

TOWN OF WINTHROP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted December 16, 2015

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SUMMARY AND VISION

Winthrop sits at the confluence of the Methow and Chewuch Rivers in the heart of the Methow Valley. Our beautiful location and small town character remain central to our identity, despite the tides of change. We embrace Old West history with our theme. We welcome visitors, offering a gate to gate western experience and a trailhead to the North Cascades. We respect our residents' desire for quality of life.

This Comprehensive Plan envisions:

- ☆ A vital economy and livable community – welcoming to residents and visitors.
- ☆ Orderly development within the Town's capacity to provide water, sewer and essential services.
- ☆ A suitable array of commercial and residential uses and settings, including mixed used areas.
- ☆ A transportation network that functions well for all users.
- ☆ Well maintained infrastructure.
- ☆ Ongoing promotion of the western theme.
- ☆ A trail network with connections to Methow Trails.
- ☆ Visual and physical access to the rivers, opens spaces, and recreation.
- ☆ Protection of shorelines and other natural features of the environment.
- ☆ Continued effort from Winthrop officials and staff to further the objectives described in this plan.

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INTRODUCTION



This Comprehensive Plan updates the Comprehensive Plan adopted by Winthrop in 1999. The Plan results from consideration of many important factors guiding the development of our community. First and foremost, this plan should reflect the values of those who live and work in Winthrop. It must consider demographic, economic, and land use trends; existing infrastructure and resources; and deficiencies and priority improvements. The plan aims to:

- Define a vision for how our community will develop over the next twenty years.
- Establish goals, policies and land use designations that guide subsequent land use regulation.
- Designate and protect critical areas according to best available science.
- Establish long-range planning guidance for local decision making and regulatory processes.
- Encourage diversified and well-balanced economic growth.
- Promote the western theme for the commercial areas of the community.
- Provide guidance for improving the physical and social environment of Winthrop for a more functional, connected, vital, and sustainable community.
- Promote the public interest - the interests of the community as a whole rather than the interests of individuals or special groups.
- Promote citizen participation and involvement in government decision making.

Basis for Comprehensive Planning

Washington State encourages cities, towns and counties to engage in comprehensive planning. Most local governments in Washington enact Comprehensive Plans to meet the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA). Winthrop, by virtue of its location in Okanogan County, is not required to fully plan under GMA; however, the Town chooses to embrace comprehensive planning objectives of the Act to the best of our ability. Winthrop adopts this Comprehensive Plan pursuant to RCW 35.63.080 and 35.63.100.

This Comprehensive Plan establishes policies concerning future development in the Town of Winthrop. The plan is intended to guide growth over the next twenty years and provide a basis for resolving challenges that arise as town officials and citizens face growth and change. Comprehensive planning takes into account existing conditions and future needs, and attempts to express reasonable consensus as to the character and direction of future growth. Consistent with the GMA, this plan addresses land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, transportation, economic development, parks and recreation, and shoreline management. In addition, the plan meets our obligation under GMA to classify and designate resource lands, and use best available science to classify, designate and regulate critical areas.

The plan is, of necessity, general in its proposals. It must be flexible since it is impossible to predict all future events which may affect the community. While the plan makes significant recommendations for future land use, it is not regulatory, does not provide engineering accuracy, nor claims to predict the future use of every parcel of property. In order to remain effective, this plan needs periodic review by town officials and citizens. Conditions could change, unforeseen events may occur, or opinion and values about land use may shift, necessitating reevaluation of the goals and policies in this plan.

Relation to Other Plans

The Comprehensive Plan is intended as Winthrop's central planning and policy document. In addition to this plan, Winthrop utilizes a number of other documents to establish policy and regulate land use, including the zoning, subdivision, westernization, flood damage prevention, critical areas and SEPA ordinances; Shoreline Master Program, Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan, Parks and Recreation Plan, Capital Facilities Plan, comprehensive water and sewer plans, and others. Implementing ordinances and other planning documents need to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan; in cases of conflict, the Comprehensive Plan prevails.

Many of the plans and regulations that implement the Comprehensive Plan, such as the zoning or westernization design review ordinances, are adopted solely by the Town and are not subject to review or approval by other agencies. However, other plans or regulatory documents, such as the Shoreline Master Program or the Water System

Plan, are reviewed and approved by State agencies. All such documents should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. In cases of conflict, the Town needs to work with various state or federal agencies to balance local and State-wide interests to achieve consistency.

Winthrop is also affected by land use planning done by Okanogan County and other entities; for example, the Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan and Methow Watershed Implementation Plan both have ramifications for Winthrop's present and future development. The pattern of development allowed by the County could impact Winthrop in the form of increased traffic, growth in the demand for services and potential reductions in water quality and quantity. Patterns of commercial and residential growth may also affect Winthrop's property and sales tax revenue. Since the Town does not have jurisdiction over County actions, the Town needs to work with Okanogan County and other entities to make sure that Winthrop's interests are represented.

Local Context

Winthrop's 400 or so residents live in the picturesque Methow Valley in North Central Washington. Prior to the construction of the North Cascades Highway, Winthrop sat at the end of the road, both physically and economically. The North Cascades Highway opened in 1972, reducing the driving time from the Puget Sound area and providing a scenic corridor through the mountains. During that same year the Town adopted a western architectural theme for the downtown. Ever since, the highway and western theme have encouraged a steady stream of recreational visits and real estate activity.

The 1970s brought some major project proposals to the Methow Valley stimulating further changes for Winthrop. These projects--the proposal by Quintana Mining for a large open pit copper mine on Goat Mountain near Mazama, and Early Winters, a proposal by the Aspen Corporation for a destination resort also near Mazama--triggered a flurry of development and land use planning activity throughout the valley. This activity culminated in the adoption of the Winthrop's first Comprehensive Plan (1977) as well as Okanogan County's *Methow Valley Addendum* to the Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan (1976) and the subsequent adoption of the County's first zoning ordinance (Okanogan County Ord. #79-8).

While neither the mine nor Early Winters were constructed, the planning done for those proposals continues to shape the local environment, as do on-going speculation, land subdivision, and small scale resort development. In 1988, Sun Mountain Lodge, nine miles from Winthrop, enjoyed an extensive 24 million dollar renovation and expansion, creating a premier four season resort. Visitors to Sun Mountain contribute to Winthrop's economy throughout the year. Throughout the 80s, efforts by local businesses and the Methow Valley Sport Trails Association (now Methow Trails) resulted in development of one of the largest systems of groomed Nordic ski trails in the United States. This trail system contributed to an emerging winter tourist economy.

During the 1990s, Winthrop sought to improve links to the growing trail system and position the town as an outdoor recreation hub. This effort coalesced around planning for a pedestrian way to link downtown with the southern commercial area. After more than a decade of planning, Winthrop began to implement a series of projects intended to strengthen its appeal as a year-round outdoor recreation hub.

In 2005, Winthrop acquired land for a permanent Town Trailhead, connecting to the MVSTA winter trails. In the following years, adjoining lands were purchased and developed with an outdoor Ice Rink. In 2011 and 2012, the Town oversaw construction of the first phase of the Susie Stephens Trail, including the construction of a cable-stayed pedestrian bridge over the Methow River. This new trail system connects downtown Winthrop with the Town Trailhead and Ice Rink. Ongoing efforts are expected to complete the pedestrian link to Winthrop's south town limits and extend a RiverWalk pathway along the Methow and Chewuch Rivers in downtown.

During the late 1980s and 1990s, Winthrop saw a doubling of its motel bed capacity, construction of its first multi-family housing complex, upgrades to water and waste water treatment systems, and annexation of over 75 acres of land in the southwestern part of town. Moving into the new millennium, Winthrop enjoyed further growth in the lodging industry along with several new land development proposals. Winthrop gave preliminary approval for approximately 170 new lots/condominium units. However, with the economic downturn that hit in 2008, only a handful of these proposals were finalized creating 74 new, mainly residential lots.

Until the economic downturn in 2008, Okanogan County processed a steady stream of building permits, subdivision and planned development applications in the Methow Valley, the majority of which are located within a ten-mile radius of Winthrop. The general direction of the County's land use system is to require most commercial and higher density developments to locate in the incorporated areas of Winthrop and Twisp and the commercially zoned areas of Mazama and Carlton.

Demographic Context

According to US Census figures Winthrop's population has fluctuated considerably over the past 50 years. Although population fell between 1970 and 1980, and again between 1980 and 1990, the number of residents in Winthrop appears to be on the rise again. Over the past two decades, we see an average growth rate of just over 1% per year.

TABLE I-1 - POPULATION HISTORY

Year	Population	Change by decade	Change by year
1960	375		
1970	488	30%	3.0%
1980	413	-15%	-1.5%
1990	322	-22%	-2.2%
2000	350	9%	0.9%
2010	394	13%	1.3%

Looking to the 2010 US Census, we get a picture of who lives in Winthrop. Fully 97% are white, and about 4% are Hispanic. Our population is older, with a median age of 48 compared with a national median age of 38. At 1.92, Winthrop’s average household size is considerably lower than national and state averages, 2.58 and 2.51 respectively. Our family size is also lower – 2.59 in Winthrop versus 3.14 nationally. While across the US, only about 27% of people live alone, in Winthrop 43% live alone.

Economically, residents enjoy a lower rate of poverty than the US as a whole – twelve percent in Winthrop versus 15% nationwide. However, median incomes are lower in Winthrop - \$40,605 compared with \$49,445 nationwide. Per capita income is \$22,746. At the time of the census, approximately half of Winthrop’s residents were employed. Half of those employed worked in service occupations.

What does this imply about the growth of our population over the twenty year planning horizon? The following trends and observations lead us to believe we will see continued growth within the Town:

- Property values are somewhat lower in the town than in the Methow Valley generally, and the severe low and moderate income housing shortage may lead to some new houses being built in town.
- Given that we have an older median age locally, Winthrop is likely to continue to attract retirees.
- Since the town has a developed water and sewer system, it offers realistic options for multi-family housing. The Cedarwood Apartments typically has a waiting list, as do low income housing units in Twisp, thus there remains a demand for construction of more multi-family housing.
- The on-going controversy over water in the Valley may serve to move some growth inside the town.
- Lots in the subdivided areas continue to sell, especially as the economy has revived.

- Anecdotally, there is a growing interest from people who live outside of town to move closer to the services and amenities available in town.

While it remains impossible to exactly predict how Winthrop’s population will change, it seems reasonable to use a growth rate of 1% per year. Table 1.2 below offers four scenarios for population growth over the next twenty years.

