

Housing

Introduction

This chapter, including related goals, policies and programs, is an important part of Cheney’s Comprehensive Plan, as housing costs and quality play a strong role in the type of jobs residents are required to hold, the type of companies willing to establish businesses in Cheney, help determine the tax base for City services – and of course influence the character of the city itself. The following pages contain an overview of Cheney’s existing housing conditions, a description of the City’s housing strategy, and a goal and policy framework focused on housing considerations.

Though the following pages may effectively sort, introduce, and present those goals and policies related to housing, the entirety of Cheney’s goal and policy framework, presented in Appendix B, should be considered the plan’s over-arching source.



Figure 8.01 - Cheney’s traditional neighborhood fabric is well- suited to diverse housing types - but related codes, including allowed use, setbacks and form requirements are essential for the type of compatible, quality development Cheney residents envision. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

This element, together with other relevant policies contained in this plan, provide a type of “road map” for the City in ensuring that the quality, range and availability of housing provided in Cheney meets the community’s needs and objectives.

Existing Conditions

The layout of a community’s neighborhoods and the associated mix of housing types that make them up exert a considerable influence on the community’s character and sense of place.

The Cheney community has grown steadily since its incorporation in the late 1800s. Growth was slower in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1980s, but the last decade has seen dramatic growth, especially in multi-dwelling residences. Today,

Cheney encompasses 4.4 square miles and houses 11,400 individuals in over 4,000 households, dormitories, fraternities, sororities, and senior living centers. The population of Cheney has been growing at a rate of one percent to four percent a year since the year 2000.

As one of the older cities in all of Spokane County, Cheney’s inventory of housing represents many different eras. The oldest of Cheney’s informal neighborhoods is the original “triangle” surrounding downtown. The next neighborhood to develop was to the north, generally between Elm Street and Oakland Street. During the 1960s and 1970s, Cheney expanded to the southwest, creating those neighborhoods generally west of Washington Street. At the same time, neighborhoods just north of Oakland Street were developing. Finally, the 1990s and 2000s have seen most development happen on the north side of town, creating Golden Hills, The Orchards, Avalon, Parkside, and Hampton Commons. This north side development also included many large apartment complexes. Currently, a new housing development is being contemplated in southeast Cheney, with plans for over 1,300 units.

Housing Types

A variety of housing types exist in the city of Cheney. In addition to the typical single-family homes and multi-family apartment buildings, Eastern Washington University provides dormitory housing and fosters a small fraternity and sorority district near the campus. Other options, such as town home, cottage-style, or accessory housing, are fairly limited. From Table 8.1, approximately 50% of Cheney’s housing units are multi-family, with 37% detached single-family and 7% attached single-family (duplex).

Table 8.02 - Total housing units by type

Year	Single-Family	Duplex	Multi-Family	Total
2014	8	4	0	12
2015	27	4	206	237
2016	24	18	192	234
Total	59	26	398	483

Cheney has a limited number of subsidized apartments. There are a total of 185 subsidized units in three complexes across town.

Eastern Washington University provides dormitories for a maximum of 2253 students in 8 buildings. Seven of these buildings are located in the north portion of campus. One building, Brewster Hall, is a mixed-use facility located in downtown Cheney. In addition to dormitories, the university provides apartments for graduate students and students with families. These apartments are located on the south end of campus.

The only senior housing in Cheney at this time is the Cheney Care Center which provides a nursing home for 54 people, assisted living for 32 people and independent apartment living for a maximum of 60 seniors. All of the facilities are located on a single campus, which is adjacent to contiguous vacant parcels along North 6th Street.

Housing Issues

Housing Balance

Within the last decade, the development of many new large-format multifamily developments have begun to pressure existing neighborhoods and on homes converted to rental use. In fact, many in the Cheney community have voiced concern over the single-family/multi-family balance of the city. As can be seen in Table 8.02, the number of multi-

family units has increased dramatically in the last eight years.

