

Transportation Element

Introduction

The Transportation Element provides the framework for improving mobility and safety in Leavenworth while supporting the City's vision for growth and quality of life. It identifies transportation system needs based on adopted land use assumptions and forecasts, consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA) and the regional transportation plan, Transportation 2050. This element addresses all modes of travel, including roads, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and freight, and includes level of service standards, concurrency policies, and strategies for funding and implementation.





PARKING RESTRICTED
POOL AND PERMIT
PARKING ONLY
DAILY
PERMIT REQUIRED

Inn

Hopkins Memorial Trust

Context

Leavenworth envisions a future transportation system that serves all users by offering a safe and robust network of sidewalks, bicycle facilities, intersections, and roadways that provide easy access to downtown and the greater region. This element provides a discussion on the inventory, level of service standards, and goals and policies for the City's transportation system.

More discussion on level of service and traffic projections is provided in Appendix F.

Documents adopted as part of this transportation element include:

- ◆ The City's Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), as updated and adopted each year
- ◆ US 2 Upper Wenatchee Valley Corridor Study (2020)
- ◆ Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council Transportation 2050
- ◆ 2026 Leavenworth Traffic Safety Action Plan
- ◆ 2020 Transportation Element Appendix traffic modeling and white paper



Inventory

Leavenworth's transportation system reflects its distinctive role as a year-round community, a tourist destination and gateway to the Upper Wenatchee Valley and the regional highway network. US Highway 2 (US 2) serves as both the City's main street and a state highway that carries freight, local trips, and significant seasonal visitor traffic. This section provides a comprehensive inventory of air, water, and ground transportation facilities and services, including transit, active transportation, and state-owned facilities, consistent with RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(A).

GROUND TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES & SERVICES

STREETS

US 2 serves as Leavenworth's regional transportation corridor, providing the primary access into and out of the City and surrounding area and is owned and maintained by WSDOT. US 2 supports passenger vehicles, freight movement, transit, and emergency response, and plays a critical role in supporting Leavenworth's economy, tourism, mobility, and life safety.

The City's street network consists primarily of two-lane roadways that balance vehicular access with pedestrian, bicycle, and tourism-related needs. Key local arterials and collectors provide connections between residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, recreational destinations, and US 2. Street design and operations in the downtown core emphasize walkability, traffic calming, and access to businesses, reflecting Leavenworth's role as a tourist destination.

The City's street system, with functional classifications and future expansions, is shown in Figure 1.