TABLE I-2 - POPULATION PROJECTIONS

YEAR	0.50%	1%	1.50%	2%
2010	394	394	394	394
2015	404	414	424	435
2020	414	435	457	480
2025	425	457	493	530
2030	435	481	531	585
2035	446	505	572	646

Table 1.2 indicates that Winthrop’s resident population could increase by somewhere between 52 and 252 people by 2035. Though it is likely Winthrop will see population growth, such projections need to be treated with considerable caution. Many events could increase or decrease growth past these projections and these projections should be reviewed and corrected with Census or other reliable population data.

Citizen Participation

The success of this Comprehensive Plan may be assessed by the levels of citizen engagement and support it generates. The plan becomes relevant when the goals and policies reflect vigorous public participation, and when its implementation continually welcomes citizen involvement. To this end, the following citizen participation objectives inform both the development and implementation of this plan:

- Ensure multiple opportunities for the public to learn about and participate in development of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Provide easy citizen access to draft and final versions of Comprehensive Plan documents.
- Provide clear, timely notice regarding public workshops or hearings, as well as other opportunities to provide comment.
- Promote open discussion and feedback on Comprehensive Plan goals and policies in all local government forums; including the Planning Commission,

Town Council, Westernization Architectural Committee, and any other permanent or temporary committees.

- Seek public input on development and implementation of land use and other regulatory codes.
- Utilize the Planning Commission to review all major land use actions, and make recommendation regarding consistency with the goals and policies of this plan.

This Plan update grew out earlier citizen participation forums. Three public input tools, in particular, helped to identify key issues and common values around growth and development in Winthrop: a Community Assessment performed by USDA Rural Development in 2005, a community visioning workshop in 2008, and parks and recreation surveys in 2006 and 2012. These forums elicited significant participation from people who live and work in Winthrop, and enabled us to distill a list of commonly held concerns and values:

- People care deeply about the small town character of Winthrop.
- Winthrop needs to be a pedestrian friendly community.
- Sustainability is important – whether it be in terms of our local economic decisions, caring for our landscape, or our use of energy and natural resources.
- We need affordable housing of all kinds – for families, seasonal workers, and older generations.
- We need to make choices about growth, density and what lands may be suitable for eventual annexation based on the resources available to our community.
- We need to have clear, transparent and welcoming public processes.
- We need regulations to provide the right mix of consistency and flexibility.

The Planning Commission took up these concerns and values, and worked them into the various elements of this Plan. During the summer of 2014, the Planning Commission offered two public workshops on the Land Use and Transportation Elements; however, the workshops had few participants. When initial attempts to solicit public input drew minimal participation, the Planning Commission went back to the table and came up with more ways to draw participation and input, including neighborhood forums, presentations, and publicity.

The Town Council and Winthrop Chamber of Commerce received a summary presentation of the issues and focus in the update process. Draft Comprehensive Plan documents were made available to the Westernization Committee and Town Council for review. When attempts to organize neighborhood workshops drew little interest, the Planning Commission focused on publicity and making draft documents easily available. The Methow Valley News offered an editorial and informative article on update process

encouraging citizen involvement. The Town made the draft Plan available to citizens on the Town’s website, the local library, and at Town Hall.

The Planning Commission offered a well-publicized public workshop on April 28, 2015. Those in attendance expressed support for the updates as drafted, and offered a few suggestions. Following the workshop, the Planning Commission discussed a handful of final revisions to the documents and decided to advance the draft Plan to a Public Hearing on June 16, 2015. Following the public hearing, the Plan advanced to the Town Council for the final adoption process.

Planning Assumptions

Planning for the Town is based on an explicit statement of assumptions about the future of Winthrop which are essential to understanding the goal and policy recommendations. The list of assumptions follows:

1. The population of the planning area will increase in the next twenty years. This will affect the demand for housing, sewer and water services, police protection and fire protection; and will further stress the transportation system.
2. Tourism and recreation will remain the visible face of the local economy.
3. Jobs in the conservation, construction, and education sectors, though less visible than tourism, will continue to have a strong impact on the local economy. Telecommuting will also offer an attractive form of employment.
4. As Winthrop strives for a strong year-round economy, there will continue to be a seasonal nature to local business.
5. Winthrop needs to encourage a diverse array of business opportunities in support of a strong and resilient economy that meets the needs of the resident population.
6. Demand for affordable and rental housing will increase.
7. Transportation patterns are changing with increasing emphasis on pedestrian and other non-motorized travel.
8. Winthrop will continue to seek additional water rights to support build out within the incorporated limits.
9. Winthrop will maintain its western theme, consistent with the period of 1850 to 1919.
10. People are attracted to the Winthrop area by the nature of the surrounding environment.
11. Winthrop will continue to develop and maintain infrastructure systems needed to serve its permanent population and the tourist economy.
12. Climate change may affect the rate and pattern of growth.

13. Substantial population growth in the Puget Sound will have some spill over to Winthrop and the Methow Valley.

Guidelines for Goal and Policy Development

In order for this Comprehensive Plan to serve as a useful tool for future decision making, it must contain clear and reasonable guidelines for an array of public and private activities and developments. The guidelines of this plan are in the form of goals and policies. Goals are statements of the ends we would like to see, our long range aims. Policies are actions to be taken or adhered to, that make the goals attainable. Policies inform day-to-day decision making in service of the goals.

The goals and policies contained in this plan have evolved after consideration of a number of important factors:

- Natural resources of the Winthrop Area such as soils, geology, climate, water, minerals, topography, fish and wildlife and shoreline features.
- Cultural resources of the Winthrop Area such as its people, businesses, industries, community facilities and services, historical sites and governmental entities.
- Past, present and projected growth and development trends.
- Desires and needs of citizens as expressed in community meetings, correspondence, and surveys.
- Sound professional planning and community development principles which will result in a sound economic base and desirable lifestyles.

Planning Area

The Planning Area considered in this document includes all lands presently found within the Winthrop's corporate limits and those unincorporated areas lying within potential annexation areas and other areas of interest. The Planning Area takes into account existing town infrastructure and resources. Figure 1.1 shows the Planning Area.

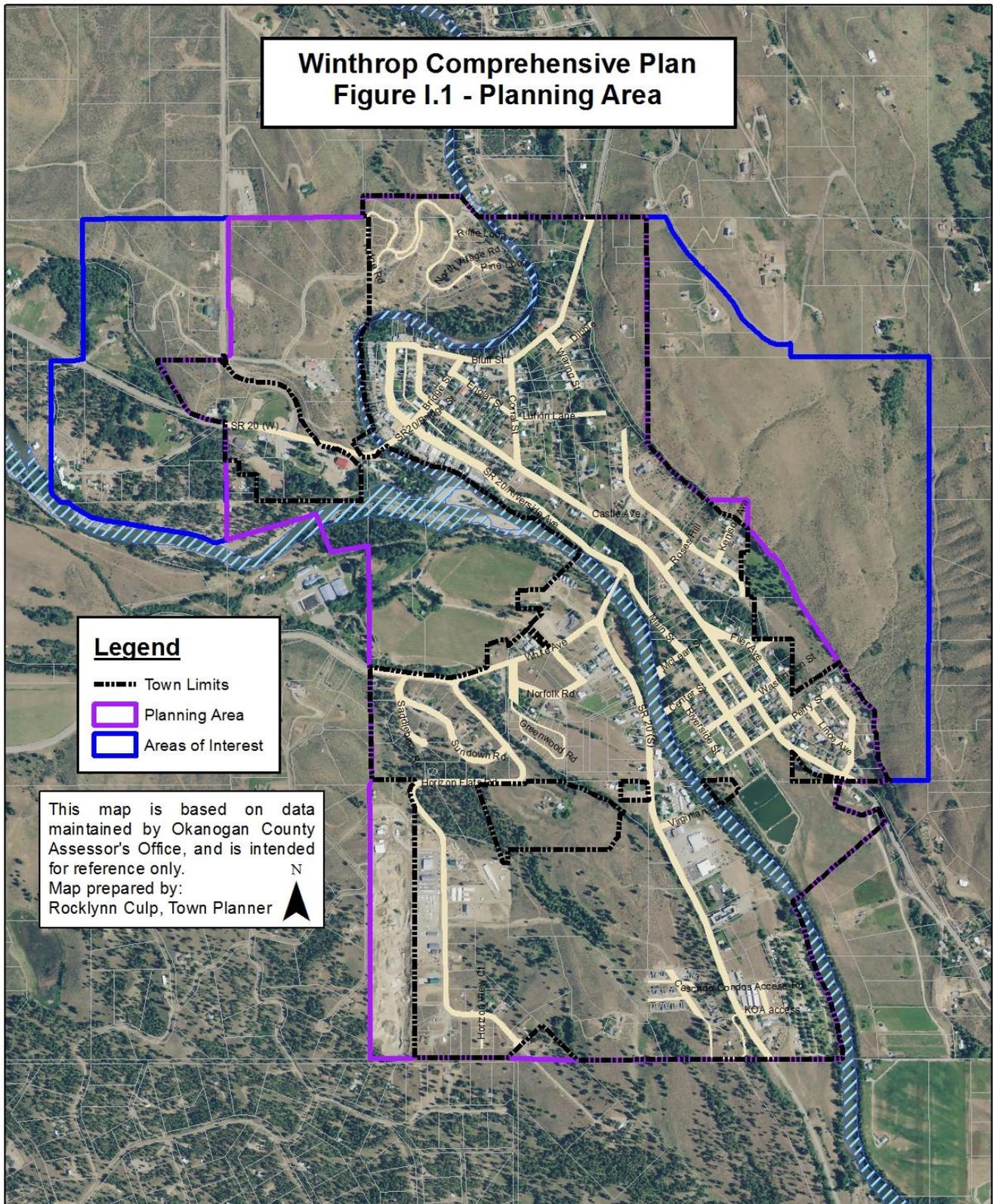


Figure I.1 - Planning Area Map

ANNEXATION AND GROWTH ELEMENT

In planning for the community's future, the Town of Winthrop looks to identify areas outside its present corporate boundaries where development is most likely to occur, and to anticipate the effects growth outside the town boundaries may have on Winthrop. Although the Town does not have jurisdiction outside of its corporate limits, development in the unincorporated areas surrounding Winthrop substantially impacts our community. Thus, we note areas where development has the most potential to affect our community, and provide policy guidance for land use decisions by both Town and County officials.