Rental Homes

As a city that is home to a regional university, Cheney's housing market is influenced by the presence of a large number of students and staff seeking housing. EWU does provide a significant amount of on and off-campus housing, with the requirement for freshman to live on campus their first year. There is increasing concern by residents that the demand for housing by the student population is spreading through traditional single-family neighborhoods. This, coupled with a projected 20% increase in enrollment over the next twenty years, could cause increased pressure unless City/EWU policies are developed to address this.

Related concerns mentioned by residents concern the over-occupancy of rental homes. When large numbers of unrelated individuals live together in a single-family home, noise, poor maintenance, social disconnectedness and other issues often conflict with surrounding owner-occupied units. In the short term, such issues can be a nuisance; long-term, they may destabilize, devalue and discourage neighborhood investment.

Staff Exodus

Cheney's ability to attract and house EWU staff and their families is a major concern. Over the past four decades, the percentage of EWU professional staff and instructors living in Cheney has dropped from 60% to less than 40%. This loss impacts Cheney's economy of course, but it also harms the city in other ways, including the relative vitality of social, civic and cultural endeavors, the degree of investment in new or existing neighborhoods, and the number of services able to survive within City limits. Increasingly, workers - whether employed by the University or not - have the freedom to

choose where they live, commuting or telecommuting as needed. Making Cheney as attractive, engaging and livable as possible, by means covered in the range of policies provided in this plan, should begin to reverse this trend.



Figure 8.02 - An increased variety of housing types, suited to a variety of age groups, lifestyles and levels of income, are seen as part of Cheney's future. This Spokane row-house provides a good example of one such type. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

The Way Forward

Data and input from the community indicate that neighborhood character needs to be preserved, protected, and expanded. Preferences are that all new housing, whether single-family or multi-family, should complement existing patterns and scale. Recent growth of multi-family housing, especially as large-scale, dedicated blocks of units, is beginning to overwhelm the community's preferred balance, suggesting that more integrated, modestly-scaled approaches be taken in the future. This plan's land use policies envision little or no expansion of multi-family

designations, but encourage far more compatible infill and new mixed-use development. To ensure that any new, higher-density growth does not compromise existing neighborhoods, the city should ensure appropriate transitions between lower and higher densities.

EWU has and will continue to play a major role in the health and vitality of Cheney, and regarding housing (along with nearly all policy categories), the City must commit to work with the University in addressing its goals. Indeed, it should be recognized that City goals and University goals are often one and the same - in the case of staff housing, for instance, growing Cheney as a place where EWU professionals prefer to live helps the University attract and retain ever more qualified staff.

Current conditions for housing development have been impacted by the recent economic downturn in 2008. Regardless, it is essential that current and future Cheney residents have access to an affordable and broad range of housing options over the next twenty years. These facts dovetail well with public's expressed desire and need for a variety of housing options, though they may also require a change from current policies and regulations that tend to focus housing options toward large-lot single family units, duplexes, or multifamily apartments. As expressed in the vision, a Cheney population diversified by income, family living arrangements and housing preferences will require housing and land use policies that encourage more variety. The goals, policies and programs of this chapter reflect this, and have been developed with an understanding that just as a home is likely the most significant investment a person will make in their lifetime, the housing stock of a community, shaped in part by policy, is as critical to the life of a city.

Additional GMA-compliant technical data related to housing may be found in Appendix C.

Policy Overview

The housing-related goals, policies and programs contained in this chapter cover topics, themes and objectives including:

- Ensuring a vital, resilient economy for Cheney, helping make housing affordable for residents
- Maintaining the scale and improving the vitality of Cheney's neighborhoods
- Retaining Cheney's "small-town" feel
- Updating the City's regulatory documents, including those related to provision of diverse housing types
- Maximizing opportunity/growing a collaborative relationship between Cheney and EWU
- Expanding and developing mixed-use areas in Cheney
- Encouraging infill opportunities within existing City limits
- Improving the walkability of Cheney, helping make neighborhoods more vital and reducing transportation costs to residents.

