

Land Use

Introduction

Over the last couple decades, Leavenworth's community has grown, both in commercial businesses and population. The community is required to plan for population growth under the Growth Management Act, with Chelan County assigning population projections for each planning cycle. The County and Cities have cooperatively determined population projections for the 20-year planning cycle¹.

The Land Use Element seeks to implement Leavenworth's Vision and accommodate projected growth. The city plans for this by designating and defining various future land uses: residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, and public. This Element establishes the City's Future Land Use Designations and Map, and sets goals and policies to balance growth with protecting agricultural, open space, and critical areas.

Appendix A provides more background analysis on population and employment growth estimates. Appendix B provides a detailed review of the existing land capacity.

¹ On December 15, 2015, the Board of County Commissioners adopted resolution 2015-112 using the OFM medium population projections.



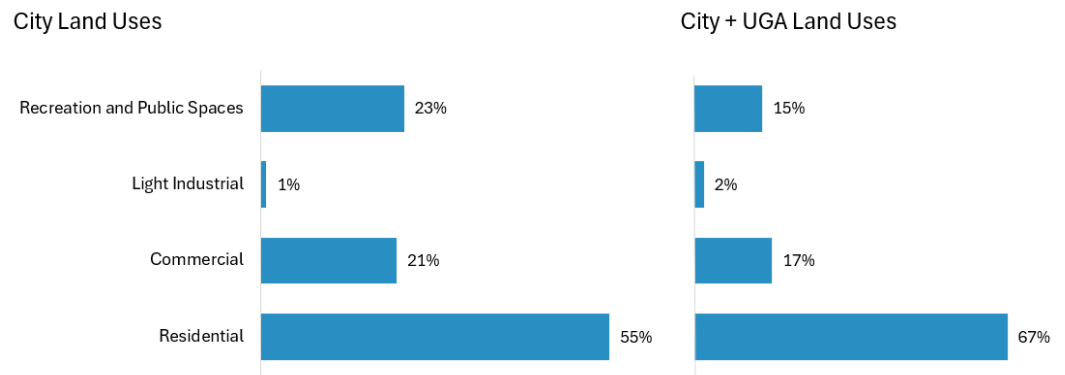
Land Use Context

EXISTING LAND USES

Leavenworth is just over one mile in diameter. It has a historical downtown core with newer businesses along the highway which bisects the town. The residential neighborhoods are located on both sides of the highway with the larger residential areas and schools to the north and smaller residential areas and the river to the south.

Residential uses account for more than half of Leavenworth's existing land use acreage. Commercial uses represent the second largest land use category, accounting for approximately 20 percent of the city's total land area. The remaining acreage consists primarily of lands designated for parks, recreation, and public facilities. This reflects the city's vibrant role as a regional destination for tourism and recreation.

Figure 1: Existing Land Uses



FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The city establishes Future Land Use Designations to implement its Vision and accommodate its population target of 3,539 people by 2046. These are then mapped in the city's Future Land Use Map, which provides the framework for the city's zoning and development regulations.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

- ◆ **Low Density Residential Designation** – This designation is for residential use types in rural areas or on parcels with limited infrastructure, limiting the maximum capacity of development. For example, this designation is appropriate for residential lands in the Urban Growth Area, or for parcels in the city that are still on septic systems. Typical densities are one to six dwelling units per acre.
- ◆ **Mixed Density Residential Designation** – This designation accommodates Leavenworth's housing stock through a variety of residential densities. For example, this designation may include infill housing types such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), middle housing, and workforce housing in Leavenworth's older neighborhoods while maintaining the existing

residential scale. It may also include areas zoned for multifamily development to ensure a diversity of housing options for renters. The intent of this designation is to provide flexibility in implementing a range of residential zoning classifications consistent with the City's vision. Depending on the adopted zoning standards, permitted housing types, and units per lot, typical residential densities may range from 6 to 20 dwelling units per acre.