This element – and the rest of this plan - reflects an effort to balance objectives of the Growth Management Act with Winthrop's location in a non-planning county. Okanogan County does not embrace the objectives or terminology of growth management, including the typical term used to define an area where the town may grow – “urban growth area”. For that reason, we have opted to use two new terms: “potential annexation areas” and “areas of interest” to convey planning considerations for areas outside our existing boundary. “Potential annexation areas” include lands immediately adjacent to the town limits of sufficient interest and impact that we would consider eventual annexation. “Areas of interest” include lands in proximity to Winthrop where annexation is unlikely, yet we would like to work with Okanogan County to ensure development impacts do not burden our community. Our planning area boundary includes potential annexation areas, but not areas of interest.

The Town advocates for joint permitting and approval of major developments in any of the potential annexation areas and other areas of interest. Coordination on development of lands in proximity to Winthrop will help assure that land uses align appropriately with Winthrop's built environment, planned land use patterns, and infrastructure resources.

Goals and Policies

*Goal 1 Encourage the development of existing incorporated areas **prior** to any further annexation, so as to ensure that Town infrastructure, resources and services are allocated first to lands within the corporate limits.*

Goal 2 Plan for the logical extension of Town boundaries through annexation of lands within potential annexation areas, provided annexation offers benefits to Winthrop consistent with the goals, policies and recommendations of this Plan.

Policy 2.1 Proposed annexations should be subject to a cost/benefit analysis including assessment of all costs to the Town; approval should require a showing of reasonable assurance of a positive benefit to the Town.

Policy 2.2 The Town should require an accompanying development proposal for the approval of any annexation petition. Development proposals should provide for sewer, water, streets, and other Town services, concurrent with the development of the property.

Policy 2.3 The Town should require annexation prior to extension of any Town services beyond the incorporated limits. Annexations should only be approved with the applicant's provision of complete utility extension and access plans for the development/annexation.

Policy 2.4 Develop, implement, and maintain utility plans that include potential annexation areas within planned service areas.

Goal 3 Seek shared jurisdiction and coordination with Okanogan County over permitting and development of the lands within the potential annexation areas and areas of interest so as to further the goals and policies of this plan.

Policy 3.1 Winthrop should pursue an interlocal agreement with Okanogan County to ensure that the planning and permitting of development within potential annexation areas and areas of interest is consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.

Policy 3.2 Winthrop should monitor and comment on development proposals outside of Town with the potential to impact Winthrop, and actively work with Okanogan County to encourage development patterns consistent with the intent of Winthrop's Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 3.3 Winthrop should encourage the County to restrict further commercial and industrial development that would require access via town streets or extension of urban services in unincorporated areas.

Policy 3.4 Winthrop should discourage urban sprawl to valuable agricultural and open space areas while encouraging infill of urban areas.

Designations

Winthrop establishes, through adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, the potential annexation areas and areas of interest illustrated in the Annexation and Growth map – Figure 1. The areas are as follows:

1. **West Chewuch Area.** This area includes the Forest Service property and a subdivision that lies between the West Chewuch Road and North Village. This is included as an area where low density residential development may be extended in a similar pattern to North Village. Utilities could loop through from North Village to the Vineyard short plat. A trail has been proposed which would also complete a loop from SaTeekhWa Park to Mac Lloyd Park.
2. **Tennis Court Area.** This area is largely floodplain. If annexed the Town would better be able to control development of the floodplain consistent with our plans and regulations.
3. **Belsby Field Area.** Currently this area is maintained as hay fields. In accord with a prior agreement, the Town allotted 60 ERUs to this area. It is surrounded by the incorporated limits on all but one side, and holds a central location in between the downtown and highway commercial districts. It offers one of the most obvious places for growth to occur.
4. **Cascade Concrete Area.** This long parcel borders all of the Horizon Flat Subdivision, and the town's sole industrial area. Cascade Concrete's main access is via the Town roadway system, yet we do not receive any property tax proceeds to offset the impacts of their heavy truck traffic. Eventual annexation could allow a growing area for industrial business, and give Winthrop more influence over impacts.
5. **Heckendorn East Area.** This includes a large parcel east of the Chewuch irrigation canal along with some parcels within the Studhorse Mountain development. The small portion of this area sitting between the ditch channel and the east town limits is included as a potential annexation area, as it may serve to extend existing residential neighborhoods. The large property east of the ditch, may **not** be desirable for annexation due to topography, habitat and access constraints; however its development has tremendous potential to impact Winthrop, and therefore the Town would like the opportunity to help guide decisions regarding development within the area.
6. **Islands.** A small handful of parcels are surrounded by lands within the incorporated limits. These parcels are not identified as potential annexation areas on the map, but rather incorporated into adjoining land use designations. Annexation proposals incorporating these lands should receive favorable consideration provided they do not compromise existing infrastructure or resources.
7. **Northwest Corner.** This area is not necessarily of interest for annexation, but any development in this area could create impacts to the Town. This area contains critical areas, including wetlands, flood hazard areas and steep slopes. It also contains an existing commercial building, and a residential subdivision.

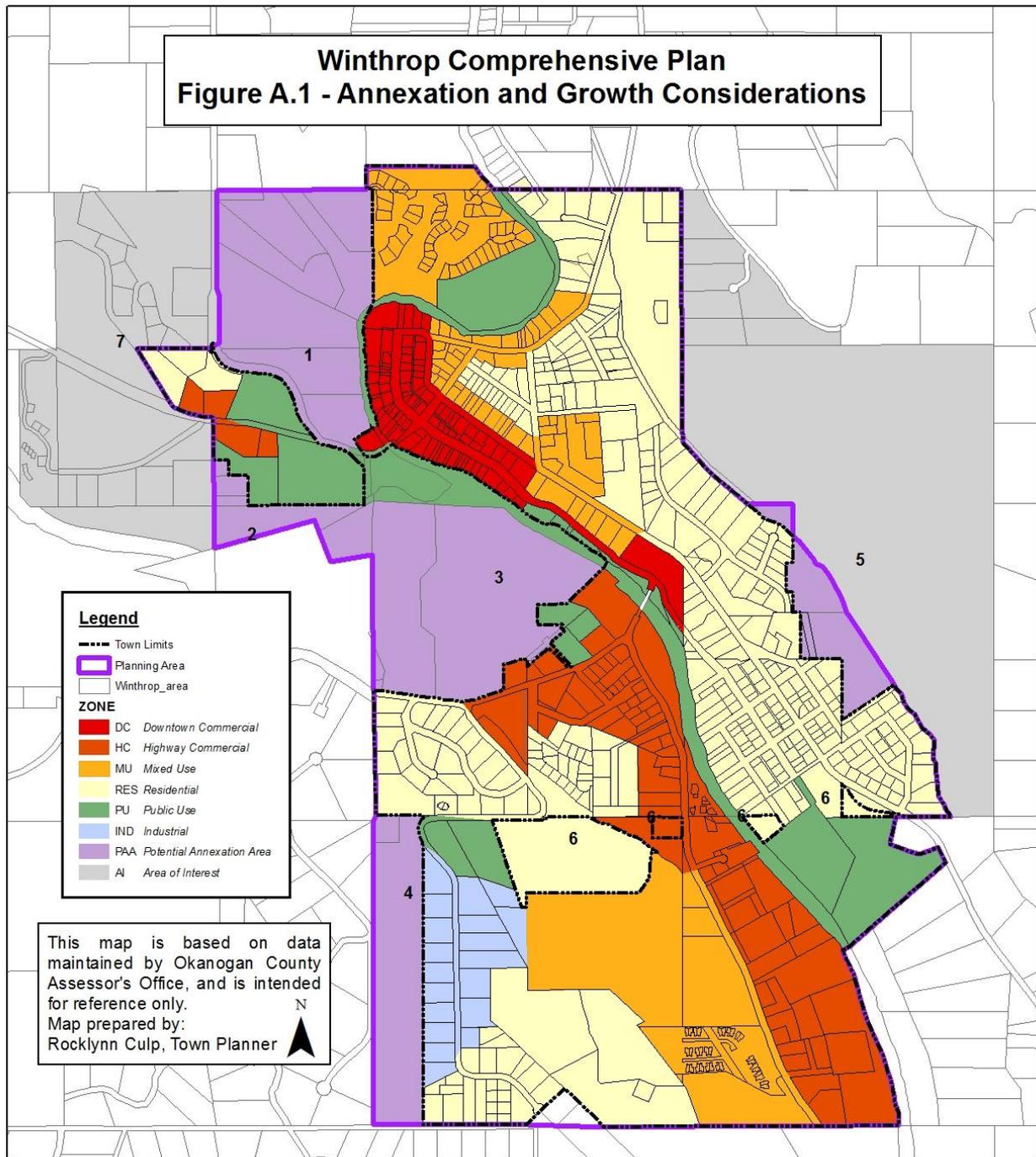


Figure A.1 - Annexation and Growth Map

LAND USE ELEMENT

Winthrop's established patterns of land use set the stage for the next 20 years of growth and development. This element builds on our history, considers current conditions, and provides guidance for the community we would like to be in the future. The Land Use Element provides goals, policies and land use designations for residential, commercial and industrial development, public uses, and resource lands.

Land Use Maps

This element includes map figures that depict existing land uses, land use designations, resource lands, critical areas and shorelines. Maps have been prepared in ArcGIS using parcel and mapping data from Okanogan County Assessor's Office and Office of Planning and Development. All map data is approximate and should be field verified prior to further use.

Land Use Background

To develop a current picture of our community, the Winthrop Planning Commission considered U.S. Census Bureau demographic and economic data, as well as analysis of Okanogan County parcel data. While the face of Winthrop changed substantially following the implementation of the western theme and the opening of the North Cascades Highway in 1972, our residential population remains roughly the same as it was in 1980. Winthrop's population peaked at 488 in 1970, and then declined for two decades; since 1990 the number of residents has grown on average approximately 1% per year. Parallel growth in the surrounding Methow Valley School District has been more rapid, resulting in a valley wide population of 5,230.

At this point in time, Winthrop's median age is 48, as compared 38 nationally, perhaps indicating a higher percentage of retired people. Of Winthrop's 400 residents, about half are in the work force; of those 200 workers, 50% work in service occupations. Median household income is \$40,605, on par with Okanogan County as a whole, and nearly \$9,000 under the national median. Despite lower median incomes, fewer Winthrop residents live below the poverty level: 12% versus a national rate of 15%.

According to 2010 census figures, Winthrop holds 300 housing units, of which 68% (205) are occupied, and 20% are for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. The split between owner and renter occupied housing is 59% owners to 41% renters. Average household size is significantly lower than the national average: 1.92 in Winthrop compared with 2.59 nationally.