Programs included in this element include the development of a corridor plan for Highway 904, spurring mixed-use and higher-density housing in and near downtown; the development of an economic plan to boost job opportunities in Cheney, and the need to clarify and adopt a new annexation policy for the City.

Goal, Policy & Program Listing

Each of the goals, policies and programs contained in the following section have been selected from the entire matrix as closely associated with technology objectives, though there may be others arguably key to the success of community goals not under this heading. All are presented in the order in which they occur in the overall matrix, and do not necessarily reflect plan or City priorities. Each goal is followed by a brief “discussion” paragraph expanding on the origins, objectives and overall benefits associated with it. Similarly, each policy is followed by discussion text, but also includes a paragraph entitled “direction,” which outlines one or more ways the policy might be implemented. Program listings in this and other elements do not include the estimated timeline or likely agencies to be involved in their completion; for this level of program detail, refer to Table 13.02 in the Implementation element.

Electronic versions of the matrix are hyperlinked to Appendix B for review and cross-referencing purposes.

Goals, Policies & Programs

Economic Development Related Goals

- Grow and sustain a balanced, resilient economy for Cheney, providing community prosperity and fiscal health. (G.01)

Discussion: In seeking long-term prosperity, residents understand the need to maintain economic diversity - capitalizing on the presence of Eastern Washington University as well as developing a strong business base independent of the school. Reflecting these values, this plan supports strategies that build and sustain a diverse, balanced economic base, retain existing quality of life assets, and help keep Cheney prosperous.

- Continue Cheney's relationship with Eastern Washington University, improving economic, educational, facility and cultural opportunities for all. (G.02)

Background: Cheney owes much of its success to the presence of Eastern Washington University, but residents sense that greater opportunities exist for both City and school, given greater collaboration. Throughout the process, participants noted the need to coordinate curricula with economic initiatives, to plan infrastructure and facilities in ways that achieve broader goals, and to help integrate educational and cultural offerings into what residents perceive as part of Cheney life. As a result, this plan includes goals, policies and programs to help the City and the EWU establish and maintain a more dynamic partnership.

- Sustain downtown as the 'heart' of Cheney, enhancing its commercial, service and civic vitality. (G.04)

Background: In preparing this plan, residents made it clear that downtown is still considered the 'heart' of Cheney. Keeping downtown vital requires supporting its numerous and necessary functions, including a strong commercial base, community services, public space access and proximate housing options. This plan provides policies and programs that help foster an environment in which downtown can thrive, in turn aiding the attractiveness, efficiency and value of the entire community.

- Keep Cheney's neighborhoods safe, vital, and attractive. (G.05)

Background: Residents prize the overall scale and small-town feel of Cheney neighborhoods, and wish to ensure their neighborhoods are kept safe, active and aesthetically pleasing. Supporting this goal, a diverse set of policies have been provided, including encouraging pedestrian-friendly development, diversity in housing types, and possible future mixed use or activity centers.

- Plan for and establish types and quantities of land uses in Cheney supporting community needs and the City’s long-term sustainability. (G.07)

Background: Towns and cities exercise considerable influence over land use, in turn influencing the type and character of development, patterns of growth, and even the net financial impact of growth on municipal coffers. Consequently, this plan supports the allocation of land use types and areas sufficient to achieve overall plan objectives.

- Grow and maintain Cheney as a self-reliant community, aiding the provision of necessary health, retail and service needs for citizens. (G.13)

Background: Cheney’s history and small-town nature is rooted in its independence and self-reliance. Essential goods and services, employment, social activities, and primary and secondary education have always been available within City boundaries. In recent years, transportation and other factors have enabled residents to seek specialized services and establish residence well outside the City, to the point where concern now exists that Cheney is becoming a ‘bedroom community.’ This goal urges the City to develop and enact strategies that help maintain the provision of essential health, retail and service needs within Cheney.