PARKING LOTS

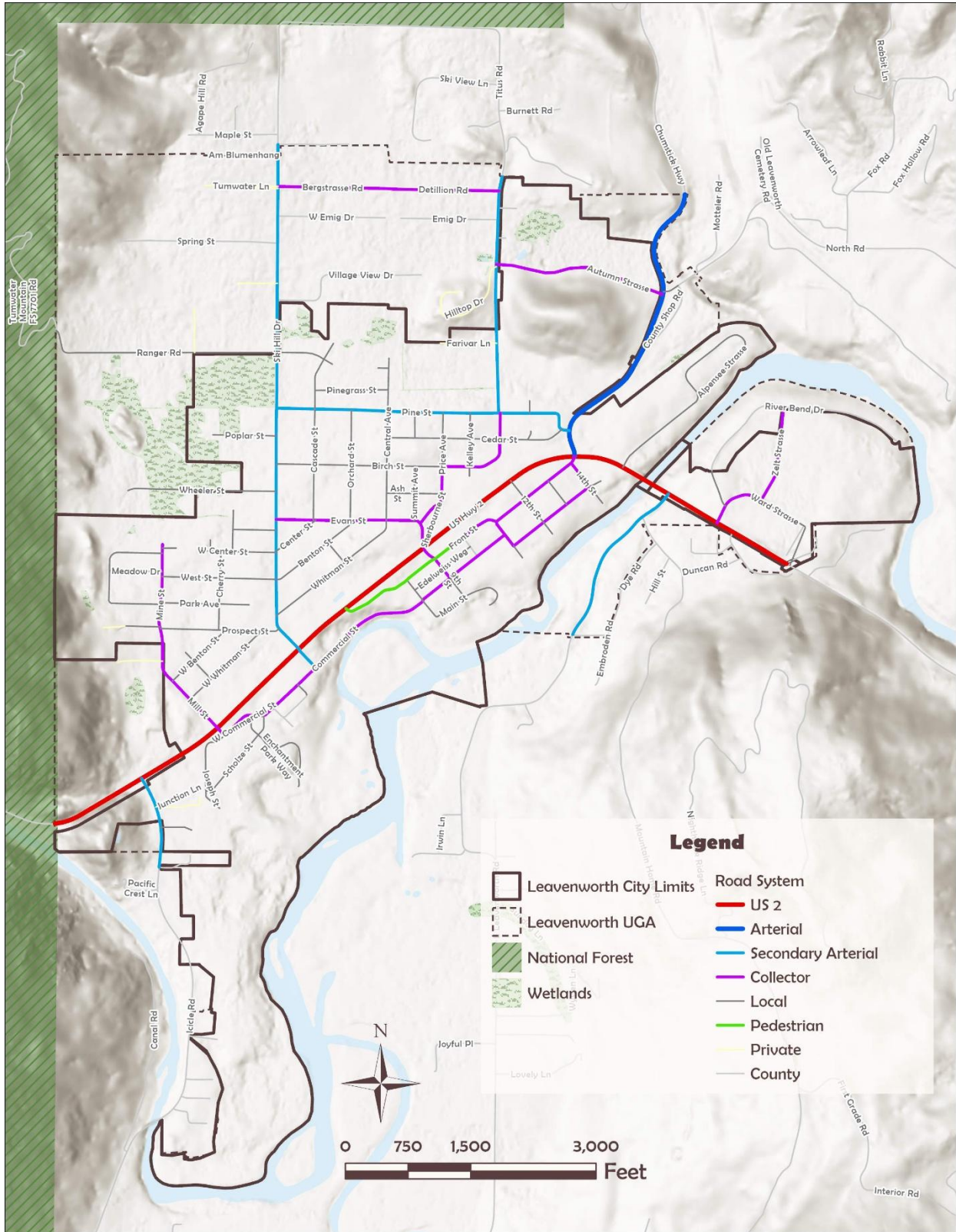
Parking lots play a vital role in reducing congestion along US 2. The City maintains eight paid parking lots in the downtown area, plus the parking lot at City Hall. The City's parking app provides real-time information about parking space occupancy, helping to direct visitors to open parking spaces without needing to circle the block and contribute to congestion. In addition to the City-owned lots, there are two park-and-rides maintained by Link Transit.

RAIL

A Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail line passes adjacent to Leavenworth and supports Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides daily passenger rail service between Seattle and Chicago. The Empire Builder began stopping in

Leavenworth in 2009 after a new train depot was constructed, and in 2025 supported 12,460 riders¹.

Figure 1 - Leavenworth Street System



¹ <https://www.amtrak.com/content/dam/projects/dotcom/english/public/documents/corporate/statefactsheets/WASHINGTON25.pdf>

FREIGHT

US 2 is designated as a T3 alternative freight corridor. The highway supports the resiliency of statewide freight mobility by providing an alternative freight route when Interstate 90, the state's primary east-west freight corridor, is impacted by severe weather or other disruptions. Through Leavenworth, the highway carries approximately 2.65 million tons of freight annually, averaging 780 truck trips per day or 6% of total traffic.²

At the local level, Chumstick Highway and Icicle Road are designated as T-3 freight corridors, supporting moderate levels of truck traffic. Ski Hill Drive, Titus Road, and Pine Street between Titus Road and Chumstick Highway are designated as T-4 or T-5 truck routes, accommodating lower freight volumes and primarily serving local access needs.

TRANSIT

Link Transit provides free public transportation within Leavenworth and to Wenatchee. The City is served by three fixed routes and two on-demand services:

- ◆ Route 32 provides local transit along US Highway 2 between the Glacier parking lot at the west end of the City and the Willkommen Park-and-Ride at the east end. This important route helps shuttle locals and tourists between downtown destinations, reducing the volume of local vehicle trips, especially during festivals.
- ◆ Route 22 and 122 Express provide service between Wenatchee and Leavenworth.
- ◆ Dial-a-Ride Transportation (DART) service is available to anyone within the Leavenworth service area, and Paratransit service is available to qualifying individuals.