Since Winthrop last adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 1999, the Town has seen some significant development. The Town has processed six annexation requests, bringing approximately 15 acres of additional land into town limits. Two of these annexations serve public purposes – land for the development of the Winthrop Ice Rink, and land

purchased by Fire District 6 with plans for eventual construction of a central training and fire hall facility. Two annexations extended the area available to a proposed development, and two incorporated “island” parcels into the town.

Between 2000 and 2012, the Town approved creation of 145 new lots through long plats or planned development and 25 new lots from short plats; of these, 74 lots have made it through final filing with the County Auditor. State legislation passed to mitigate the effects of the recession that began in 2008 extended the time period for finalizing plat actions, with the effect that certain developments which would otherwise have expired may still proceed. In 2013, the Town saw an uptick in land use applications and building permits, indicating the local economy is recovering from a 5-year downturn that paralleled the national recession.

Table LU-1 - Land Use Inventory

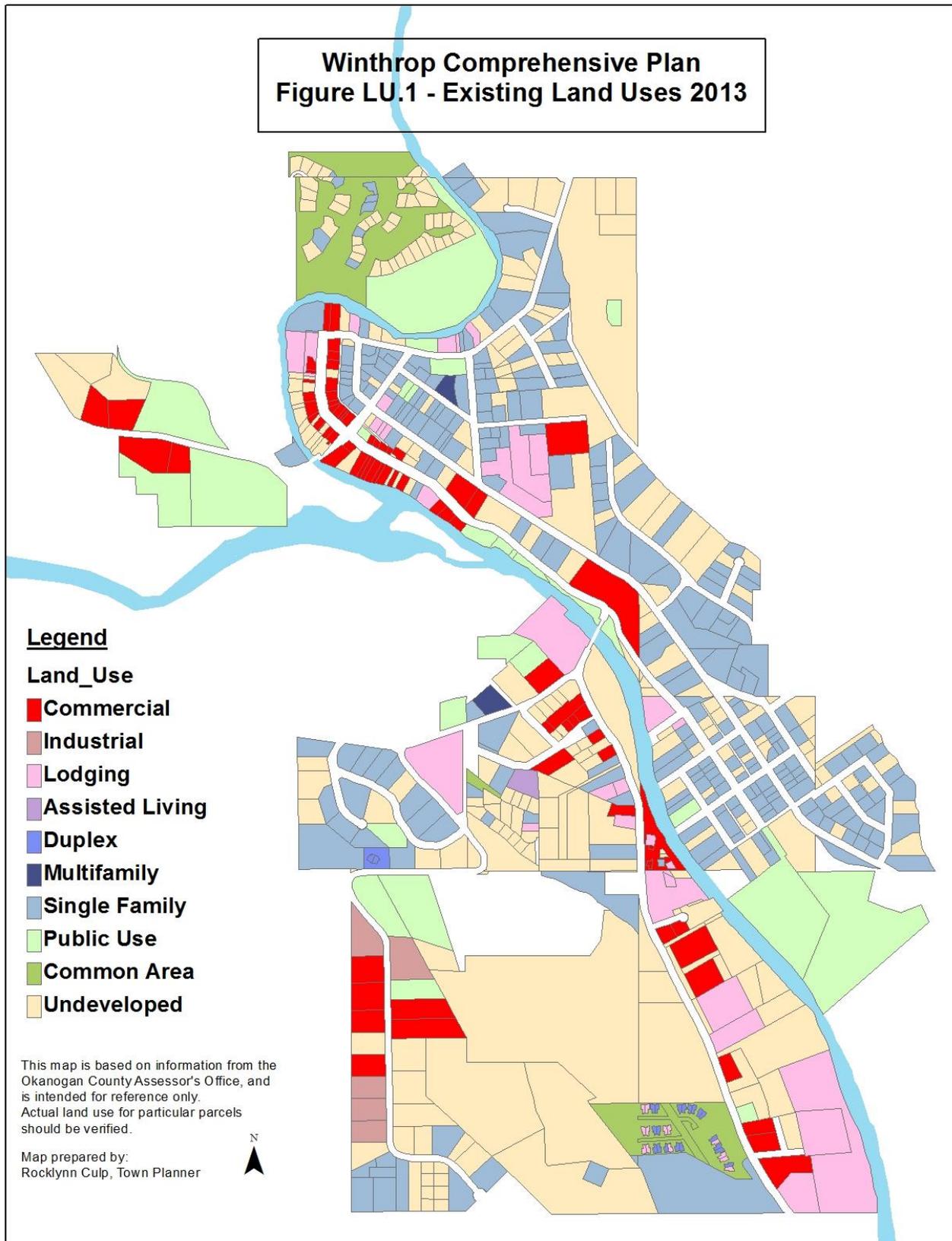
Category	Number of Parcels ¹	Approximate Acreage	Percent of Total Acreage
Single Family Residential	258	114.4	22.3%
Duplex Residential	22	1.6	0.3%
Multi Family Residential	2	1.4	0.3%
Assisted Living	1	0.9	0.2%
Lodging/overnight rentals	45	39.7	7.7%
All Other Commercial	77	37.3	7.3%
Industrial	5	6.5	1.3%
Public Use ²	27	67.8	13.2%
Undeveloped	279	217.8	42.5%
Common Areas	6	25.0	4.9%
Totals	722	512.4	100.0%

Approximately 40% of the land in Winthrop remains vacant, consistent with the 1999 Comprehensive Plan. Despite the significant subdivision activity of the past decade, a relatively small percentage of new lots have been built upon. The most concentrated residential construction has consisted of infill in the medium density Heckendorn neighborhood, where the trend has supported construction of compact homes on 5,000 square foot lots. Since 1999, there has been an increase of 65 parcels designated by Okanogan County Assessor as single family; 28 parcels hosting overnight rentals; and 11 parcels supporting other commercial endeavors. Other significant development includes the Town Trailhead and Ice Rink (2007), and the first phase of the Susie Stephens Trail (2012). These projects provide amenities for residents and visitors, in support of the local tourist and recreation economies.

¹Based on Assessor's tax parcel data.

²Includes parks, schools, town facilities such as the sewer treatment plant, shop building, and Town Hall.

The map in Figure LU-1 depicts current land use within the planning area.



General Land Use Goals & Policies

The general comprehensive planning goals for land use follow. Focused goals for specific land use designations are contained in subsequent sections.

Goal 1 Accommodate Winthrop’s anticipated population and economic growth in a sustainable manner, consistent with the community’s character, environment, resources, and quality of life.

- Policy 1.1 Provide for development within the capacity of Winthrop’s resources and capacity to deliver public services and infrastructure.
- Policy 1.2 Land use designations and development regulations should reflect the local character and environment, so as to preserve views, maintain open space, enhance access to outdoor recreation, and promote the western theme.
- Land use designations within the incorporated limits should take into account existing patterns of use, Winthrop’s capacity to provide service, and impacts to the natural environment.
 - Designation of lands outside the incorporated limits and within potential annexation areas should be based on existing uses, compatible densities, the long term needs and desires of the community, and Okanogan County designations.
- Policy 1.3 Limit consideration of annexation proposals to those which further the land use goals and policies of this plan, and which are consistent with Winthrop’s resources and ability to provide services.
- Policy 1.4 Give precedence to annexation of islands over proposals that extend the Town boundaries.
- Policy 1.5 Encourage infill development and re-development of suitable lands within the existing corporate limits.
- Policy 1.6 Focus growth in areas with the capacity to absorb development, where transportation and utility infrastructure can be provided at reasonable cost, and where adverse environmental impacts can be avoided or mitigated.

- Policy 1.7 Require that the costs associated with land development such as road access, parking, stormwater drainage, environmental review and compliance, and the design and installation of utilities, be borne by developers or public-private partnerships that provide a net benefit to the public. Such costs may include impact fees and off-site improvements necessary to maintain or develop capacity.
- Policy 1.8 Adopt maximum building sizes that are consistent with existing and planned development patterns.
- Policy 1.9 Plan for and implement a transportation/circulation network that encourages walking and bicycling, including ease of access to neighborhoods, businesses, recreation facilities and natural features of the landscape.
- Policy 1.10 Use SEPA, Shoreline, critical areas, and other land use reviews and permit processes to ensure development fits with the community character and natural environment.

Goal 2 Provide a basis for orderly and coordinated development of lands within the Town, consistent with applicable state statutes and guidelines.

- Policy 2.1 Ensure that this Land Use Element remains consistent with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, and with applicable federal and state regulations.
- Policy 2.2 Ensure that Winthrop’s Zoning, Subdivision, Environment, and other relevant titles in the Winthrop Municipal Code remain consistent with this Land Use Element and the Comprehensive Plan as a whole.
- Policy 2.3 Coordinate land use permitting and environmental review to minimize the burden of multiple land use applications for projects that are consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.
- Policy 2.4 Provide timely, effective information about land use proposals to applicants, interested agencies and the public; ensure open and fair public process in quasi-judicial land use decisions.
- Policy 2.5 Development regulations; including but not limited to lot coverage, setbacks, structure bulk and height limitations; should provide for snow storage and the absorption of storm runoff and snow melt.

- Policy 2.6 Ensure all land use proposals provide adequate access for emergency vehicles.
- Policy 2.7 Land use designations and regulations should minimize dangerous, injurious, or noxious conditions that would adversely affect the use or value of adjacent properties or neighborhoods.
- Policy 2.8 Transportation and storage of hazardous waste should only be allowed when necessary for the continued existence of existing permitted or conditional uses. New on- or off-site hazardous waste treatment and storage facilities should not be allowed except as uses accessory to otherwise permitted uses.
- Policy 2.9 Wherever possible, accommodate multiple functions within open space and trail corridors, including, stormwater management, viewpoints, protection of critical areas and/or cultural resources, and passive recreation.

Goal 3 Foster economic vitality and community livability through land use planning and implementation.

- Policy 3.1 Provide for a range of land uses and densities that recognizes the needs of residents, commercial interests, and visitors.
- Policy 3.2 Provide flexible tools such as planned developments, mixed use areas, and standards for accessory dwelling units to encourage innovation in meeting the needs of Winthrop's residents and visitors.
- Policy 3.3 Land uses with the potential to generate environmental, public health and safety, or aesthetic impacts should be required to obtain a planned development, conditional use or similar permits that provide for agency and public review.
- Policy 3.4 Provide a wide range of options for locating facilities that offer care for children, elderly and disabled or disadvantaged populations.
- Provide for the placement of various types of day care facilities in commercial and residential land use designations, in compliance with RCW 35.63.185.
 - Provide for placement of long term residential care facilities in all land use designations where residential uses are allowed.