- Maintain, update, coordinate and implement Cheney’s policy and regulatory documents. (G.14)

Background: Cheney’s greatest successes have come when united under a shared vision, leaders and citizens have come together to address objectives. This goal serves to recognize and continue Cheney’s tradition of community planning and implementation, carrying it beyond more immediate, reactive efforts to the establishment and regular re-evaluation of long-range civic objectives. This plan is configured to aid periodic updates, and encourages future planning work for specific City departments, topical needs or neighborhoods. Cheney exists in a far more dynamic, diverse environment than at any time in the past, and this trend is likely to continue. Good planning – and just as important, implementation – is key to maintaining Cheney’s essential qualities over time.

- Maintain and improve Cheney’s small-town scale, charm and aesthetic beauty. (G.16)

Background: Whether newly-arrived or long-term, residents of Cheney frequently cite the community’s ‘small-town charm,’ its modest size, and its setting between rich agricultural lands and unique lake and channeled scabland areas as highly attractive features. Due to this, many of the goals, policies and programs contained in this plan help retain the City’s overall scale while providing for ample growth; support the development of cultural features and activities, and direct land use decisions reducing development pressures in undeveloped or highly rural areas.

Housing & Related Policies

- (P.01) Designate and service a steady and reliable supply of land within the City’s UGA, supporting overall plan objectives.

Discussion: Land use determinations exercise considerable influence over the health, quality and safety of cities, influencing the type and character of development, patterns of growth, even the net financial impact of growth on municipal budgets. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including maintaining land use areas matching plan objectives and community need; coordinating with Spokane County and neighboring municipalities on UGA expansion, if required.

- (P.02) Expand the number of local living-wage jobs.

Discussion: Cheney’s long-term vision includes having those employed in the city also live in the city, maintaining Cheney’s self-contained, self-reliant image. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including efforts to recruit well-paying jobs; strategic provision of infrastructure; efforts to reduce housing and other living costs in Cheney.

- (P.09) Expand opportunities for Eastern Washington University students to find employment and remain in Cheney after graduation.

Discussion: Strong economies rely on a well-trained workforce, and the presence of EWU provides Cheney with tremendous opportunities to strengthen its economy. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including efforts improving job opportunities during and after graduation for EWU students - leveraging student knowledge, energy and expertise toward local business growth.

- (P.12) Coordinate all long-range planning efforts between the City and Eastern Washington University.

Discussion: Community and work groups emphasized the need for the City and EWU to cooperate to position Cheney among the best places to live and do business in the Inland Northwest. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including City and EWU efforts to continue a strong partnership.

- (P.16) Designate land uses within City and UGA limits that preserve downtown as Cheney’s essential and defining commercial center.

Discussion: Downtown is still seen by most as the ‘heart and soul’ of the community, and residents hope to improve downtown’s civic and commercial vitality. Cheney has many tools at its disposal to improve – or damage – the vitality of its downtown, but one of the most powerful involves land use designations within its jurisdiction. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including ongoing land use decisions that sustain downtown as the commercial and cultural heart of Cheney.

- (P.17) Encourage compatible mixed-use development on vacant or under-utilized sites in downtown Cheney.

Discussion: Mixed-use development helps bring activity and energy to targeted areas of the city, and in terms of service cost per acre, is one of the most efficient development patterns known. Expanded use options could increase market absorption of vacant and under-utilized land or functionally obsolete buildings. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including expanding use options for vacant or under-utilized properties; developing or refining code or other mechanisms to ensure compatibility with neighboring development.

- (P.18) Encourage residential development on upper floors in existing downtown buildings.

Discussion: Residents help make ground-floor commerce far more viable, providing a built-in customer base for day-to-day needs and services. A majority of plan participants expressed support for policies to encourage the establishment of a resident population living in the downtown area. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including the development of code provisions; consideration of targeted incentives supporting upper-floor residential downtown.

- (P.21) Support the preservation, restoration, and adaptive reuse of historic homes, buildings, and properties in Cheney.