NONRESIDENTIAL LAND USES

- ◆ **Commercial Designation** – This designation is intended to accommodate a variety of retail, lodging, and commercial services for both Leavenworth's community members and its visitors. These commercial services may support either pedestrian-oriented or auto-served commercial uses.
- ◆ **Light Industrial Designation** – This designation allows light manufacturing of goods and provides storage facilities.





PUBLIC USE DESIGNATIONS

- ◆ **Recreation Designation** – The Recreation Designation provides both passive and active recreation opportunities. It also provides for and protects open space and areas that provide ecological benefits and services by protecting vegetation and habitat.
- ◆ **Public Designation** – The Public Designation ensures and protects land uses that serve the public, such as educational institutions, municipal buildings like City Hall, or capital facilities, including fire, police, or pump stations.

Table 1: Future Land Use Designations and Implementing Zones


FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	IMPLEMENTING ZONING DISTRICTS
Low Density Residential	Residential 8 (R-8)
Mixed Density Residential	Residential Low 6 (RL6) Multi-Family (MF) Residential 3 (R-3)
Commercial	Central Commercial (CC) General Commercial (GC) Tourist Commercial (TC)
Light Industrial	Light Industrial (LI)
Recreation	Recreation (REC) Recreation Public (RP)
Public	Public (P)

MORE INFORMATION

Comprehensive Plan Appendices | Visit: [Leavenworth online GIS maps](#)

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Goals and Policies

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

Goal LU 1. Provide sufficient land area and densities to meet Leavenworth's projected needs for housing, employment and public facilities.

- Policy LU 1.1.** Permit new development where adequate public facilities and services can be provided.
- Policy LU 1.2.** Provide and promote needed facilities that serve the general public, such as facilities for education, libraries, parks, culture and recreation, police and fire, transportation and utilities. Ensure that these facilities are located in a manner that is compatible with growth patterns.
- Policy LU 1.3.** Through development regulations, maintain a process to site essential public facilities requiring consistency of the proposed facility with the Comprehensive Plan; emphasizes public involvement; identifies and minimizes adverse impacts; and promotes equitable location of these facilities throughout the city, county and state.
- Policy LU 1.4.** Prohibit extension of sanitary sewer services into unincorporated Chelan County except to resolve health and environmental emergencies.
- Policy LU 1.5.** Extend domestic water service to unincorporated Chelan County where the extension will not conflict with City current and future needs and does not encourage the conversion of agricultural or rural lands to urban densities.
- Policy LU 1.6.** Promote attractive, friendly, safe, quiet and diverse residential neighborhoods throughout the city, including low- and moderate-density to high-density residential neighborhoods.
- Policy LU 1.7.** Consider environmental limitations, infrastructure, and the Comprehensive Plan Vision when establishing residential densities and limits.

Goal LU 2. Implement Leavenworth’s vision, goals, and policies through the Future Land Use Map and development regulations.

Policy LU 2.1. Maintain development regulations that promote compatibility among land uses; retain desired neighborhood form and architectural scale; ensure adequate light, air, and open space; protect and enhance environmental quality; and manage potential impacts on public facilities and services. Development regulations should include features including, but not limited to, impervious surface area and lot coverage; building height, bulk, placement, and separation; development intensity; access and connectivity; and landscaping and open space.

Policy LU 2.2. Encourage infill development on suitable vacant parcels and redevelopment of underutilized parcels.


Policy LU 2.3. Promote compatibility between land uses and minimize land use conflicts when there is potential for adverse impacts on lower intensity or more sensitive uses by ensuring that uses or structures meet performance standards that limit adverse impacts, such as noise, vibration, smoke and fumes.

Policy LU 2.4. Acknowledge nonresidential uses in Residential zones, such as schools, religious facilities, home occupations, parks, open spaces, senior centers and day care centers. Maintain development standards which respect the scale and form of the neighborhood.

Policy LU 2.5. Encourage the development of commercial land in a manner which is complementary and compatible with adjacent land uses and the surrounding environment by providing well designed transition or buffer areas.

Policy LU 2.6. Support the continued use of nonconforming uses, particularly single-family residences.