- Regulations on day care and residential care facilities should be limited to reasonable protection of public health, safety and welfare.
- Policy 3.5 Ensure that development regulations provide opportunities for affordable housing.
- Policy 3.6 Plan for and implement *complete streets standards*, which provide for circulation by car, bike and foot.
- Policy 3.7 Plan for and implement development standards that create safe pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity throughout Winthrop.
- Develop a comprehensive non-motorized transportation network, including trails, bike lanes, sidewalks, and other non-motorized facilities that connect residential, commercial and public land uses.
 - Pursue dedication of public rights-of-way and easements that facilitate non-motorized connectivity.
- Policy 3.8 Provide open space and maintain parks that offer a range of organized and passive recreation activities, opportunities to view nature, and connectivity to trails and recreation opportunities.
- Policy 3.9 Continue to promote Winthrop’s western theme as a key economic generator and an aesthetic asset to the community.
- Policy 3.10 Recognize the importance of the Chewuch and Methow Rivers as key natural features that support Winthrop’s economy. Plan for and implement a RiverWalk corridor that provides access and views along the rivers.
- Policy 3.11 Encourage the efficient use of outdoor lighting to reduce light pollution and conserve energy while providing for public safety. Winthrop will encourage a nighttime environment that includes the ability to view the stars against a dark sky, use of energy efficient lights, appropriate levels of outdoor lighting for specific areas and uses, and use of shielding techniques that direct light downwards.
- Policy 3.12 To the extent feasible and practical, ensure that new public facilities, including transportation facilities, are visually attractive and contribute positively to the desired community character.

- Policy 3.13 Provide development standards that encourage new and existing land uses to relate positively to public streets, sidewalks, paths, and public gathering areas. Buildings and landscaped areas should present a well-designed face to the public realm, allow access to sunlight, and protect views of rivers and mountains.
- Policy 3.14 Provide for agricultural uses at a scale and intensity suitable for specific land use designations. Agricultural uses may include keeping of domestic farm animals, poultry or rabbits; bee keeping; home and community gardens; and small scale commercial agriculture not covered under Resource Lands.
- Policy 3.15 Encourage the use of xeric and native plant species for landscaping, buffers, and stormwater swales.
- Policy 3.16 Encourage energy efficiency/conservation, and provide for the use of alternative energy sources throughout all land use designations.
- Policy 3.17 Encourage development within all designations to utilize firewise site planning and landscaping methods.

Goal 4 Partner with Okanogan County and regional entities in a manner that supports coordinated land use and infrastructure development.

- Policy 4.1 Foster a partnership with Okanogan County in planning for areas outside the corporate limits that affect Winthrop's quality of life, resources and services.
- Policy 4.2 Encourage Okanogan County officials to provide notice of all land use applications within a ten mile radius of Winthrop to the Town for review and comment.
- Policy 4.3 Develop agreements with Okanogan County officials to support Winthrop's planning objectives for potential annexation areas and areas of interest.
- Policy 4.4 Participate in county-wide and regional planning efforts in a manner that furthers the goals and policies of the Winthrop Comprehensive Plan.
- Policy 4.5 Participate in watershed planning efforts in a manner that helps secure adequate water for Winthrop to grow in accord with the goals and policies of the Winthrop Comprehensive Plan.

Residential Development

This section of the Land Use Element establishes the goals, policies and land use designation for residential development. A specific Housing Element, which further addresses issues such as housing type, affordability and related topics is also included in the Housing Element of this Plan.

Goal R1 Protect neighborhood character by providing safe and pleasant residential areas.

Policy R1.1 Ensure that the Zoning Code and Official Zoning Map set forth residential designations encompassing suitable areas for neighborhood development.

Policy R1.2 Adopt standards that provide for safe, quiet, aesthetically pleasing residential areas. Standards should include, and are not limited to the following:

- Regulations for building setbacks, structure height, and maximum lot coverage that serve to protect views, allow for privacy, and maintain a pattern of development consistent with neighborhood character.
- Regulations for keeping of animals so as to provide opportunities for residents to keep domestic pets and domestic farm animals while minimizing nuisance impacts.
- Require off-street parking for residential uses.

Policy R1.3 Ensure that allowed and conditional uses in residential zones are compatible with the desired neighborhood character.

Policy R1.4 Provide for home occupation licenses through a process that ensures compatibility with neighborhood character.

Policy R1.5 Limit overnight rentals to those areas where tourist accommodations have close access to commercial and recreation areas, and are consistent with the neighborhood character.

Goal R2 Provide a range of density and location options to ensure a variety of housing types that is sensitive to demographic trends, and includes affordable, multifamily and seasonal housing.

- Policy R2.1 Provide for planned developments as a tool to reach higher allowed densities while retaining neighborhood character.
- Policy R2.2 Provide standards for integrating accessory housing units in residential areas.
- Policy R2.3 Provide for some of the residential housing needs to be met in Mixed Use and Commercial areas.
- Policy R2.4 Allow the integration of adult family care homes and day care facilities into residential areas, with standards that maintain neighborhood character and safety.

Goal R3 Connect neighborhoods with commercial and recreation areas via a safe and functional transportation network.

- Policy R3.1 Develop complete streets that ensure safe, convenient vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle access to and within all neighborhoods.
- Policy R3.2 Develop safe non-motorized routes to parks, trails, and service centers.

Residential Land Use Designations

The residential designation is intended to accomplish the following objectives:

- recognize existing land use patterns;
- recognize environmental constraints;
- recognize the capacity of the Town to provide infrastructure and service;
- recognize housing needs based on shifts in economic and demographic trends; and
- provide for orderly growth that reflects community values

Neighborhood Residential - Lands with this designation are intended to provide a broad range of residential uses in areas with adequate utilities in place. This designation may be expressed through residential zoning that provides for variations in density and housing types. Zones within the neighborhood designation are intended to provide for cohesive neighborhood character where residents may enjoy quiet, safety, privacy, and ease of access to commercial areas. Medium density zones may provide options for up to 8 residential units per acre, while higher density zones may allow up to 14 units per acre. Single family residences will typically be permitted outright in medium density zones; duplexes and accessory dwellings should be broadly permitted to foster affordability; and multifamily units should be permitted in those areas suited to higher density. The neighborhood designation allows for home occupations, adult family

homes, in-home daycares, and similar uses which are compatible with the neighborhood character. Retail commercial and overnight rentals should be prohibited in medium density areas.

In addition to the preceding residential designation, the plan also provides for a mixed-use designation which allows a mixture of residential and low intensity commercial uses. A complete description of this designation is contained in the section on mixed use development.



The Heckendorn neighborhood illustrates a pattern of infill with small to medium sized single family homes on 5,000 square foot lots.



The typical pattern in established neighborhoods is small homes on small to medium sized lots.



Winthrop has only one low income housing apartment complex. These 16 units remain in high demand.



The Summer set, Wister Way and Waring Street neighborhoods tend toward medium sized homes on medium to large lots.

Figure LU-2, the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map illustrates those areas designated for neighborhood/residential development.



Commercial Development

This section of the Land Use Element establishes the goals, policies and land use designations for commercial development.

Goal C1 Designate commercial districts that foster a lively, diverse and sound economic base for the community.

- Policy C1.1 The zoning code and official zoning map should set forth commercial designations that encourage vitality and compatibility among businesses.
- Policy C1.2 Recognize the unique roles the downtown and highway commercial districts play in meeting the commerce needs of residents and visitors.
- Policy C1.3 The Downtown Commercial district should reflect a traditional downtown feel with the following characteristics:
- Small lots with minimal setbacks that allow for a traditional downtown pattern of development.
 - Consistent implementation of the old west theme.
 - Easy pedestrian circulation, along dedicated boardwalks/sidewalks, and a RiverWalk path.
 - Access to shopping, eating, and local services that fit within the downtown scale of development and character.

- Amenities such as open public space, bicycle parking, and outdoor furnishings, located appropriately so as to maintain safe, accessible pedestrian corridors.
- Standards that ensure commercial uses are most prominent along the public ways; allowed residential uses should be subordinate to commercial uses.
- Improved orientation towards the Methow and Chewuch rivers, highlighting the natural environment.
- On-street public parking, off-street business parking, and public satellite parking areas managed to optimize use of the limited land base.

Policy C1.4 The Highway Commercial district should allow for a vibrant mix of uses along SR 20 with the following characteristics:

- A more varied pattern of lot sizes and configurations, with maximum building sizes consistent with current development patterns.
- Allowed uses and standards that support a mix of commercial development appropriate for an arterial roadway.
- Multifamily housing may be allowed with mitigation that ensure compatibility with commercial uses.
- Standards that ensure commercial uses are most prominent along the highway corridor; allowed residential uses on lots that have highway frontage should generally be subordinate to commercial uses.
- Consistent implementation of the old west theme.
- Safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle trail routes that enable access along the highway corridor.
- Parking needs primarily met on individual lots.
- Snow storage and stormwater needs met on individual lots.

Goal C2 Provide policies and regulations that support the development of safe, inviting and accessible commercial districts.

Policy C2.1 Setbacks, lot coverage, and development standards should reflect public health and safety priorities.

Policy C2.2 Develop and implement a signage program to improve way-finding in and between the commercial zones, and better direct people to parking areas and other key town features.

Policy C2.3 Development standards should preserve views from public rights-of-way to the mountains and river corridors.

- Policy C2.4 Development of commercial districts should emphasize ease of pedestrian circulation, and provide for integration of vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic at a scale appropriate to the pattern of development.
- Policy C2.5 Provide parking standards for the respective commercial districts that reflect their characteristics and available land base.
- Policy C2.6 Ensure commercial districts have strong connectivity to key recreation facilities such as the Town Trailhead, Mack Lloyd Park and the Barn.
- Policy C2.7 Prioritize completion of key pedestrian routes within and between the two commercial districts, including, but not limited to:
- Susie Stephens Trail as the primary pedestrian arterial between the two commercial
 - RiverWalk districts, and as a valuable amenity to downtown.
- Policy C2.8 Development regulations should incorporate greenbelt buffers; landscaping; snow storage; stormwater drainage; adequate utilities; noise, odor, air, and water pollution control; and attractive fencing or similar measures.

Goal C3 Ensure cohesive development in accord with the western theme.