For interstate travel, Northwestern Stage Lines provides daily bus service to Leavenworth from Seattle, Spokane, and Pullman.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Leavenworth's active transportation network is a defining feature of the City, supporting walkable neighborhoods, recreation, tourism, and access to local destinations. The system includes a combination of sidewalks, shared-use activity trails, recreational trails, and bicycle lanes. The existing active transportation system is shown in Figure 2, along with proposed expansions.

AIR TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

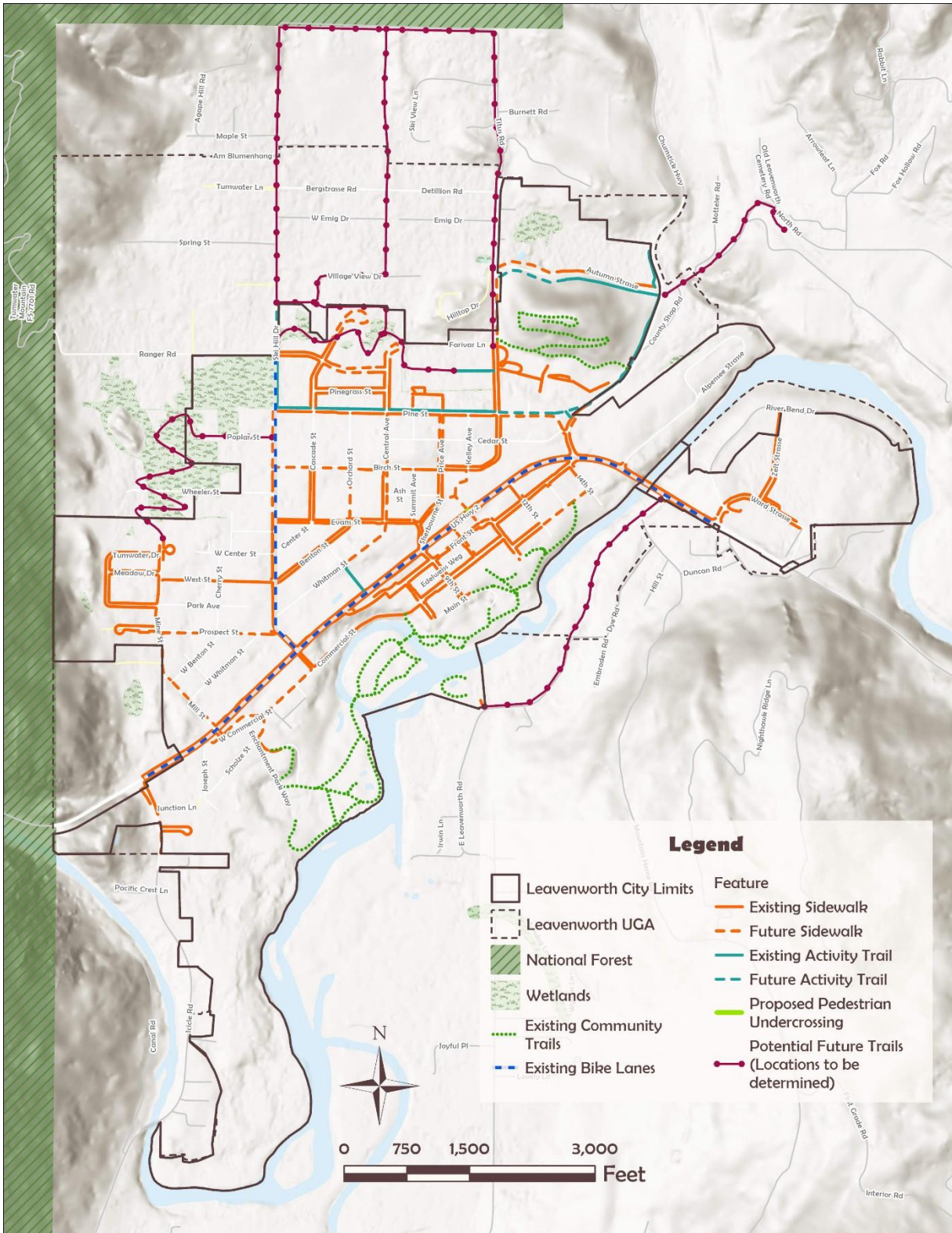
There are no air transport facilities within or nearby city limits. The nearest general aviation and commercial airport is Pangborn Memorial Airport in East Wenatchee. It provides passenger service, air cargo handling, and general aviation for residents, businesses, and visitors. The nearest public airports are the Lake Wenatchee State Airport owned by WSDOT and the Cashmere-Dryden Airport owned by Chelan County.

