but libraries anticipate the continued and expanded use of radio frequency. RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) allows libraries to inventory, circulate and sort materials through radio frequency tagging. The WW Public Library has not been able to acquire this technology due to its cost. Libraries also foresee a wireless environment within the next five years necessitating new equipment and security considerations.

Drive-up services have been requested. As our population ages, more individuals could benefit from drop-off and pickup services. Services of this type would need to be part of the planning for a new building.

Parks & Recreation

Parks and Recreation

Walla Walla's long term commitment to parks began in 1901 when land that is currently Pioneer Park was acquired. A group of prominent women formed the Park Civic and Arts Club in 1907 and began raising money for park improvements. The Club's dedication to park development and City beautification led to the hiring of the Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm to help plan the parks system in Walla Walla. The Club continued their effort to provide parkland dedications and to improve park facilities by adding shrubs, trees, flowers, play equipment and other park amenities throughout the City. The influence of this early devotion to parks is reflected in the wealth of City parkland that exists today.

City Parks and Recreation Facilities
City Parks are divided into three categories: community parks, neighborhood parks and mini-parks.

Community parks provide for diverse multi use recreational opportunities and may include natural areas for outdoor recreation. This type of park includes parking facilities, restrooms, and is easily accessible to the community served. The desirable size for a community park is typically 25 acres or more with a service area radius of two miles.

Neighborhood parks provide for both active and passive recreational uses. The desirable size for a neighborhood park is typically five to ten acres with a service area radius of one half mile.

Mini-parks provide specialized facilities or passive recreation to serve a concentrated or limited population. The desirable size for a mini-park is typically one acre or less with a service area radius of less than one quarter mile.

Community Parks
- Borleske Stadium/Veterans Memorial Pool (12 Ac)
- Fort Walla Walla Park (205 Ac)
- Mill Creek Sportsplex (50 Ac)
- Pioneer Park (58 Ac)

Neighborhood Parks
- Eastgate Lions Park (12 Ac)
- Howard-Tietan Park (19 Ac)
- Jefferson Park (9 Ac)
- Menlo Park (7 Ac)
- Vista Terrace Park (7 Ac)
- Washington Park (12 Ac)
- Wildwood Park (6 Ac)

Mini-Parks
- Crawford Park (1.2 Ac)
- Heritage Square (0.7 Ac)
- Volunteer Park (0.1 Ac)
- Xeriscape Park (0.2 Ac)

Other City Park Facilities
- Mountain View Cemetery (65 Ac)
- Veterans Memorial Golf Course (135 ac)

City Trails
- Mill Creek Trail
- Fort Walla Walla Trail
- US 12 Trail (Moore Street to Vista Terrace Park)

Buildings/Facilities
- Carnegie Center
- Garden Center at Pioneer Park
- Aviary at Pioneer Park

The City also partners with the Walla Walla School District to utilize indoor and outdoor school facilities for Recreation programs.

Conditions
During the last 14 years, park irrigation systems have been automated to improve efficiency. Most of the City's parks have restroom facilities. The City of Walla Walla, in partnership with

local neighborhoods and civic groups such as Rotary, Sherwood Trust, etc. continue to install, replace and/or enhance playground equipment. Replacements/enhancements have been completed at Pioneer, Howard-Tietan, Washington, Wildwood, Fort Walla Walla, Vista Terrace, and Jefferson Parks.

Facility Needs

City Council approved the Parks and Recreation Department's Comprehensive Plan in June of 2018. This document will guide the planning and operation of the Department through June of 2024. Having an approved plan will also allow the City to apply for grants through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office for future park development.

The Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan identified a need for the City to establish a park in the southwest section of the City. The City has expanded in this quadrant of the City and many new homes have been built and there is not a park within a ½ mile for these families to access.

The Department has been very successful in funding new playgrounds over the last twenty years. The latest park to receive new playground equipment was Vista Park, which was completed in 2022. Staff is now working on grants and private donations to begin reconstructing the playgrounds that were installed over twenty years ago, starting with Pioneer Park.

Many of the parking lots in the City's parks are at the end of their useful life and are in need of rehabilitation. A plan should be developed to repair and/or replace these parking lots.