- Policy C3.1 Require all commercial buildings to conform to the western theme of the Town as established by Chapter 15.08 of the Winthrop Municipal Code.
- Policy C3.2 Regulate size, height, type, placement and lighting of commercial signs, to conform to the western theme of the Town.

Commercial Designations

The commercial designations are intended to accomplish the following objectives:

- recognize existing land use patterns;
- recognize environmental constraints;
- recognize the capacity of the Town to provide infrastructure; and
- recognize commercial needs and opportunities based on tourism, the local economy, and livable community.

Two primarily commercial land use designations are established through this plan: Downtown and Highway:

Downtown Commercial (DC) - The downtown commercial designation allows typical commercial uses consistent with an aesthetically pleasing, pedestrian-oriented business area. Implementation of the western theme remains essential to the downtown character. In addition to maintaining an orientation towards main street, this designation encourages access to and enjoyment of the Methow and Chewuch Rivers. With limited area for off-street parking, successful development within the downtown requires innovative strategies for shared parking and mitigation programs for development of parking facilities within walking distance. Upper floor residential uses of a commercial building are encouraged.



Highway Commercial (HC) - The highway commercial designation is intended for areas that provide a full range of commercial uses, particularly those that often involve vehicular access along an arterial route and supply adjacent customer parking areas. Limited “light” manufacturing, that includes a retail component, is permissible. Residential uses may be integrated into this district with a primary commercial use; multifamily may be allowed as a primary use under suitable conditions, with standards that support compatibility with commercial uses.



Figure LU-2, the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map illustrates the location of each of the commercial land use designations.

Mixed Use Development

This segment of the Land Use Element establishes goals, policies, and a land use designation for development of areas where commercial and residential uses are blended, and serve to transition between focused commercial and neighborhood districts.

Goal MU1 Provide for safe, attractive and accessible mixed use districts that blend low impact commercial and residential uses, and buffer quieter neighborhoods from downtown and highway commercial districts.

- Policy MU1.1 Ensure that the Zoning Code and Official Zoning Map set forth mixed use districts which allow for a compatible blend of low impact commercial and residential uses, recognizing that mixed use districts may have distinct characteristics that guide the appropriate balance of uses.
- Policy MU1.2 Locate mixed use districts where they function to smooth the transition from high intensity commercial to quiet neighborhoods.
- Policy MU1.3 Mixed use districts should support moderate levels of activity and traffic (less than commercial districts, more than neighborhoods).
- Policy MU1.4 Mixed use districts should incorporate a range of housing types and densities, and allow low impact commercial uses that are quiet, safe, and able to blend into a neighborhood setting.
- Policy MU1.5 Adopt standards that provide for safe, attractive and accessible mixed use districts. Standards should include, but are not limited to the following:
- Regulations for building setbacks, structure height, and maximum lot coverage that serve to protect views and maintain a consistent pattern of medium density development.
 - Regulations for keeping of animals so as to provide opportunities for residents to keep domestic pets, fowl, or domestic farm animals while minimizing nuisance impacts.
 - Regulations for off street parking, stormwater drainage, landscaping.

- Regulations that ensure compatibility of businesses with residential uses.

Policy MU1.6 Ensure that allowed and conditional uses in mixed use zones are compatible with a medium to high density residential setting.

Policy MU1.7 Provide for live-work studios and home occupations through a process that ensures compatibility with the desired zoning district character.

Policy MU1.8 Development should be required to minimize potential offsite impacts by incorporating greenbelt buffers; landscaping; snow storage; adequate utilities; noise, odor, air, and water pollution control; attractive fencing or similar measures.

Goal MU2 Provide a range of density and location options to ensure a variety of housing types that is sensitive to demographic trends, and includes affordable, multifamily and seasonal housing.

Policy MU2.1 Provide for planned developments as a tool to retain zoning district character while achieving higher densities.

Policy MU2.2 Provide standards for integrating accessory housing units in mixed use areas.

Policy MU2.3 Allow the integration of adult family care homes and day care facilities into mixed use areas, with standards that maintain zoning district character and safety.

Goal MU3 Connect mixed use districts with commercial and recreation areas via a safe and functional transportation network.

Policy MU3.1 Develop complete streets that ensure safe, convenient vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle access to and within all mixed use areas.

Policy MU3.2 Develop safe non-motorized routes to parks, trails, and service centers.

Mixed Use Designations

The mixed use designation is intended to accomplish the following objectives:

- recognize existing land use patterns;
- recognize environmental constraints;

- recognize the capacity of the Town to provide infrastructure; and
- recognize the need for a variety of housing types to meet economic and demographic trends, while expanding the area available for low impact commercial activities.

Mixed Use (MU) - The mixed use designation allows a variety of zoning districts that blend a range of residential and low impact commercial uses. Commercial uses within mixed use areas should be compatible with a neighborhood setting. Desirable businesses generate low to moderate traffic, are quiet, and do not generate light, glare, odors or emissions; site design should present an aesthetic appearance, consistent with Western standards where applicable.



Figure LU-2, the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map illustrates the location of each of the mixed use land use designations.

Industrial Development

This portion of the Land Use Element establishes the goal, policies and land use designation for industrial development.

Goal I1 Promote light industrial development which contributes to economic diversification, growth, and stability of the community.

- Policy I1.1 The zoning code and official zoning map should set forth an industrial district that encourages a diversified local economy by providing a location for industrial uses not suited for other locations.
- Policy I1.2 Non-industrial uses allowed in areas designated Industrial should be compatible with industrial uses.
- Policy I1.3 Development of Industrial districts should emphasize connectivity to arterial routes, with potential for heavy truck traffic.
- Policy I1.4 Adopt standards for development within the Industrial designation that include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Regulations for building setbacks, structure height, and maximum lot coverage that allow sufficient flexibility for a range of industrial and manufacturing uses.

- Requirements for adequate off-street parking, loading areas, and fire access.
- Containment and absorption of snow and stormwater on site in accord with local and state regulations.
- Landscaping, fencing or other buffers which serve to enclose uses and limit impacts.

Goal I2 Provide reasonable standards that foster industrial uses while protecting the environment, community vitality, and livability.

Policy I2.1 Recognize the importance of providing a location for industrial uses while limiting impacts to adjoining residential or commercial zones.

Policy I2.2 Allowed and conditional uses in the Industrial designation must conform to local, state and federal standards and permit requirements for environmental protection; including, but not limited to applicable standards and permitting for water, air, emissions, particulates, noise, odor, or lighting.

Industrial Designations

Industrial areas should have ready access to primary transportation corridors and utilities with sites large enough to accommodate off-street parking, loading and reasonable expansion.

Light Industrial (LI) - Lands within this designation are characterized by the historic existence of industrial types of uses. Light industrial activities such as warehousing, light product assembly, indoor and outdoor storage, wholesaling, contractor's supply, and similar uses are generally permitted. More intensive uses with the potential to create noise, odor, smoke and dust should require review and permitting to minimize impacts.



Figure LU-2, the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element Map illustrates the location of properties with the industrial land use designations.

Public Use

This portion of the Land Use Element establishes the goal, policies and land use designation for public uses.

Goal P1 Protect the public's interest in publicly owned, operated and maintained facilities or properties that help create a vibrant, livable community and ensure cost-effective delivery of services to the public.

- Policy P1.1 Acknowledge the importance of public uses to the general health, safety, welfare and economic wellbeing of area citizens and protect such uses for future generations.
- Policy P1.2 Ensure that if present public use areas are converted to other, non-public uses that the original public use will be replaced with a similar if not enhanced facility.
- Policy P1.3 Provide and maintain all public facilities that serve the diverse cultural, social and economic sectors of the planning area.
- Policy P1.4 Encourage public uses, where appropriate, to provide protection for critical areas including fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands, shorelands, known flood hazard areas, and steep slopes.
- Policy P1.5 Encourage the development of trails, walkways and/or sidewalks to link public uses areas with one another and with residential, commercial and industrial areas.
- Policy P1.6 Strive for public uses areas that are "barrier free" and provide opportunities, where appropriate, for all age groups, regardless of race, creed, color or religious preference.

Public Use Designation

Public Use (PU) - Land with this designation is publically owned property such as the land containing and adjoining the wastewater treatment facility and the Town's park lands. Not all publically owned property is included in this designation, particularly when such properties are relatively small in size or are being considered for sale and conversion to private uses.



Resource Lands

Under the Growth Management Act, classifying and designating "natural resource lands of long-term commercial significance" is a required task for all cities, towns and counties in the state. Resource lands include agricultural lands, forest lands, and mineral resource lands. During 1993 and 1994, the Town of Winthrop and other Okanogan County communities participated in a coordinated planning effort to classify and designate resource lands. Based on this coordinated strategy, Winthrop has no identified resource lands within its boundaries. There are agricultural lands and mineral resources within proximity of the town; there are no forest lands in proximity.

The goals and policies herein provide guidance for coordinating with Okanogan County on the development and permitting of resource lands. Since Winthrop does not have any designated resource lands within our boundaries, these goals and policies are not directly applicable to development in Winthrop. However, they may apply to potential annexation areas and areas of interest, and to other lands under County jurisdiction where development could generate impacts to Winthrop.

Goal 1 Support commercially-significant agricultural operations, while protecting public health, safety and welfare

Policy 1.1 Agricultural uses should be allowed where they can be appropriately mitigated to be compatible with the mix of commercial and residential uses within the Town and potential annexation areas.

Policy 1.2 Encourage the establishment of sufficient buffers for agricultural uses to protect public health, safety and welfare.

Policy 1.3 Encourage the control of noxious weeds.

Policy 1.4 Recognize and support the multiple uses and beneficial role agricultural resource lands play in the provision of open spaces, enhancement of wildlife habitat and the rural qualities prized by the community.

Goal 2 Support mineral development in areas outside of Winthrop where viable deposits exist and can be utilized under historic, present, and projected land use patterns for the area

Policy 2.1 Residential and commercial development should take priority over any proposed mineral exploration or development within Winthrop, potential annexation areas, and areas of interest.

Policy 2.2 Lands being considered for annexation that have known mineral development sites (including gravel or soil extraction) should

include zoning designations that would allow the use or potential use to take place while providing protection for urban uses.

Policy 2.3 The Town should coordinate with relevant county, state, federal and tribal entities on the development of mineral resources; coordination should address access to mineralized lands through Winthrop, suitable buffers for residential and commercial uses, and reclamation of the land according to an approved site reclamation plan.

