

Housing

Introduction

This Housing Element seeks to improve the quantity, diversity and quality of housing options in Leavenworth by evaluating the existing housing conditions, reviewing projected housing needs, and implementing data-based housing tools. This Element also seeks to mitigate and reduce pressures of displacement and seek to ensure all have access to housing, regardless of income, race, or background.¹

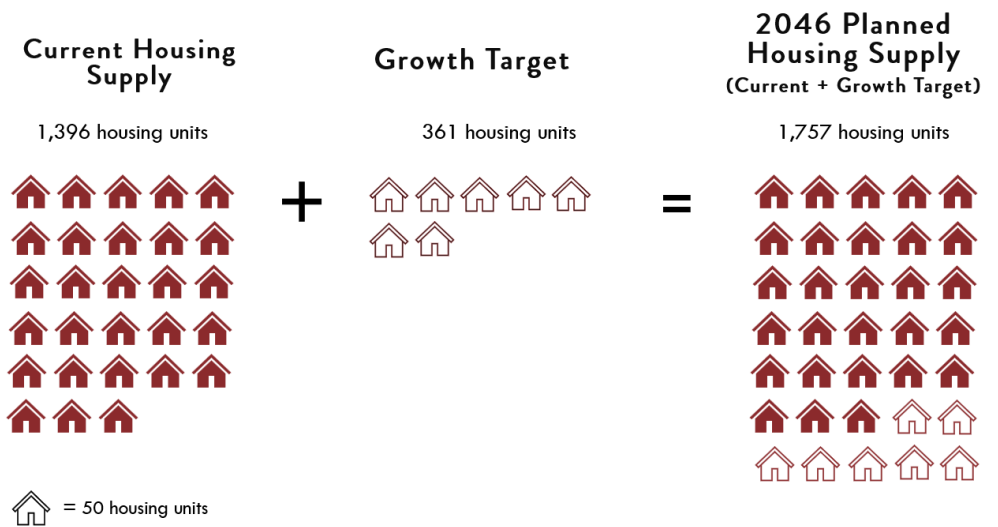
¹ RCW 36.70A.070(2)



Housing Context

Leavenworth had an estimated 1,396 housing units in 2023. Over half of these units were single-family homes.² Leavenworth must plan for an additional 361 housing units by 2046 according to its population allocation.³ The city’s Land Capacity Analysis estimates sufficient land and zoning to meet this housing goal across all income levels.

Figure 1: Housing Supply and Growth Target



Renters are more burdened by housing costs than owners in Leavenworth.

However, with Leavenworth’s vibrant local economy, housing demand is likely higher than its adopted target. In 2022, there were 2,376 jobs in the city. If the city were to provide housing for all of the workers within city limits, approximately 635 additional housing units would be needed.⁴ While not all workers may choose to live within city limits and some positions are seasonal, the goals and policies of the Housing Element place particular emphasis on workforce housing and providing workers with the option to live affordably within the city.

Housing prices for homebuyers provide a barrier. Leavenworth’s land values have increased 143% since 2010, compared to the city’s median household income, which has only increased 68%. The city should continue to allow and enable more housing ownership opportunities that are attainable to more income levels, such as smaller homes on smaller lots, middle housing types, condominiums, and unit lot subdivisions.

² 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04.

³ Chelan County Department of Community Development, 2026 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update Population Allocations, March 4, 2024.

⁴ This assumes 1.17 jobs per household.




Just under half of the city's households were renters in 2023. While rental data is limited relative to home value data, the city's Housing Action Plan notes that rents in the city were 6-8% higher than in other communities in the County. To advance the city's goal of providing both sufficient and affordable housing supply, the city should support zoning and development regulations that allow more rental opportunities and protect currently affordable rental units from being displaced in redevelopment or economic pressures.

MORE INFORMATION

Comprehensive Plan Appendices and the 2021 Housing Action Plan |
Visit: [City Website](#) and search [Housing Options](#)

Goals and Policies

Goals and policies with a mountain icon  contribute to the Climate Resilience Element.

Goal H 1. Enable and allow the availability and sufficient supply of housing affordable for all economic segments of the population.

Policy H 1.1. Promote and allow sufficient housing affordable and attainable for all income levels, particularly for low- (1-80% Average Median Income) and moderate-income (workforce, 80%- 120% AMI).

Policy H 1.2. Identify and remove zoning and development regulations that prevent housing types that are more affordable to lower incomes and the local workforce.

Policy H 1.3. Continue to allow and expand rental housing options, including multifamily housing, co-living, and moderate density housing types.

Policy H 1.4. Continue to allow single-family housing types while allowing greater flexibility for density, such as through Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

Policy H 1.5. Support moderate density housing types, including accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes and townhomes within all residential zones.

Policy H 1.6. Identify and reduce barriers to housing access to mitigate displacement pressures.

Policy H 1.7. Identify and remove barriers to housing access for all community members, with particular attention to policies, practices, or outcomes that result in racially disparate impacts.