Policy LU 2.7. Identify a suitable area to relocate/locate City, County, and State public works shops.

 **Policy LU 2.8.** Identify and protect open space, forested areas, and greenspaces in the City and urban growth areas that are important for wildlife, recreation, ecological services, climate resilience, and the community.



Mat Shop

Flax Shop

Candle Connection

Woolies

Wierhyge

Wine

PINE HILL

Flax Shop

Woolies

Wine

Wine

Wine



Goal LU 3. Promote high-quality and efficient use of buildable lands by balancing development regulation flexibility and predictability.



- Policy LU 3.1.** Allow clustering that preserves open space and administrative deviations for minor variations/ deviations from prescribed standards.
- Policy LU 3.2.** New residential developments should include provisions for paved streets, curbs, and gutters at the time of development and be consistent with City development standards.
- Policy LU 3.3.** The City may, at the discretion of the City Council, participate with the developer in the added cost of any improvements which further implements the Capital Facilities Plan. In addition, the City may, at the discretion of the City Council, develop a Local Improvement District (LID) for financing improvements in new subdivisions.
- Policy LU 3.4.** Encourage cluster developments with a mix of density and incentives, such as residential density bonuses, variations in allowed housing type, and/or flexibility in regulations.

Goal LU 4. Encourage the development of commercial and light industrial facilities/businesses.

- Policy LU 4.1.** Maintain and enhance a strong commercial core, based on the Old-World Bavarian Alpine Theme, which will be attractive to both tourists and residents.
- Policy LU 4.2.** Encourage land use distributions that provide opportunities for shops, services, recreation and access to healthy food sources within walking or bicycling distance of homes, workplaces and other gathering places.
- Policy LU 4.3.** Encourage a pattern of mixed-use development in the commercial areas with residential uses as supportive to the primary commercial uses.
- Policy LU 4.4.** In the Central and Tourist Commercial designations, allow light manufacturing activities which have a retail function and which are supportive of and supported by the allowed commercial uses, particularly those related to tourism.

Policy LU 4.5. In the General Commercial designations, allow light manufacturing activities and business office park uses which have a wholesale function, including warehousing and/or distribution activities. Require standards which place storage and service entrances in the least visible areas on the site, and prohibit outside storage of any product.

Policy LU 4.6. Encourage the appropriate location, density, and design of franchise businesses, especially those with drive-through facilities, in order to minimize traffic and access impacts on arterials and collector streets, reducing the proliferation of driveway access points, and ensuring site design that supports a sense of place and the economic vitality of the city.

Policy LU 4.7. Encourage mixed use developments in Commercial zones. Remove development regulations that create extra layers of review and barriers to mixed use.

Policy LU 4.8. Encourage separating manufacturing uses that create substantial noise or emissions to minimize impacts on incompatible uses.

Policy LU 4.9. Encourage accessory uses that support the primary use in the Light Industrial Designation, including food and beverage services and retail sales.



Goal LU 5. Preserve the natural environment and consider environmental justice, harnessing best available science, conservation and land management practices to create a resilient community.

Policy LU 5.1. Encourage use of best available science to protect and ensure the integrity of the natural environment. Promote use of techniques, such as clustering, conservation easements, land trusts, stormwater utility funds, conservation easements, sensitive site planning, best land management practices and flexible regulations, to help retain and protect open space, environmentally critical areas, and unique natural features by:

- ◆ Utilizing SEPA, the Shoreline Master Program, Flood Hazard Reduction, and Critical Areas policies and regulations to ensure protection of the natural

environment, critical resources, and habitat vital for safe species migration.

- ◆ Discouraging development in areas with natural hazard risk such as those susceptible to landslide, flood, avalanche, unstable soils, and excessive slopes.
- ◆ Continuing to implement the excavation and grading ordinance to regulate excavation, grading, and earthwork construction activities.
- ◆ Supporting the efforts of public and private organizations, whose goal is the preservation or conservation of critical areas.
- ◆ Allowing open space and recreational use of critical areas where such use does not negatively impact critical areas.
- ◆ Preserving and enhancing conservation or protection measures necessary for anadromous fisheries.