Level of Service

The acres per capita Level of Service (LOS) is the most common benchmark used for whether a community has enough park lands, but this metric fails to address the distribution of those lands in a community and the type of (park) demand within a community. The historic standard referenced 10 acres of park and/or open space per 1,000 persons, but most communities simply try to maintain their current ratio as they grow in population.

Other references have indicated the LOS for Community Parks would be 9.3 acres per 1,000 and 2.1 acres per 1,000 for neighborhood Parks.

Police

Police Facilities

In 2009, a General Obligation (GO) bond was passed to build new Police facilities and in 2012 the WWPD moved into a new 30,170 square feet Headquarters (HQ) building at 54 E. Moore Street, across the street from the City Service Center. The new facilities were designed to provide enough space for a future staff level of 54 sworn officers and 43 civilian staff. The 3,330 square feet Police Evidence Storage Building located north of the City Service Center was renovated at the same time to bring that building up to current codes and to improve security, fire alarms, address structural deficiencies, doors, windows, unit heaters and video monitoring.

The new building and renovation of the storage facility was designed to accommodate: Police administration; Police operations; small emergency operations and Police training room; Records storage and retrieval; Investigations; Police community and Crime prevention programs; Property storage/retrieval and evidence processing; Fingerprinting lab; Suspect processing and interviewing; Police support services, Patrol shift briefings, Staff meetings and also features a Community meeting/multi-purpose room (Chuck Fulton Community Room).

Secure areas were provided for safety including: interview rooms; conference rooms; suspect processing rooms; locker rooms; and lunch and kitchen facilities. Non-secure interview rooms were also included to allow the public to talk with the officers or to make reports in privacy. The new headquarters building features advanced electronics, video monitoring, communications, air handling and emergency systems. The facility has a back-up generator for power capable of running all of the lights, computers, and critical functions of the building. It does not operate the HVAC system.

Police Services
Currently, there are 48 commissioned officers and 14 civilian employees with the Walla Walla Police Department. Services provided include animal control, crime prevention, investigations, patrol, and parking and code enforcement. Community programs provided by the Police Department include Washington State Crime Prevention Association activities, the Crime Free Rental Housing Program, Child Passenger Safety Program and a Special Teams Unit that is focused on Gang and Drug related activities.

Public Safety Communications (WESCOMM)
Emergency services communications in Walla Walla County are provided by Walla Walla Emergency Services Communications (WESCOMM). Under a contract with Walla Walla County, the WWPD operates the Enhanced 911 center for all law enforcement, fire services, and ambulance services within Walla Walla County (WWPD, WWFD, WW County Sheriff's office, City of College Place Police and Fire Departments, Rural Fire Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and the Walla Walla Airport Fire Department) except for Rural Fire District 5, covering the western portion of Walla Walla County near the Wallula/Burbank area which utilizes Franklin County's 911 call center due to logistics and phone service coverage. There are 17 employees with WESCOMM.

In 1997, the center moved from City Hall into the current 3,000 square foot facility at the SW corner of Rose Street and 2nd Avenue. This building also serves as the headquarters for the Walla Walla County Department of Emergency Management and the Emergency Operations Center. The current facility is located over Mill Creek and should be considered for relocation due to its vulnerability to impacts from flooding and/or earthquake damage. The building is owned by Walla Walla County and leased to WESCOM.

Level of Service and Future Needs
As the population and community's socio-economic mix change and the land area serviced by the department grows, the number of law enforcement personnel and the location of those personnel will also need to be addressed. The Department will need to adjust and adapt to these changes in order to maintain public safety and respond to calls in a timely manner. At present, with 48 commissioned officers and a population estimate of 33,390, the ratio is 1.43 officers per 1,000 people. Although this ratio is a common measurement used by agencies to evaluate the number of officers in a community, it does not address the actual amount of police time required to handle calls for service from inception to completion. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) recommends that

workload be used to determine the number of officers required for a community. This assessment should consider workload, deployment and response times for patrol officers. This assessment method is recommended because the ratio approach to level of service does not factor in the type of service requests. A more holistic approach to level of service would be to analyze the type of 911 calls from the CAD system to assess needs. It is recommended that the Police Department utilize ICMA's Patrol Workload & Deployment Analysis System to conduct an assessment of the number of officers needed in the city.