Classification of Resource Lands

Agricultural Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance - Okanogan County uses six criteria to classify the long-term value of agricultural lands. For the sake of consistency, Winthrop uses the same criteria to determine the extent of agricultural lands of long-term significance within and around the Town; such lands must meet at least four of the following six criteria:

- Land is currently in agricultural use.
- Land has one or more of the following improvements in place:
 - Irrigation facilities (public or private)
 - Drainage facilities (public or private)
 - Fencing, stock watering or other physical improvements that enhance the lands suitability for commercial agricultural production
- Land is enrolled in Agricultural Open Space taxation program.
- Land is surrounded by lands primarily in agricultural use with few non-farm commercial, industrial or residential uses and is not located in areas with clear potential for more intense uses of land
- Land is not located within areas identified for urban or suburban growth (or similar designation) in official city, town, or county comprehensive plans
- Land is not located within an area served by domestic sewer or domestic water service districts.

Forest Resource Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance - For the initial purposes of classification of Forest Lands for timber production and harvest, the Town of Winthrop intends to designate Land grades 1 through 5 pursuant to WAC 458-40-535, as forest lands of long-term commercial significance.

Mineral Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance - A four-tiered classification scheme presented in a report by Alan Robert Grant to the U.S. Forest Service dated May 3, 1982 is the basis for the five-tiered system developed by the Okanogan County GMA Mineral Resource Lands subcommittee to classify these resource lands within the county. The Okanogan County classification system is based on the "likelihood of activity" which includes the following categories:

- Area I has very good potential for development of minerals of long term commercial significance. These areas will see continued exploration activities and includes areas which have historic mineral resources, which include some identified and demonstrated reserves, with a very good potential for undiscovered reserves.
- Area II has good potential and includes areas geologically favorable with some identified reserves and good potential for undiscovered reserves.
- Area III has moderate potential and includes areas geologically favorable with some identified reserves and moderate potential for undiscovered reserves. Also included are areas where rock units of poor potential obscure underlying areas of good and very good potential.
- Area IV has fair potential and includes areas geologically unfavorable overall, but includes certain areas that require additional geologic investigation. Also included are areas where rock units of poor potential obscure underlying areas of moderate, good and very good potential. With the exception of the existing gravel pit site located on Horizon Flat, most of the Town and the planning area lie within this designation.
- Area V has poor potential and includes areas that are geologically unfavorable with poor potential for undiscovered reserves.

Resource Lands Designations

Agricultural Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance - No parcels of land within Winthrop meet the classification of agriculture lands; there are agricultural lands in proximity to the Town.

Forest Resource Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance - No forest resource lands of long-term commercial significance have been identified within the Town of Winthrop nor the associated planning area.

Mineral Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance - No mineral resource lands have been identified in Winthrop; there are mineral lands in proximity to the Town.

Land Use Designations Map

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

Our transportation and circulation system plays a pivotal role in building a livable community and strong local economy. Winthrop seeks to develop and maintain a system that serves the needs of residents, business owners, and visitors. Our transportation system must emphasize safety, mobility, accessibility, and connectivity for all users, including vehicular traffic, bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and those with mobility impairments or disabilities. As we describe and set goals for our transportation system, we need a common understanding of these central characteristics:

1. **Safety** - A *safe* transportation system minimizes the chances of people encountering physically harmful situations while walking, bicycling or as a driver or passenger in a motor vehicle.
2. **Mobility** - The *mobility* of our transportation system ensures people and goods can move through our community efficiently. Mobility is affected by the number of access points, parking, pedestrian crossings and other factors that inhibit travel.
3. **Accessibility** - The *accessibility* of our transportation system allows people to reach specific locations by different modes of legal travel.
4. **Connectivity** - *Connectivity* refers to the extent that the network provides direct routes of travel and avoids circuitous routes. Increased connectivity improves accessibility.

Regional and Statewide Planning Context

Strong connections to population centers such as Wenatchee, the Puget Sound region, and Spokane help ensure a healthy local economy. Three main arterials facilitate travel to and from Winthrop: State Route 20, US Highway 97, and State Route 153.

State Route 20 passes through the heart of Winthrop, in the dual role of arterial thoroughfare and “Main Street.” SR 20 originates off of US Hwy 101 on the Olympic Peninsula and ends at the Idaho border where it intersects with US Highway 2. SR 20 is both a designated Highway of Statewide Significance and a Scenic Byway. The stretch of SR 20 that passes through the North Cascades west of Winthrop typically closes for 3-4 months each winter.

SR 20 connects with SR 153 approximately 10 miles south of Winthrop, and with US Hwy 97 in the county seat, Okanogan, approximately 35 miles to the east. SR 153 is a short highway segment that connects SR 20 at Twisp with Hwy 97 at Pateros. It provides a year round route through the lower Methow Valley for travelers from locations south or west of the Methow Valley. US Hwy 97 is an important north-south

route from the Canadian border to its intersection with Interstate 5 in Northern California. In addition to reaching Winthrop via Hwy 97 to SR 153 to SR 20, travelers can come via 97 the intersection with SR 20 in Okanogan. Although neither 153 nor 97 pass through Winthrop, they ensure that travelers and goods can reach our community. Once here connections to local, county, forest and private roadways and trails enable a further network of access.

Winthrop actively participates in local and regional transportation planning in order to maintain good connectivity to and through our town. Until 2014, the Town participated in region wide planning through the North Central Regional Planning Organization (NCRTPO). In 2013, NCRTPO moved to limit its area to Chelan and Douglas counties. In the wake of that decision, Winthrop has been working with other Okanogan County jurisdictions to establish a new county-wide council of governments to replace the RTPO functions. Together Winthrop and other Okanogan County jurisdictions intend to ensure our region remains vitally connected to larger statewide, national and international networks. This transportation element should maintain consistency with planning documents adopted by the new council of governments, or any subsequent regional transportation planning groups.

Local Transportation Planning and Data

Planning. At this update, Winthrop primarily utilizes our annual Six-year Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) to guide decisions about transportation improvement. We draft our STIP based on local inventory and assessment of roadway conditions, pavement ratings from the Washington Transportation Improvement Board, and local transportation planning priorities. Previous transportation studies – mostly compiled with the anticipation of the development of a major resort west of town - are out of date. In 2014, we lack current comprehensive data and analysis of how our transportation system is functioning. Without that information, we cannot accurately assess current level of service for key roadways and intersections. The Town should seek funding for transportation studies to assess the function of our system under current and projected conditions.

Traffic Data. WSDOT maintains an annual traffic report that includes actual counts or estimates at given locations along state highways. 2012 is the most recent year for which the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is figured based on actual counts. The table below shows AADT at 3 locations in Winthrop, along with a permanent counter that is approximately 1 mile west of town.

Milepost	Location	2012 AADT
191.90	1 mile west of Winthrop	1700
192.84	Chewuch River Bridge	2900
193.35	Main St Intersection	3900
193.47	White Avenue Y Intersection	4300

The traffic counts show concentrated traffic at the White Avenue “Y” intersection and at the intersection with Main Street, at the SR 20 metal bridge. On average, traffic is less concentrated at the Chewuch River Bridge and west of Town; however, it seems likely that average includes higher rates during the summer tourist season and lower rates in winter. Peak traffic counts were not available.

Level of Service. Typically, Level of Service (LOS) is measured based upon the delay experienced when traveling a roadway segment or when going through an intersection. The primary measure for LOS is time-delay, with speed and capacity utilization employed as secondary measures. An optimal level of service allows vehicles to flow through the system without significant delays. LOS standards are coordinated between the WSDOT and the local agency for state highways, and the Town sets LOS for the local roadway system.

In rural areas and small towns, the typical measure of LOS is ineffective due to relatively low traffic volumes, especially when averaged over a year as in the AADT numbers provided above. Because of this difference, a more complete measure of LOS for two-lane streets also rates *operation* and *condition*. *Operation* LOS rates a roadway in terms of how its characteristics compare with those necessary for it to function as intended. *Condition* LOS rates a roadway in terms of how its physical characteristics compare to those of an ideal facility.

In Winthrop, delays occur most often at the four-way intersection in downtown. An updated study of the Bridge Street – Riverside Avenue/SR 20 intersection, along with SR 20 through town would provide valuable information. Such a study should consider the broader measures of LOS, including operation and condition.

System Inventory and Characterization

Streets and Roads

The Town of Winthrop street system consists of just under 10 miles of roadways, including 6.5 miles of town streets, 1.7 miles of state highway, and 1.5 miles of private roads. In addition, the town holds several small segments of alley or undeveloped streets that are not presently utilized. Figure T-1 shows the existing street and road system. The majority of the system is bituminous surface treated (BST) with gravel shoulders. The remaining is a combination of BST without gravel shoulders, asphalt pavement with curb and gutter, and a small number of low maintenance dirt roadways.

Functional Classification. WSDOT assigns federal functional classifications to roadways across the state according to guidelines produced by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). As stated on the WSDOT website:

Functional classification is the grouping of highways, roads and streets by the character of service they provide and was developed for transportation planning purposes... Comprehensive transportation planning, an integral part of total

economic and social development, uses functional classification to determine how travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner.

Three functional classifications apply to Winthrop’s roadways:

- **Rural Minor Arterial.** SR 20 through town is a *rural minor arterial*. As an arterial route, the primary function of the SR 20 corridor is to provide mobility, allowing people and goods to reach Winthrop, as well as travel through our community. The rural minor arterial designation stretches from Sedro Woolley to Okanogan. From the west entrance to MP 193.85, at approximately the Virginian resort, the highway is two travel lanes with the paved lane width varying from 11 to 16 feet. From MP 193.85 to the south town limits (approximately 1/3 mile), the highway has a center turn lane.
- **Rural Major Collector.** Winthrop has three *rural major collector routes*. Collector routes facilitate mobility on a more local level and provide a backbone for accessibility within the community. Locally, our collector routes funnel traffic into Winthrop from key recreation destinations and the neighboring town of Twisp; they include:
 - Riverside Avenue north of Bridge Street and Bluff Street to the north Town limits. Bluff Street turns into the East Chewuch Road outside of Winthrop, and the rural major collector designation continues onto the county road.
 - Main Street from the intersection with SR 20 south to Center Street, then east on Center to Castle Avenue, and south on Castle Avenue to the Town limits. From the Town limits, the major collector designation continues south to Twisp along the Twisp-Winthrop Eastside Road.
 - White Avenue from the intersection with SR 20 to Town limits. At the Town limits, White Avenue becomes Twin Lakes Road. The entire Twin Lakes Road is designated a rural major collector.
- **Local Access.** The remainder of Winthrop’s street network is considered *local access*. These streets provide access within and between neighborhoods and commercial areas. Improving the connectivity of local access streets for all modes of travel allows for more efficient circulation.