² <https://wsdot.wa.gov/freight-plans>

WATER TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

There are no water-based transportation facilities within Leavenworth that support passenger or freight travel.

Figure 2 - Existing and Future Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities



Level of Service

The City adopts the following multimodal level of service (LOS) standards and the associated methodologies, deficiency threshold, and monitoring procedures described in Appendix F. These adopted standards and methods guide concurrency review, annual performance evaluation, and transportation investment decisions. As growth happens, transportation facilities that exceed the LOS thresholds are considered deficient and will be addressed through the Transportation Improvement Program and concurrency review.

These LOS standards support the Growth Management Act requirements for multimodal performance, active transportation, and environmental justice and are consistent with the LOS standards adopted in the regional Transportation 2050 plan.

VEHICLE LOS STANDARDS

The automobile LOS standard reflects typical weekday conditions and the seasonal visitor demand that is characteristic of Leavenworth. The City will maintain the current LOS standards:

- ◆ City Streets
 - Weekday PM Peak Hour: LOS D or better at all intersections.
 - Summer Sunday Peak Hour: LOS F permitted when delays remain less than 100 seconds at signalized intersections and less than 70 seconds at unsignalized intersections.
- ◆ US Highway 2: LOS D; however, concurrency requirements do not apply to highways of state-wide significance, per RCW 36.70A.070(6).

PEDESTRIAN LOS STANDARDS

Pedestrian LOS is based on:

- ◆ Minimum clear sidewalk widths:
 - US 2: 8 feet
 - Urban Streets: 5 feet
 - Activity Trails: 8 feet
- ◆ Continuous sidewalks are required on US 2, all arterials and collectors, and within one quarter mile of schools and transit stops.
- ◆ All pedestrian facilities must meet ADA standards for curb ramps, slopes, clear widths, and detectable warnings.
- ◆ Enhanced crossings on all legs of intersecting federally classified roads and US 2.
- ◆ 100% completion of planned regional pathways.
- ◆ No vehicle-pedestrian collisions.

BICYCLE LOS STANDARDS

Bicycle LOS is based upon:

- ◆ Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) 2 or better for bicycle corridors on high-volume streets and LTS 1 on lower volume streets.
- ◆ All bike routes are continuous and connect to an activity trail or low volume street.
- ◆ 100% completion of planned regional on-street bikeways and planned regional pathways.
- ◆ No vehicle-bicycle collisions.

TRANSIT LOS STANDARDS

The LOS standards for transit focuses on stop quality and safe, accessible connections that support Link Transit operations.

- ◆ All transit stops must provide lighting, seating, route information, and ADA-compliant access.
- ◆ High use stops should include shelters when feasible.
- ◆ Sidewalks within one quarter mile of transit stops must meet pedestrian LOS standards.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LEVEL OF SERVICE

To ensure transportation investments equitably serve all residents, particularly those with limited transportation options, lower incomes, and/or other disadvantages, the City evaluate, identify, and monitor Environmental Justice areas and the distribution of projects within. Deficiencies identified within the evaluation will be addressed through prioritized capital improvements to ensure equitable and reliable access to transportation services and infrastructure.

Project Lists

6-YEAR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is updated annually and adopted by City Council. The TIP can be amended if new project or funding opportunities arise. The TIP provides a timeline and funding sources for each project. More information on TIP projects can be found on the City's website.