Service calls between 2009 and 2017:

Walla Walla Police Department

Year	Requests For Service
2009	19,320
2010	19,879
2011	18,537
2012	19,701
2013	20,355
2014	18,820
2015	20,911
2016	19,128
2017	22,801

With the new police station and upgraded Evidence Storage renovations in place, a majority of the Police Department's future needs have been addressed. However, as the service population grows through annexation and in-fill on the Southside of town, it becomes more difficult geographically for timely police response to this area. The Fire Department is faced with the same dilemma. A small police satellite out-station as part of any new fire station built in the area would help the Police Department meet the needs of this growing area of the City.

Firearms Range

Currently, the Police Department is able to use the firearms range at the Washington State Penitentiary or the College Place Police Department range (which is for pistols only). Both locations are getting more and more difficult to schedule due to use from other competing entities. In order to sustain the highest possible training standards with regard to the extremely high liability issue of firearms use, the Police Department, in coordination with Public Works, has developed a plan for a firearms range located on some un-used land at the landfill. The initial cost estimates place this project at right around $300,000.

Appendix XII. 20-Year Funding Forecast

	Annual Escalation: 0%	Annual Escalation: 1%	Annual Escalation: 0%	Annual Escalation: 1%	Total
2026	$650,000.00	$2,000,000.00	$1,000,000.00	$4,000,000.00	**$7,650,000.00**
2027	$650,000.00	$2,020,000.00	$1,000,000.00	$4,040,000.00	**$7,710,000.00**
2028	$650,000.00	$2,040,200.00	$1,000,000.00	$4,080,400.00	**$7,770,600.00**
2029	$650,000.00	$2,060,602.00	$1,000,000.00	$4,121,204.00	**$7,831,806.00**
2030	$650,000.00	$2,081,208.02	$1,000,000.00	$4,162,416.04	**$7,893,624.06**
2031	$650,000.00	$2,102,020.10	$1,000,000.00	$4,204,040.20	**$7,956,060.30**
Subtotal 2026-2031 CFP	$3,900,000.00	$12,304,030.12	$6,000,000.00	$24,608,060.24	**$46,812,090.36**
2032	$650,000.00	$2,123,040.30	$1,000,000.00	$4,246,080.60	**$8,019,120.90**
2033	$650,000.00	$2,144,270.70	$1,000,000.00	$4,288,541.41	**$8,082,812.11**
2034	$650,000.00	$2,165,713.41	$1,000,000.00	$4,331,426.82	**$8,147,140.23**
2035	$650,000.00	$2,187,370.55	$1,000,000.00	$4,374,741.09	**$8,212,111.64**
2036	$650,000.00	$2,209,244.25	$1,000,000.00	$4,418,488.50	**$8,277,732.75**

2037	$650,000.00	$2,231,336.69	$1,000,000.00	$4,462,673.39	**$8,344,010.08**
2038	$650,000.00	$2,253,650.06	$1,000,000.00	$4,507,300.12	**$8,410,950.18**
2039	$650,000.00	$2,276,186.56	$1,000,000.00	$4,552,373.12	**$8,478,559.68**
2040	$650,000.00	$2,298,948.43	$1,000,000.00	$4,597,896.85	**$8,546,845.28**
2041	$650,000.00	$2,321,937.91	$1,000,000.00	$4,643,875.82	**$8,615,813.73**
2042	$650,000.00	$2,345,157.29	$1,000,000.00	$4,690,314.58	**$8,685,471.87**
2043	$650,000.00	$2,368,608.86	$1,000,000.00	$4,737,217.73	**$8,755,826.59**
2044	$650,000.00	$2,392,294.95	$1,000,000.00	$4,784,589.90	**$8,826,884.85**
2045	$650,000.00	$2,416,217.90	$1,000,000.00	$4,832,435.80	**$8,898,653.70**
Total	**$13,000,000.00**	**$44,038,007.99**	**$20,000,000.00**	**$88,076,015.98**	**$165,114,023.97**
Total (without 2026-2031 CFP Funds)	**$9,100,000.00**	**$31,733,977.87**	**$14,000,000.00**	**$63,467,955.74**	**$118,301,933.61**