Discussion: As a city that is over 125 years old, Cheney has a diverse collection of buildings that enhance its identity and add to its overall attractiveness. Such properties boost visitor impressions, provide cultural backdrop, and in the case of adaptive reuse, conserve resources. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including working to preserve properties associated with historic events or individuals, or are fine examples of a particular style; City support, where possible, toward the adaptive re-use of landmarks like the flour mills, Fisher High School, and the Northern Pacific Depot.

- (P.24) Support the development of compatible infill housing in Cheney neighborhoods.

Discussion: The community's overall objective to conserve and sustain the qualities enjoyed by residents today mandates that as growth occurs, it generally does so within City limits, including in existing neighborhoods. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including developing and maintaining land use and code provisions allowing infill housing types; establishment of codes ensuring such development is compatible with neighborhoods; consideration of tax credit or other incentives to spur desired investment; exploring what makes neighborhoods "great places" and adopting appropriate standards that are flexible, consistent and straightforward yet achieve quality design.

- (P.25) Support the development of compatible neighborhood mixed-use and civic activity centers, where suitable.

Discussion: Fulfilling the practical needs of residents within a convenient walking distance suggests the creation or revitalization of smaller, mixed-use ‘centers’ located in prominent, accessible points in the community. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including developing and maintaining land use and code provisions allowing mixed-use centers; establishment of codes ensuring such development is compatible with neighborhoods; consideration of tax credit or other incentives to spur desired investment.

- (P.26) Encourage a wide variety of residential building types in neighborhoods, consistent with community needs and plan objectives.

Discussion: Multiple housing types aid the type of efficiency, walkability, affordability and demographic diversity residents hope to foster in Cheney. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including code updates to allow for a continuum of housing opportunities for residents; establishment of codes ensuring such development is compatible with neighborhoods; consideration of tax credit or other incentives to spur desired investment.

- (P.27) Facilitate the provision of housing affordable to local wage-earners, and compatible with Cheney’s existing neighborhoods.

Discussion: Cheney’s economic vision includes residents living and working in the city, and the provision of affordable housing is an essential part of that objective. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including developing and maintaining land use and code provisions allowing a variety of housing types; consideration of tax credit or other incentives to spur low-income through moderate-income housing construction; consideration of land bank or other solutions reducing owner cost.

- (P.28) Support increased rates of resident home ownership in Cheney.

Discussion: The importance of home ownership as a way of improving individual household and societal standards of living has long been recognized. It can act as a powerful economic stimulus, benefit neighborhoods, and can raise property values. Plan participants expressed strong support for increased in-home ownership rates over the plan’s lifetime. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including developing and maintaining land use and code provisions allowing infill housing types; consideration of tax credit or other incentives to spur low-income through moderate-income housing construction; consideration of land bank or other solutions reducing owner cost.

- (P.29) Coordinate land uses, transportation access, and civic amenities between new and existing neighboring development.

Discussion: As the community grows and develops, it is essential that the city remain cohesive and well-connected - designed with enough foresight to support overall community value, service efficiencies, and ensure viable transportation options. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including review and update of applicable codes; maintenance and coordination of transportation and land use objectives; investment in civic amenities that support interconnected, efficient development patterns.

- (P.30) Ensure that new building and renovation efforts in Cheney are compatible with the City’s overall scale, architectural, transportation and public space objectives.

Discussion: New development, whether infill, greenfield or renovation, needs to occur respecting community objectives as well as private ones, respecting the surrounding community while allowing new development to be successful and profitable. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including maintenance and implementation of related transportation, service and parks plans; updates to codes respecting local character, building scale, size and form; exploring what makes neighborhoods “great places” and adopting appropriate standards that are flexible, consistent and straightforward, yet achieve quality design.

- (P.31) Promote land use and growth patterns that ensure all residences are within walking distance of civic and service amenities.

Discussion: Cheney’s vision includes growth patterns that are more interconnected and walkable, providing multiple advantages including resident convenience, greater mobility and service efficiencies. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including enacting land use and transportation policies that encourage the provision of services within walking distance of residents; working to identify and locate areas well- suited for neighborhood-scale services; working to improve existing proximate service areas.