Table 1. Projects from the 2026-2031 TIP

NAME	DESCRIPTION	YEAR	COST
Ski Hill Active Transportation Improvements Ph II	Construct missing sidewalks on Ski Hill Drive between north of Evans Street.	2026	\$835,000
Mine Street / Mill Street improvements	Addition of pedestrian/bicycle facilities, pavement improvements, etc.	2027	TBD
Commercial Street and Scholze Street sidewalks	Construct a new sidewalk along Commercial Street from Ski Hill Drive to Enchantment Park.	2027	\$800,000
Autumn Strasse Extension - Chumstick to Titus Road Connector	Complete roadway from Chumstick Road to Titus Road including sidewalk and multiuse trail.	2027	\$3.5 Million
Pine Street Phase II	Construct a new connection from Pine Street to Chumstick Highway, including sidewalks and activity trails along Pine Street and Chumstick Highway.	2027	\$5 Million
Central Avenue Sidewalk Extension	Construct a new sidewalk on Central Avenue to extend Safe Routes to School Sidewalk to the multiuse path on Pine Street	2027	\$600,000
Ward Strasse & River Bend Drive intersection planning	Planning study (30%) to develop intersection improvement options to enhance traffic movement .	2027	\$50,000
River Bend Drive / Ward Strasse sidewalk	Construct sidewalks in existing gaps on Ward Strasse between Zelt Strasse and US 2	2028	\$600,000
Construct a downtown parking garage	Design and construction of a new parking garage with 200 spaces.	2028	\$45 Million
Scholze Street reconstruction	Rebuild Scholze St between Enchantment Park Way and Joseph St	2028	\$450,000
Front Street Pedestrian Plaza	Reconstruction of western portion of Front Street as a pedestrian plaza between US2 and Division Street including 8th Street and 10th Street	2028	TBD

20-YEAR PROJECT LIST

The 20-year project list includes project that are anticipated to be needed to serve new growth and development. This list is less detailed than the 6-year TIP and does not include cost estimates.

Table 2. 20-year project list

NAME	DESCRIPTION
ADA Transition Plan	Prepare and implement an ADA transition plan, including evaluation of all City-owned off-street parking facilities.
Construct missing pedestrian and bicycle connections	Construct missing sidewalks, activity trails, and bicycle facilities to improve multimodal LOS and increase safety.
US 2 eastbound bicycle lane	Remove on-street parking to connect bicycle lane paired with delivery zone/parking/drop off.
Icicle Road pedestrian crossing	Construct a mid-block marked crosswalk across Icicle Road on the north side of the Leavenworth Adventure Park site parking lot
Pedestrian crossing at US 2 and Mill Street	Install signage and an enhanced crossing to improve pedestrian safety at the uncontrolled crossing at Mill Street and US 2.
US 2/Ski Hill Drive intersection improvements	Install traffic control at US 2 and Ski Hill Drive to improve LOS improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.
US 2 streetscape improvements Phase I-III	Improve US 2 mobility for local traffic, transit, and emergency responders by extending right-turn pockets to bypass queueing on US 2 and transit signal preemption. Project includes construction of a shared use path to separate bicyclists and pedestrians from vehicles on US 2. Phase 1: Ski Hill Drive to 9th Street Phase 2: 9th Street to Chumstick Highway Phase 3: Chumstick Highway to East Leavenworth Road
Intersection improvements at US 2 and Chumstick Highway	Restripe the northbound approach to extend the right turn bay past 14th Street and change the lane configuration for both the northbound and southbound approach to provide a left turn and a through-right. Retime traffic signal to remove split phasing.
Install traffic signal preemption	Upgrade existing signals to provide preemption for transit and emergency vehicles. Project would be the first phase of streetscape improvements on US 2.
Support improved transit connections	Partner with LINK Transit to increase transit frequency, specifically during off-peak travel times to better accommodate service industry employees.
8th Street improvements	Reconstruct 8th Street, including curb replacement, sidewalk, and illumination, from Front Street to Commercial Street
Division Street reconstruction	Reconstruct Division Street, including sidewalks, curb, gutter, and street illumination, from Commercial Street to the Wenatchee River Institute
County projects that benefit the City	Support County-led projects that benefit the City, such as intersection improvements at North Road and Chumstick Highway, Titus Rd improvements north of city limits, and a multi-use trail that connects Leavenworth to the train station