Appendix XIII. Transportation Elements Project List

Project ID	Project Name	Project Type	Evaluation Rating	Cost Estimate	Estimated Costs Borne by Develop-ment	Develo-pment Comm ent	Estimated Costs Borne by City	In 2026-2031 CFP? (CFP Project Number)	Sponso-ring Agency (ies)	Priorit-ized Project	Estimated Prioritized Project Expendit-ure	Project Description
BR-01	6th Avenue/ Mill Creek	Bridge	14	$7,300,000	$0		$7,300,000	BR2701	City	Yes	$7,300,000	BR915-001
BR-02	4th Avenue/ Mill Creek	Bridge	14	$5,550,000	$0		$5,550,000	BR2701	City	Yes	$5,550,000	BR915-003
BR-03	2nd Avenue/ Mill Creek	Bridge	14	$8,350,000	$0		$8,350,000		City		$0	BR818-016
BR-04	Main Street/ Mill Creek	Bridge	14	$8,350,000	$0		$8,350,000		City		$0	BR915-005
BR-05	Otis Street/ Mill Creek	Bridge	14	$2,000,000	$0		$2,000,000		City		$0	BR916-004
BR-06	Merriam Street/ Mill Creek	Bridge	14	$2,000,000	$0		$2,000,000		City		$0	BR916-006
BR-07	3rd Avenue/ Garrison Creek	Bridge	14	$3,250,000	$0		$3,250,000	2028-XX	City	Yes	$3,250,000	BR716-007
BR-08	Chase Avenue/ Garrison Creek	Bridge	14	$1,250,000	$0		$1,250,000		City		$0	BR715-007

BR-09	Rustic Place/ Yellowhawk Creek	Bridge	14	$1,000,000	$0		$1,000,000		City		$0	BR718-008
F-01	Myra Road Freight Reroute from 9th Avenue	Freight	9	$500,000	$0		$500,000		City		$0	Reroute freight traffic from 9th Ave to SE Myra Rd. (Wayfinding and guide signage)
FS-01	2nd Avenue	Future Study	18	$40,000	$0		$40,000		City		$0	Conduct a study to evaluate offset intersections between Stahl St and Whitman St and identify location(s) for crosswalk improvements. once the location is determined, install enhanced crosswalk.
FS-02	Main Street	Future Study	13	$50,000	$0		$50,000		City		$0	Future study to establish street cross section. Reconstruct road to consistent cross section and restore curbs. Evaluate parking to see if diagonal parking could be converted to parallel parking, and consider bike lanes or turn lanes if parallel parking
FS-03	Melrose Street Corridor Study	Future Study	20	$150,000	$0		$150,000		City	Yes	$150,000	Improve pedestrian crossing and evaluate curb extensions at public street intersections for traffic calming and pedestrian safety. Corridor analysis to consider design elements like turn lanes, bike lanes, and on-street parking where land use creates
INT-01	Alder Street Division Street	Intersect ion	17	$1,300,000	$0		$1,300,000		City		$0	Construct a new traffic and pedestrian actuated signal at the intersection of Alder

												Street and Division Street adjacent to Pioneer Park.
INT-02	Bryant Avenue Howard Street	Intersection	18	$3,200,000	$0		$3,200,000		City		$0	Install compact roundabout
INT-03	U.S. 12/ Harbert Road	Intersection	9		$0		$0		City		$0	Install left turn lane on US 12 WB with development
INT-04	9th Avenue/ Birch Street	Intersection	17	$360,000	$0		$360,000		City		$0	Install RRFB improved pedestrian crossing; restricted intersection - right-in/right-out for vehicles
INT-05	9th Avenue/ Emma Street	Intersection	20	$320,000	$0		$320,000		City	Yes	$320,000	Install RRFB improved pedestrian crossing w/ refuge island
INT-06	9th Avenue/ Main Street	Intersection	20	$1,650,000	$0		$1,650,000	2028-XX	City	Yes	$1,650,000	Traffic signal improvement - full replacement
INT-07	9th Avenue/ Alder Street	Intersection	19	$1,650,000	$0		$1,650,000		City	Yes	$1,650,000	Traffic signal improvement - full replacement
INT-08	9th Avenue/ Poplar Street	Intersection	19	$2,800,000	$0		$2,800,000		City	Yes	$2,800,000	Traffic signal improvement - full replacement
INT-09	9th Avenue/ Chestnut Street	Intersection	19	$1,700,000	$0		$1,700,000		City	Yes	$1,700,000	Traffic signal improvement - full replacement
INT-10	9th Avenue/ Willow Street	Intersection	7	$70,000	$0		$70,000		City		$0	Restricted intersection - right-in/right-out for vehicles
INT-11	2nd Avenue/ Tietan Street	Intersection	18	$1,000,000	$0		$1,000,000		City	Yes	$1,000,000	Construct a new traffic and pedestrian actuated signal at the intersection of 2nd Avenue and Tietan Street.