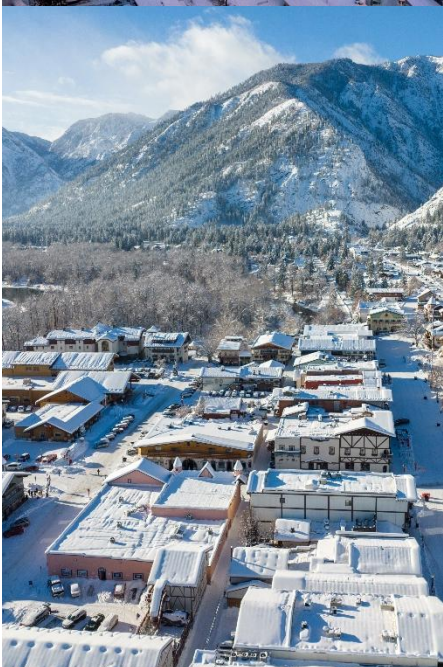
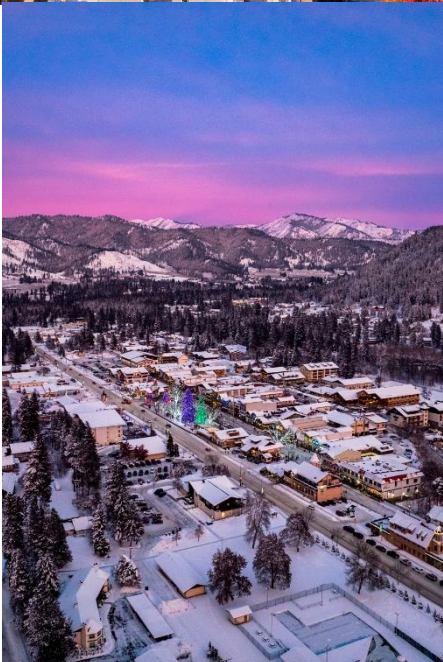
Goal H 2. Promote a diverse mix of residential densities and housing types through development regulations and flexibility.

Policy H 2.1. Encouraging cluster subdivisions cottage housing, and other zoning techniques that allow for density bonuses or other mechanisms for higher density and greater utilization of land.

- Policy H 2.2.** Consider and allow historic housing patterns that can accommodate more affordable housing types, such as smaller lots and co-living housing.
- Policy H 2.3.** Evaluate existing land uses by housing type and densities, and regulations, which may be presenting barriers to the development, to proactively address changes in housing needs for all economic segments of the population. Remove multifamily density barriers from existing development regulations.
- Policy H 2.4.** Allow and enable zoning tools, such as unit lot subdivision and small lot zoning in historic neighborhoods, to allow infill and housing on smaller lot sizes.
- Policy H 2.5.** Ensure that parking requirements, setbacks, height limits, and other development standards do not create unnecessary barriers to housing affordability.

Goal H 3. Continue providing incentives and subsidies and maintaining partnerships to support affordable housing, with particular attention to affordability for low- and workforce-income levels.

- Policy H 3.1.** Expand and strengthen partnerships with both non-profit organizations and private entities, such as Upper Valley MEND, to provide affordable housing.
- Policy H 3.2.** Maintain and monitor affordable housing incentive programs, such as the Muti-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) Program, density bonuses, and housing grant/loan programs, for effectiveness in providing affordable units.
- Policy H 3.3.** Regularly evaluate housing affordability incentives to ensure they are effective, financially feasible, and utilized by developers and property owners.
- Policy H 3.4.** Support regional and county programs and incentives to address affordable housing needs for low-income residents.
- Policy H 3.5.** Evaluate the financial feasibility of offering fee waivers for affordable housing.
- Policy H 3.6.** Prioritize housing incentives and strategies that address historic inequities and mitigate disproportionate impacts, including environmental justice concerns.



Goal H 4. Encourage and incentivize workforce housing so more people working in Leavenworth can live here.

- Policy H 4.1.** Provide a sufficient supply of entry-level housing options for workers. This may include traditional home rental options, such as apartments, and more innovative strategies such as co-living and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).
- Policy H 4.2.** Review and amend city development regulations to ensure they do not unnecessarily limit housing supply or undermine affordability, while maintaining Leavenworth’s historic residential scale, form, and character.
- Policy H 4.3.** Expand partnerships with local employers, businesses, and community organizations to identify and address barriers to the development and retention of affordable workforce housing.
- Policy H 4.4.** Pursue long-term affordable workforce housing solutions through partnerships with regional and local organizations, such as Upper Valley MEND, that mitigate high land costs, including community land trust models.
- Policy H 4.5.** Support and expand attainable homeownership opportunities beyond single-family detached homes, including duplexes, triplexes, condominiums, and unit lot subdivisions.

Goal H 5. Balance the need for additional housing to meet population and workforce growth while mitigating and preventing displacement of existing affordable housing options, particularly for sensitive groups and those with unique needs.

- Policy H 5.1.** Support regeneration/preservation/rehabilitation of existing housing by:
 - ◆ Considering permitting the division of existing structures in designated single-family neighborhoods.
 - ◆ Considering expansion of rehabilitation programs.
- Policy H 5.2.** Identify and remove barriers to site manufactured homes.
- Policy H 5.3.** Continue to support pre-approved housing plans for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

Policy H 5.4. Consider a program for low-income applicants to obtain pre-approved housing plans at a free or highly reduced price.

Policy H 5.5. Continue to monitor and protect housing supply from being converted into short-term rentals.

Policy H 5.6. Support development regulations for aging in place, including unit lot subdivision, ADUs, and provisions on accessibility and universal design.



Goal H 6. Ensure that residential development and redevelopment projects are resilient to the impacts of climate change.



Policy H 6.1. Prioritize the preservation and weatherization of housing in overburdened communities to protect residents from the harmful impacts of climate change and increase housing resilience.



Policy H 6.2. Support and promote programs to distribute cooling units and install heat pumps, prioritizing households or facilities with residents (e.g., low-income seniors) most vulnerable to extreme temperature events.



Policy H 6.3. Encourage the implementation of recommended actions in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) building standards, as prescribed by Chelan County Fire District 3.