Financing and Implementation

This long-range planning effort has identified many transportation investments that would greatly enhance Leavenworth's transportation network but exceed forecasted revenues over the next few decades. If the City finds that implementation of necessary improvements is not feasible due to funding, the City must consider how additional funding can be raised or how land use assumptions can be reassessed to ensure the LOS standards are met. Existing and additional revenue sources that the City could consider implementing to enhance its ability to fund transportation system maintenance and rehabilitation, as well as new capital, are described below.

EXISTING REVENUES

TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT DISTRICTS (TBD)

Cities and counties may form transportation benefit districts (TBDs), quasi-municipal corporations, and independent taxing districts that fund specific transportation projects. TBD revenue may be used for transportation improvements included in a local, regional, or state transportation plan. Maintenance, operation, and construction costs are eligible. Leavenworth receives funding from a 0.2% sales tax, which raises an estimated \$700,000 in annual revenues. The tax must be reauthorized by voters in 2031.

REAL ESTATE EXCISE TAX

Real estate excise taxes are taxes on the selling price of real estate. The first quarter percent can be used on capital projects included in the capital facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan. The second quarter percent is restricted to transportation, water/storm/sewer systems, and parks. Leavenworth collects 0.05% tax on each real estate transaction, providing an estimated \$200,000 into the public works capital projects fund.

GAS TAX

The state allocates a portion of gas tax revenue back to the City. These funds are generally used for maintenance and preservation.

PARKING REVENUES

The City implemented paid parking in the downtown core in 2021, which will bring in an estimated \$3.6 million in 2026. The parking fees pay for parking management and enforcement, parking lot improvements, and increasing parking availability through the creation of new parking lots and the proposed construction of a new parking garage.

POTENTIAL REVENUES

TRANSPORTATION IMPACT FEES

Transportation impact fees (TIF) are one-time charges on new development to fund transportation capital improvement needed to accommodate growth. The State provides guidance for how impact fee programs are developed, including the types of capital projects that can be funded and how rates must be structured. Impact fees cannot be used to fund maintenance and operations costs.

COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAMS


Most large transportation projects are funded by grant programs, such as WSDOT Safe Routes to School, Transportation Improvement Board grants, and CDTC Regional STP Program.


STATE APPROPRIATIONS

The state occasionally funds a package of transportation projects state-wide or appropriates funds to specific projects.




Goals and Policies

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

 **Goal TE 1. Provide a safe, accessible, well-connected, and complete transportation system for travelers of all modes, all ages, and all abilities.**

- Policy TE 1.1.** Support the expansion of public transit service and facilities in Leavenworth. Improve bus stop comfort and safety through coordination with Link Transit, and improve shelters and safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Policy TE 1.2.** Implement transportation demand management (TDM) strategies to reduce peak auto demand, improve multimodal access, and support LOS compliance.
- Policy TE 1.3.** Plan a transportation system that equitably accommodates users of all abilities, including the elderly and those with special needs.
- Policy TE 1.4.** Develop and adopt an ADA transition plan that will identify existing obstacles to accessibility and create and establish a schedule to meet compliance.
- Policy TE 1.5.** Prioritize the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities in the design and construction of future transportation improvements.
- Policy TE 1.6.** Develop an active transportation system that promotes connectivity between residential development, parks and recreation facilities, schools, and downtown via pathways, trails and street extensions.
- Policy TE 1.7.** Support pedestrian-oriented design and streetscape amenities including landscaping, benches, lighting, artwork, and other amenities.
- Policy TE 1.8.** Adopt bicycle parking standards for public and commercial facilities.
- Policy TE 1.9.** Achieve the LOS standards identified within this plan for all modes of transportation.
- Policy TE 1.10.** Support implementation of the Leavenworth to Wenatchee regional trail system.

 **Policy TE 1.11.** Support and encourage development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Policy TE 1.12. Implement the 2026 Traffic Safety Plan to continue supporting crash reduction and increase safety for all modes of transportation.