INT-12	4th Avenue/ Alder Street	Intersection	18	$1,000,000	$0		$1,000,000		City		$0	Traffic signal improvement - full replacement
INT-13	5th Avenue/ Main Street	Intersection	18	$1,000,000	$0		$1,000,000	2028-XX	City	Yes	$1,000,000	Traffic signal improvement - full replacement
INT-14	Bryant Avenue/ Fern Avenue	Intersection	5	$50,000	$0		$50,000		City		$0	Removal of all way stop flasher and span wire
INT-15	Wilbur Avenue/ Highway 12 Interchange	Intersection	24		$0		$0		WSDOT, City		$0	Grade separated interchange to improve north-south connections, including multimodal connections
INT-16	Reser/Howard/ Cottonwood/Prospect Intersection	Intersection	17	$3,850,000	$0		$3,850,000		City		$0	Reconfigure the existing intersection with a roundabout to improve traffic flow and safety.
INT-17	Main Street/ 3rd Avenue	Intersection	18	$1,000,000	$0		$1,000,000	2028-XX	City	Yes	$1,000,000	Traffic signal improvement - full replacement
INT-18	Main Street/ 4th Avenue	Intersection	18	$1,000,000	$0		$1,000,000	2028-XX	City	Yes	$1,000,000	Traffic signal improvement - full replacement
INT-19	Main Street/ Colville Street	Intersection	19	$1,000,000	$0		$1,000,000	2028-XX	City	Yes	$1,000,000	Traffic signal improvement - full replacement
INT-20	Main Street/ Spokane Street	Intersection	19	$1,000,000	$0		$1,000,000	2028-XX	City	Yes	$1,000,000	Traffic signal improvement - full replacement
INT-21	Pleasant Street/ Fern Avenue	Intersection	7	$150,000	$0		$150,000		City		$0	Span wire/pole replacement and advanced signage

INT-22	9th Ave/ Orchard Street	Intersection	21	$4,250,000	$0		$4,250,000		City	Yes	$4,250,000	Install roundabout
INT-23	Plaza Way Taumarson Road	Intersection	19	$4,250,000	$0		$4,250,000		City		$0	Install compact roundabout
INT-24	Fern Ave/ Abbott Road	Intersection	18	$3,200,000	$0		$3,200,000		City		$0	Install compact roundabout
MM-01	9th Avenue	Multimodal	16	$9,300,000	$0		$9,300,000		City		$0	Corridor improvements - update cross section, install 10-foot wide multi-use paths on each side, ADA upgrades as per S 9th Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Study
MM-02	Poplar Street	Multimodal	19	$15,000,000	$0		$15,000,000	IRRP028	City	Yes	$15,000,000	Corridor improvements - install bike lanes, update cross section as per Poplar Corridor Study
MM-03	Poplar Street	Multimodal	19	$26,600,000	$0		$26,600,000	IRRP028	City	Yes	$26,600,000	Corridor improvements - install bike lanes, update cross section as per Poplar Corridor Study
MM-04	Isaacs Avenue	Multimodal	23	$51,000,000	$7,750,000	3700 feet between Looking Glass Road and Harbert Road on north side	$43,250,000		City, Development		$0	Improve Isaacs Avenue from Tausick Way/Airport Road to the WWCC east entrance to principal arterial standards. This would be a joint City/County project to reconstruct the roadway, including turn lanes, curb and gutter, drainage facilities, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes.