- (P.38) Maintain land use strategies favoring growth within the existing urbanized area over development on the perimeter, promoting infill, limiting sprawl and helping the City provide affordable services.

Discussion: Growth patterns have significant implications in terms of community character, mobility, land use, livability, and the cost of service provision. Through the planning process, participants urged the City to promote growth and infill within existing urbanized areas. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including supporting land use actions; collaboration with Spokane County helping reduce development pressures within and near Cheney’s UGA.

- (P.48) Acquire, develop and maintain neighborhood parks in new and existing neighborhoods in accordance with adopted LOS standards.

Discussion: As new neighborhoods emerge, residents want neighborhood parks to be included, and want existing parks to be at least as well-maintained as they are today. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including consideration of park dedication fees for acquisition; consideration of new development requirements for park land development; continued updates and implementation of parks planning.

- (P.53) Budget to implement plans and implementing programs adopted or supported by the City.

Discussion: Many participants felt the City has a poor track record with long-range planning, often neglecting to implement or budget for planned recommendations. This policy establishes the basis for Cheney to implement plans and programs developed, adopted or supported by the City. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including ongoing work and collaboration by department heads, the City Administrator and City Council to appropriate necessary funds to invest in supported programs.

- (P.58) Maintain consistency between City planning and code documents.

Discussion: Comprehensive plans establish policy supporting long-range community vision. As essential tools to implement policy, development regulations and other municipal codes must be reviewed and updated to support plan policy. In addition, cross-consistency helps streamline development permitting and ensures community support for proposals. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including updating and maintaining consistency between City plan documents and applicable codes.

- (P.65) Consider incentives for sustainable or ‘green’ building design, practices and construction.

Discussion: Wise and conservative use of resources, regardless of supply, is an important way communities can improve their own long-term health and ensure the availability of resources in the future. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including the promotion of “green” building design and construction, possibly including LEED standards or certification; consideration of economic development strategies attracting green businesses; enactment of City-specific conservation goals.

- (P.77) Promote improved maintenance of both public and private property across the city.

Discussion: Safe, healthy and sanitary housing is a right everyone should enjoy. When owners of properties fail to provide preventative maintenance, the City is obligated to act to protect neighborhoods and surrounding property owners. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including development of strong approaches to deal with properties found in poor condition, possibly through building codes, property maintenance codes or other means; increase in staff resources for enforcement.

Housing & Related Programs

- (PR.01) Code Update – Review and update the City’s zoning and development regulations as necessary to support the objectives of the comprehensive plan, including: the streamlining and simplification of permitting.
- (PR.02) 904 Corridor Plan/Design – City officials should work with WSDOT to study the SR 904 corridor (between I-90 and Mullinix Road) using least cost planning and practical design approaches. The emphasis of this corridor analysis should be on sustainable safety and practical mobility solutions while fostering the local economy. Based on the findings of this study and WSDOT concurrence on the identified practical solutions, the City could pursue design and funding of the improvements. This is in support of the City’s comprehensive plan goals and SRTC Horizon 2040.
- (PR.08) Annexation Policy – Draft and adopt an annexation policy to provide clear criteria and performance measures for considering and approving annexation requests.
- (PR.09) Citizen Involvement Strategy – Draft and adopt a process that ensures early and continuing citizen and neighborhood participation in land use planning.

- (PR.10) Historic Preservation Incentives – Establish strategies and incentives as appropriate to encourage the preservation of the community’s historic structures and spaces.
- (PR.12) Progress Measures - Develop community benchmarks, indicators or performance measures to evaluate the comprehensive plan’s success in goal achievement and policy implementation, and to guide its adaptation to new circumstances as conditions change.
- (PR.13) Planning Budget – Establish and budget for a seven-year review cycle for Cheney’s comprehensive plan.
- (PR.14) Impact Fees – Consideration of an Impact Fee ordinance modification, ensuring fees and dedications are based on system improvements necessary to support proposed development, will not exceed the costs of necessary system improvements, and will be used for system improvements to benefit the new development. Review impact fees as allowed through GMA.