Policy TE 1.13. Coordinate with Chelan County to ensure seamless transitions of active transportation routes from City streets to County roads.

Goal TE 2. Minimize the impacts of US 2 on Leavenworth’s quality of life through collaborative efforts that involve community members and other agencies and organizations.

Policy TE 2.1. Continue coordinating with WSDOT, CDTC, Link Transit, and Chelan County to address traffic congestion problems and improve multimodal access through implementation of the US 2 Upper Wenatchee Valley Corridor Study.

Policy TE 2.2. Ensure the Comprehensive Plan remains consistent with Transportation 2050 and other regional plans.

Policy TE 2.3. Prioritize inclusive community outreach in the transportation planning process to ensure equitable implementation of transportation improvements.

Policy TE 2.4. Consider impacts to human health and safety (noise, exhaust fumes, vibration, etc.), as well as environmental impacts when planning and designing transportation facilities.

Policy TE 2.5. Pursue collaborative funding opportunities with WSDOT and other agencies for projects on US 2 that support safety and efficiency for all modes of travel.

Policy TE 2.6. Explore options for a US 2 bypass via Chumstick Highway to redirect through traffic around the City.


Goal TE 3. Provide a coordinated, efficient, and financially sustainable parking system that balances access, economic vitality, neighborhood character, and multimodal transportation goals.

Policy TE 3.1. Develop and maintain residential, customer, employee, and visitor parking options which reflect changes in demand, reduce congestion and frustration, and provide for the community as a whole.


- Policy TE 3.2.** Pursue cooperative partnerships between the public and private sectors to provide and/or fund needed parking facilities and strategies.
- Policy TE 3.3.** Integrate parking area design with landscape design in a way that reduces the visual impact of impervious surfaces and provides screening of parking from public view. Design features should include provisions for landscaping adjacent to buildings and walkways, and for parking areas to be located behind buildings and away from areas of high public visibility.
- Policy TE 3.4.** Pursue development of a downtown parking garage and encourage underground and/or structured parking for private developments.
- Policy TE 3.5.** Design and maintain public parking facilities to enhance safety and security by including Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals such as appropriate lighting, clear signage, safe pedestrian circulation, visibility, landscaping design that avoids hidden areas, and regular maintenance.





Goal TE 4. Preserve, maintain, and construct transportation infrastructure to be long-lasting, resilient, aligned with the land use element, and financially sustainable.

- Policy TE 4.1.** Update the 6-Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) annually to reflect current estimated costs and schedules to ensure priority, cost, and timing of projects are accommodated.
-  **Policy TE 4.2.** Identify and implement strategies and standards to ensure the resilience of the existing and new transportation system from climate change exacerbated hazards.
- Policy TE 4.3.** Engage in proactive maintenance of existing infrastructure to mitigate potential issues and extend their expected lifespan.
- Policy TE 4.4.** Require new development to mitigate their impacts to the transportation system, ensuring that appropriate levels of service for all modes of transportation are maintained and concurrency requirements are met.
- Policy TE 4.5.** Identify stable and predictable funding sources for maintaining and preserving existing transportation facilities and services.
- Policy TE 4.6.** Identify and pursue grant opportunities to fund new transportation projects.

- Policy TE 4.7.** Require development to address snow removal and storage in the design of streets and other transportation facilities.
- Policy TE 4.8.** If funding is not available to meet existing or future transportation needs, reassess the land use element
- Policy TE 4.9.** Encourage landscaping, street trees, and low impact development along transportation facilities for stormwater management, noise reduction, shade, visual appearance, and air quality.

 **Goal TE 5. Ensure that the local transportation system – including infrastructure, routes, and travel modes – is able to withstand and recover quickly from the impacts of extreme weather events and other hazards exacerbated by climate change.**

-  **Policy TE 5.1.** Identify and mitigate transportation infrastructure that is vulnerable to repeated floods, landslides, and other natural hazards.
-  **Policy TE 5.2.** Create evacuation plans and outreach materials to help residents plan and practice actions that make evacuation quick, speed up and improve the safety of evacuation.