MM-05	Harbert Road	Multimodal	14	$11,900,000	$11,900,000	Entire project length from US12 to Mill Creek Road	$0		City, Development	Yes	$0	Corridor improvements - install bike lane, install sidewalk
MM-06	Kendall Road	Multimodal	17	$3,450,000	$2,600,000	3500 feet on west side north of Cottonwood Road; 900 feet on east side	$850,000		City, Development		$0	Corridor improvements - install bike lane, install sidewalk
MM-07	Cottonwood Road	Multimodal	17	$4,200,000	$2,100,000	2800 feet west of Kendall Road on northeast side	$2,100,000		City, Development		$0	Corridor improvements - install bike lane, install sidewalk
MM-08	School Avenue	Multimodal	18	$13,100,000	$0		$13,100,000	TBD - Grant Dependent	City	Yes	$13,100,000	Reconstruct the roadway including realignment of the Pleasant Street intersection, utility improvements, pedestrian improvements, illumination, and school speed zone flashers.
MM-09	Offner Road	Multimodal	20	$400,000	$0		$400,000		City	Yes	$400,000	Complete sidewalk connection on east side

MM-10	Plaza Way	Multimodal	23	$5,300,000	$0		$5,300,000	TBD9024	City	Yes	$5,300,000	Corridor improvements - improve to arterial standards
MM-11	3rd Avenue	Multimodal	21	$600,000	$500,000	700 feet north of Whitney Road on both sides	$100,000		City, Development	Yes	$100,000	Add sidewalks
MM-12	1st Avenue/ Main St	Multimodal	15	$1,650,000	$0		$1,650,000		City		$0	ADA accessibility improvements and pedestrian countdown timers.
MM-13a	4th AveŲMĴ Extension (North)	Multimodal	29	$9,000,000	$2,450,000	400 feet north of railroad crossing	$6,550,000		City, Development, Railroad	Yes	$6,550,000	Reconstruct N 4th Avenue to minor arterial standards including sidewalks and a railroad crossing.
MM-13b	4th AveŲMĴ Reconstruction (South)	Multimodal	29	$5,500,000	$0		$5,500,000		City, Railroad	Yes	$5,500,000	Reconstruct N 4th Avenue from W Moore to Rees Avenue to minor arterial standards including sidewalks and a railroad crossing.
MM-14	Alder Street - Roosevelt to Brock IRRP	Multimodal	21	$5,250,000	$0		$5,250,000	TBD9030	City	Yes	$5,250,000	Roadway and utility improvements from Roosevelt St to Brock St. Work also includes new traffic signal or roundabout at Roosevelt Street.
MM-15	Berney Drive	Multimodal	17	$3,800,000	$600,000	800 feet on southwest side north of Pleasant Street	$3,200,000		City, Development		$0	Widen Berney Dr for bike lanes. Add sidewalks from Russell Creek Rd to UGA south of Delmont Pl

MM-16	Boyer Avenue Bike Boulevard	Multimodal	17	$450,000	$0		$450,000		City		$0	Reconstruct Boyer Avenue and create a bike route connecting downtown to Mill Creek Trail
MM-17	Cottonwood Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities	Multimodal	20	$650,000	$325,000	400 feet north of Canberra Drive on both sides	$325,000		City, Development	Yes	$325,000	Extend sidewalk, trail, and bike lanes from Austin Street to Kendall Road, and widen roadway.
MM-18	Edison Trail	Multimodal	19	$2,200,000	$0		$2,200,000		City	Yes	$2,200,000	Connect Edison Elementary School to Cambridge Dr through bike lanes and/or trail
MM-19	Fern Avenue	Multimodal	20	$4,650,000	$0		$4,650,000		City	Yes	$4,650,000	Install sidewalks on east side of Fern Ave to close gaps
MM-20	Highway 12 Trail	Multimodal	18	$550,000	$0		$550,000		City, WSDOT		$0	Trail Rehabilitation
MM-21	Main/Palouse/ Boyer	Multimodal	14	$700,000	$0		$700,000	2028-XX	City	Yes	$700,000	Modify traffic signal to include audible pedestrian signal
MM-22	Rees and Sumach Sidewalks	Multimodal	18	$1,000,000	$0		$1,000,000		City		$0	Installation of sidewalk and curb/gutter on Sumach Street and Rees Avenue from DeSales High School to Memorial Pool.
MM-23	Mill Creek Bike Path Repaving	Multimodal	14	$200,000	$0		$200,000		City		$0	Bike path repaving to improve pavement conditions
MM-24	Tausick Way Trail Crossing (Mill Creek Bridge)	Multimodal	18	$400,000	$0		$400,000		City		$0	Enhance trail crossing at Tausick Way. To be completed as part of Alder-Tausick preservation project.