Policy LU 5.2. Preserve the City's dark skies through lighting regulations to support ecosystem health and the enjoyment of the community.

Policy LU 5.3. Where identified, address environmental justice concerns and reduce and eliminate disparities through land use policies and development regulations.

Policy LU 5.4. Consider and address potential and identified environmental health disparities through development regulations.

Policy LU 5.5. The goals and policies of the Leavenworth Shoreline Master Program, as amended, are considered an element of the City of Leavenworth Comprehensive Plan, and are included by reference as if fully set forth herein.



Policy LU 5.6. Incorporate drought and fire-resistant vegetation into landscaping requirements.






Goal LU 6. Protect and maintain air and water quality.

Policy LU 6.1. Adopt and implement stormwater and drainage standards within the corporate limits and UGA that protect water resources from impacts caused by development, utilizing source control, on-site detention, and treatment of storm water, where appropriate.

Policy LU 6.2. Review and monitor drainage, flooding, and stormwater for potential contamination, providing guidance for corrective actions and mitigation where necessary.



- Policy LU 6.3.** Encourage and support future and ongoing state water quality monitoring programs.
- Policy LU 6.4.** Support water quality education programs which inform local citizens and visitors about water quality issues.
- Policy LU 6.5.** Encourage appropriate regulatory agencies to pursue violators who illegally discharge waste into rivers, lakes, and streams.
- Policy LU 6.6.** Protect the availability of potable water by minimizing the potential for contamination of ground water sources from residential, commercial, and industrial activities. When necessary, encourage the restoration of contaminated ground water sources.
- Policy LU 6.7.** Continue to support and participate in the implementation of the Wenatchee Watershed Management Plan.
- Policy LU 6.8.** Recognize the potential benefits of public water, rail, electric, alternative fuels, non-motorized, and air transportation in helping maintain local air quality.
-  **Policy LU 6.9.** Encourage green stormwater infrastructure that incorporates drought and fire-resistant vegetation where possible.
-  **Policy LU 6.10.** Develop and implement a wildfire smoke resilience strategy in partnership with local residents, emergency management officials, regional clean air agency officials, and other stakeholders.
-  **Policy LU 6.11.** Prioritize at-risk community members for actions that mitigate wildfire smoke, including providing personal protective equipment and filter fans or incentivizing infrastructure updates (e.g., HVAC updates and MERV 13 filters for air intake) for facilities that serve high-risk populations.

Goal LU 7. Ensure that development minimizes impacts upon significant natural, historic, and cultural features and preserves their integrity, by working with the Tribes and the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

- Policy LU 7.1.** Encourage development that is compatible with the natural environment and minimizes impacts to significant natural and scenic features.

Policy LU 7.2. Promote nature preserves and conservation areas and support the prohibition of inappropriate development within them.

Policy LU 7.3. Encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.

Goal LU 8. Encourage expansion of the Urban Growth Area where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

Policy LU 8.1. Ensure the size of designated UGA is based on projected population, existing land use, the adequacy of existing and future utility and transportation systems, the impact of second home demand, viable economic development strategies, and sufficient fiscal capacity within the capital facilities plan to adequately fund the appropriate infrastructure necessitated by growth and development.

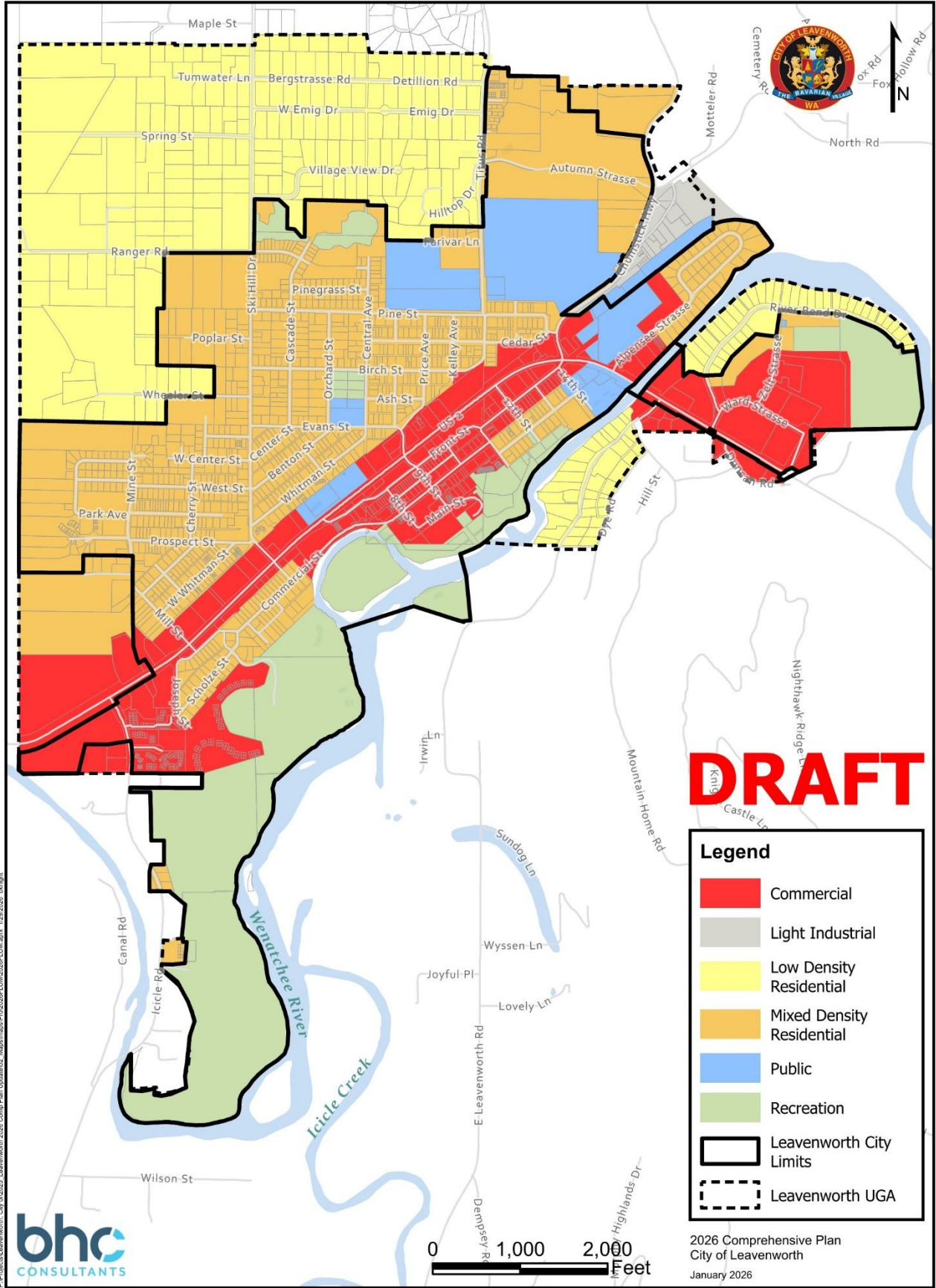
Policy LU 8.2. Discourage irregular corporate boundaries during the process of designating urban growth boundaries.



Goal LU 9. Ensure that buildings are designed and built sustainably to reduce environmental impacts and remain resilient to extreme weather, wildfire, and other hazards worsened by climate change.



Policy LU 9.1. Through development regulations, the zoning map, and planning practices, consider and mitigate wildfire risks. Such practices may include applying the Wildland-Urban Interface Code, considering Firewise practices, and separating development from wildfire prone areas.



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Legend

- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Low Density Residential
- Mixed Density Residential
- Public
- Recreation
- Leavenworth City Limits
- Leavenworth UGA

2026 Comprehensive Plan
City of Leavenworth
January 2026

Map LU-1 Future Land Use Map