MM-25	Municipal Golf Course Trail	Multimodal	11	$9,050,000	$3,000,000	Rail to trail through Veterans Memorial Golf Course	$6,050,000		City, Development		$0	Construct trail
MM-26	Reser Road	Multimodal	18	$4,550,000	$0		$4,550,000		City		$0	Improve Reser Road from Wilbur Avenue to School Avenue to minor arterial standards. This will be a joint City/County project.
MM-27	Roosevelt Street	Multimodal	18	$1,150,000	$0		$1,150,000		City		$0	Reconstruct roadway and extend bike lanes
MM-28	Avery Street	Multimodal	18	$1,000,000	$250,000	850 feet on east side of Avery Street north of Electric Avenue; 200 feet on west side of Avery	$750,000		City, Development		$0	Improve Avery Street north of Rose Street.
MM-29	Cherokee Street	Multimodal	19	$1,050,000	$0		$1,050,000		City	Yes	$1,050,000	Reconstruct Cherokee Street from 2nd Avenue to 3rd Avenue to collector standards including sidewalks.
MM-30	Clinton Street	Multimodal	24	$8,650,000	$605,000	700 feet between US12 and	$8,045,000	IRRP027	City, WSDOT, Development	Yes	$8,045,000	Improve Clinton St to minor arterial standards

						Sumach St on west side						
MM-31	Dell Avenue	Multimodal	31	$4,050,000	$0		$4,050,000		City	Yes	$4,050,000	A Port of Walla Walla sponsored project to create a new commercial district on Dell Avenue from 13th Avenue to the west city limits. This project will provide a new streetscape which will complement the 13th Avenue ARRA improvements.
MM-32	Electric Avenue	Multimodal	26	$7,900,000	$7,900,000		$0		City, Development	Yes	$0	Extend Electric Avenue from Myra Road to Woodland Avenue to collector standards, consistent with the Myra Road sub-area master plan.
MM-33	Melrose Street	Multimodal	28	$8,350,000	$1,250,000	1400 feet east of Frontier Street on north side of Melrose Street	$7,100,000		City, Development	Yes	$7,100,000	Reconstruct Melrose Street from Wilbur Avenue to Airport Road to minor arterial standards, including frontage improvements.
MM-34	Orchard Street	Multimodal	23	$3,900,000	$0		$3,900,000		City	Yes	$3,900,000	Upgrade to collector standards
MM-35	Clinton Street/ Highway 12 Interchange	Multimodal	31	$75,000,000	$0		$75,000,000	ST2411	WSDOT, City		$0	Grade separated interchange to improve north-south connections, including multimodal connections

MM-36	Wilbur Avenue	Multimodal	20	$3,700,000	$0		$3,700,000	2027-XX	City	Yes	$3,700,000	Improve Wilbur Avenue to minor arterial standards from approximately Pleasant Street to Bryant Avenue. This would be a joint City/County project.
MM-37	Sumach Street IRRP	Multimodal	18	$3,000,000	$1,100,000	1200 feet on south side of Sumach Street; 800 fee on north side	$1,900,000		City, Development		$0	Full roadway and utility improvements on Sumach Street from Clinton Street to East end of road.
MM-38	Village Way Improvements	Multimodal	21	$2,150,000	$195,000	350 feet on northwest side	$1,955,000		City, Development	Yes	$1,955,000	Improve Village Way from Plaza Way to the end, including new sidewalks.
MM-39	Chase Avenue Reconstruction	Multimodal	24	$5,900,000	$0		$5,900,000		City	Yes	$5,900,000	Reconstruct Chase Avenue from Birch Street to Orchard Street to collector standards including sidewalks.
MM-40	Alder and Main Re-striping	Multimodal	11	$200,000	$0		$200,000	2031-XX	City	Yes	$200,000	Re-stripe Alder Street and Main Street to 2 lane roads with angled parking from 5th Avenue and 6th Avenue to 9th Avenue.
MM-41	Mill Creek Trail Repave and Improvements	Multimodal	14	$3,600,000	$0		$3,600,000		City		$0	Repave and widen the Mill Creek Trail from Cambridge Street to Tausick Way. Improve accessibility to the trail from the west end.

MM-42	Washington Park Bike Trail	Multimodal	13	$2,350,000	$0		$2,350,000		City		$0	A BPAC sponsored project to construct a bike trail through Washington Park from 9th Avenue to 13th Avenue.
MM-43	Fort Walla Walla Bicycle Links	Multimodal	13		$0		$0		City		$0	A BPAC sponsored project to construct bike links to Fort Walla Walla from The Dalles Military Road, Myra Road and Chestnut Street.
MM-44	Bridge Street Sidewalk Replacement	Multimodal	19	$1,050,000	$0		$1,050,000		City	Yes	$1,050,000	Replace the ADA deficient and deteriorating sidewalks north of Pioneer Middle School.
MM-45	Park Street Bike and Pedestrian Improvements	Multimodal	21	$2,700,000	$0		$2,700,000		City	Yes	$2,700,000	Improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on Park Street from Rees to Alder Street.
MM-46	Pine Street Sidewalk Infill	Multimodal	21	$1,600,000	$0		$1,600,000		City	Yes	$1,600,000	Sidewalk infill along Pine Street where needed.
MM-47	Odd Fellows Home Area - Boyer Avenue - Clinton Avenue	Multimodal	19	$350,000	$0		$350,000		City	Yes	$350,000	ADA accessibility upgrades.
MM-48	Rees/Par 72 Bike and Pedestrian Enhancements	Multimodal	17	$500,000	$0		$500,000		City		$0	Improve pedestrian accessibility to the crossing between the multi-use path and the sidewalks on Rees Avenue.
MM-49	Garrison Village Way at Myra Road Intersection Improvements	Multimodal	19		$0		$0		City		$0	Improve pedestrian crossing safety at the intersection of Myra Road and Garrison Village Way/Fort Walla Walla Entrance.

MM-50	DeSales School Zone Safety Enhancements	Multimodal	19	$400,000	$0		$400,000		City	Yes	$400,000	Improve pedestrian crossing safety near DeSales Catholic High School.
MM-51	Stevens Street Sidewalks	Multimodal	18	$1,150,000	$350,000	600 feet on west side north of Lodge Drive	$800,000		City, Development		$0	Sidewalk infill from Tietan Street to Lodge Drive.
MM-52	Fern Avenue Pedestrian Bridge	Multimodal	13	$750,000	$0		$750,000	TBD - Grant Dependent	City	Yes	$750,000	Construct a pedestrian bridge over Caldwell Creek connecting Fern Avenue and Klingman Court.
MM-53	Tietan Street Sidewalks - 4th to Plaza	Multimodal	21	$1,800,000	$450,000	430 feet on south side; 550 feet on north side west of 4th Avenue	$1,350,000		City, Development	Yes	$1,350,000	Install new sidewalk, ADA ramps, curb and gutter, illumination, and stormwater improvements.
NR-01	Myra Road Extension (North)	New Roadway	12	$20,800,000	$20,800,000	Entire project length	$0		City, Development, WSDOT	Yes	$0	Extend Myra Rd as a principal arterial connection to SR 125
NR-02	Wilbur Avenue Extension (South)	New Roadway	21	$10,250,000	$5,000,000	Will be accomplished through some combination of future City/Cou	$5,250,000		City, Development, County		$0	Extend and improve Wilbur Avenue to minor arterial standards from Bryant Avenue to Reser Road. This will be a joint City/County project and will require a bridge over Yellowhawk creek.

						nty partners hips and/or construc ted as part of future develop ment.						
NR-03	Futura Road Extension	New Roadway	19	$5,000,000	$5,000,000	1500 feet west of Myra Road on both sides	$0		City, Developm ent	Yes	$0	Construct a new road from Myra Road to Avery Street to collector standards in compliance with the Myra Road sub-area master plan.
SA-01	Middle Waitsburg Road/Blue Mountain Drive	Safety	14	$1,050,000	$0		$1,050,000		City		$0	Reconfigure the existing intersection and surrounding roadways to improve traffic flow and safety.
SA-02	Pine Street	Safety	16	$2,100,000	$0		$2,100,000		City		$0	Improve safety, capacity and freight mobility along W Pine St
			Total Cost	**$447,490,000**						**Total Cost**	**$164,395,000**	



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