Figure T.1 shows the existing street system and functional classifications.

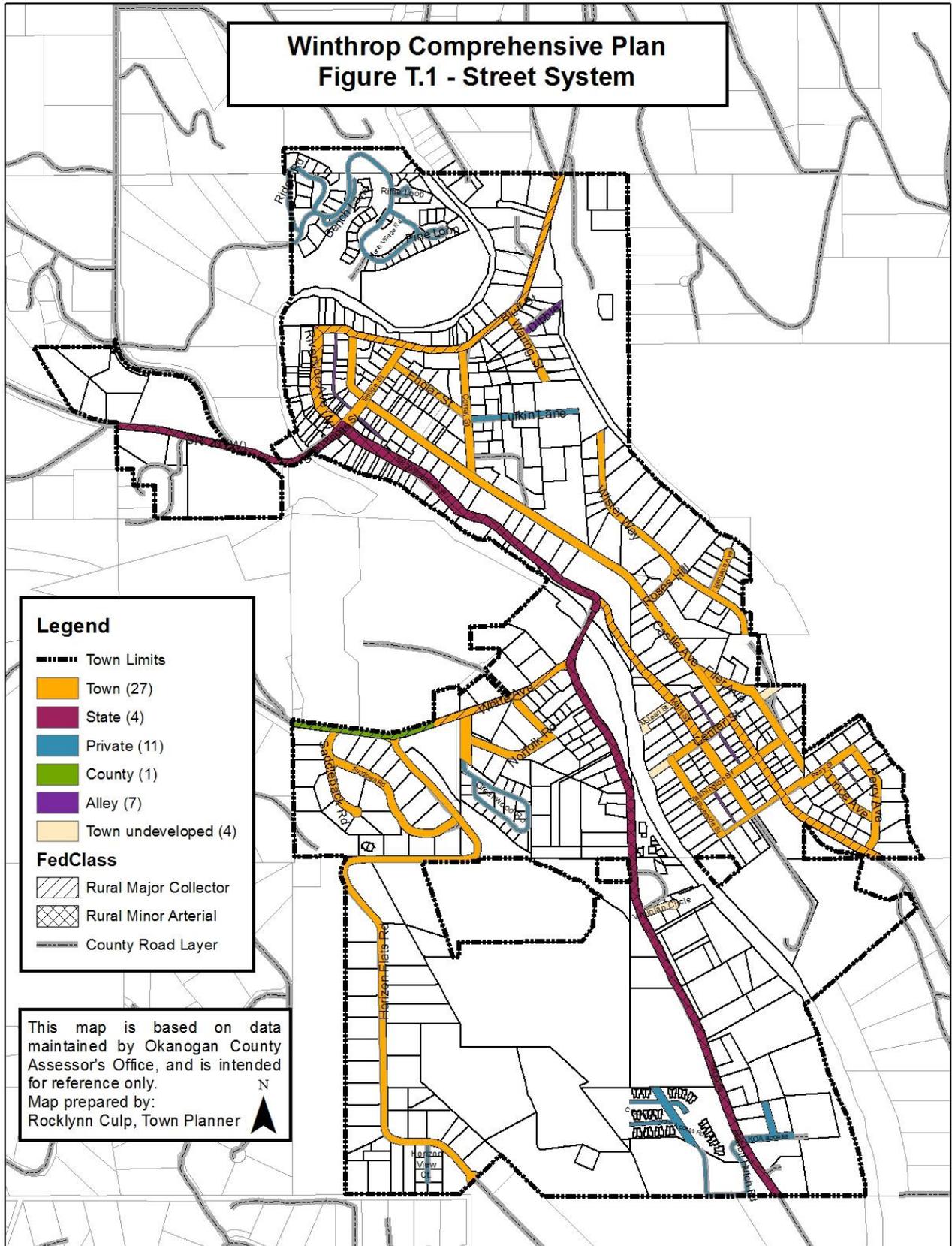


Figure T.1-Winthrop Street System

Parking

Due to the narrow confines of downtown, parking has been a long standing concern for downtown businesses. Throughout the downtown core, most parking is front-in angle parking, requiring use of the travel lane of SR 20/Riverside Avenue for pulling in or backing out. Additionally there are some parallel parking stalls which also require maneuvering within travel lanes for access. The parking lot of the Winthrop Barn and the Town Trailhead also offer parking within walking distance of downtown.

In 2012, two Planning Commissioners conducted a *Parking Capacity Survey* to assess the numbers of public and private parking spaces serving the downtown core. Because off-street parking typically is unpaved, and stalls are not striped, the number of spaces is estimated based on area. The findings of the survey are summarized as follows:

Location	Public		Private		Mixed Public-Private, Sole Use, or Uncertain		TOTALS
	On-street	Off-street	On-street	Off-street	On-street	Off-street	
SR 20 – 4-way to Spring Creek bridge	84		1	28	6	21	140
Bridge St – 4-way to bridge	11	16				34	61
Riverside N of 4-way	83			44		48	175
Barn and Library		145					145
Behind the Duck				36			36
Ice Rink – Town Trailhead		120					120
TOTALS	178	281	1	108	6	103	677

Source – Welles Bretherton and Art Campbell, Winthrop Planning Commission

On street parking provides the most direct access to downtown businesses, while public off-street parking at the Barn or Town Trailhead require the ability and willingness to walk. Currently, parking options at the Barn and Town Trailhead may be underutilized due to lack of signage.

Public Transit

A Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) for Okanogan County was established in 1996. Although an initial county-wide vote in 1997 to establish public transit failed, Okanogan County voters approved a resolution to fund public transit in November, 2013. The Okanogan County Transit Authority (OCTA) is currently working toward initiating services in 2015. OCTA intends to offer an initial service that includes two

routes in and out of the valley: a Winthrop/Twisp to Omak route and a Winthrop/Twisp to Pateros route. In order to decrease route travel time, bus stops will be limited and Park-and-Ride facilities are encouraged.

The new countywide public transit system will bolster existing service provided by the non-profit Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition (OCTN) which offers inter-city commuter routes and shuttles, typically serving senior and disabled citizens, but available to the general population. The service runs five days a week, but with a limited schedule. Annual ridership is approximately 70,000.

Wenatchee is the nearest city to offer rail and bus connections for more extended travel. Amtrack's Empire Builder route stops in Wenatchee once eastbound and once westbound each day. Bus service is available through Northwest Trailways.

Non-Motorized Circulation

Pedestrian Facilities: In keeping with the western theme, pedestrian access in the downtown area of Winthrop is provided via boardwalks. The Chewuch River Bridge (Bridge Street) possesses a separated walkway which permits safe pedestrian movement across the river and along the shoulder of State Route 20 (SR-20) to paved walkways in Mack Lloyd Park. The Methow River Bridge (Green Bridge) has a separated pedestrian walkway along its west side. However, this walkway is narrow, and has no connecting sidewalks nor defined pedestrian walkways.

For nearly two decades, the Town gathered information and planned for a trail system that would create safe alternate circulation routes for pedestrians. The original concept of a "South End Pedestrian Trail" gradually evolved into a detailed plan for the Susie Stephens Trail. Other concepts, including a RiverWalk, a trail to the schools, a trail to Pearrygin Lake State Park, and a loop through North Village have generated interest. Public input in various forums, including the 2012 Parks and Recreation Survey, continues to indicate decisive support for pedestrian trails and pathways.

The first segment of the Susie Stephens trail was completed in 2012. A second segment is scheduled for construction in 2016. These first two segments improve pedestrian and bicycle access by providing an alternate route to SR 20. The multiuse trail stretches from the Methow Conservancy building in downtown to the Virginian resort. A third segment will complete access to the south end of town.

The RiverWalk—another long held vision for improving downtown pedestrian circulation—is poised for Phase 1 design and construction. The first segment of the RiverWalk consists of an underpass under the Chewuch River Bridge, and construction of a five foot wide pedestrian path along the left bank of the Chewuch River from the Farmer's Exchange to Carlos 1800. Future segments will connect RiverWalk to the Susie Stephens Trail at the south end of downtown and to the trail through SaTeekhWa Park at the north end. The RiverWalk project aims to extend the downtown Western theme

along the Chewuch River to create opportunities for enjoyment of the river setting, provide activities for visitors and increase potential for commercial ventures.

Over recent years, federal and state funded transportation projects have been required to provide pedestrian facilities. As a result, a 2013 project on Castle Avenue provided the first sidewalks in Winthrop outside of the downtown area. A reconstruction of upper Bluff Street in 2015 added another stretch of sidewalk. Future projects will extend sidewalks along Castle Avenue, Bluff Street and other high traffic local access routes. Eventually, these projects can be expected to greatly improve pedestrian safety and connectivity throughout Winthrop.

Bicycle: Winthrop has seen a significant rise in bicycle trips around and through town. In parallel with our efforts to improve pedestrian circulation, the Town strives to provide safer access for bicycle traffic and better connections to Methow Trails' facilities. The initial steps taken to date include the first segment of the multiuse Susie Stephens Trail, and short segments of bike lanes along Castle Avenue and Bluff Street.

SR-20 has been designated as a state bicycle route recognized by WSDOT for many years. In 2014, Washington State approved the designation of a 407-mile leg of US Bike Route 10, passing through Winthrop and the Methow Valley on SR 20; this is the first such interstate route to be designated in the state. The route stretches across the state from Anacortes to Newport. Eventually, US Bike Route 10 will cross the northern US from Washington to Maine.

Okanogan County has identified several bike routes that converge in Winthrop. These routes utilize SR-20, White Avenue/Twin Lakes Road, Riverside Avenue, Main Street, Castle Avenue, Center Street and Bluff Street within the town limits. At the edge of town, bike routes continue on the East Chewuch Road to Pearrygin, the West Chewuch Road to national forest lands, and along the Twisp-Winthrop Eastside Road to Twisp.

Efforts to improve bicycle circulation continue with the addition of bike lanes on the Upper Bluff Street reconstruction and extension of the Susie Stephens Trail. Promoting bicycle and pedestrian access throughout the town remains a high priority. In particular, we seek to provide strong connections to parks, downtown, and other high traffic areas; Pearrygin Lake State Park; and Methow Trails facilities.

Air Traffic

Four major airports are within 400 road miles of the Methow Valley: Seattle-Tacoma, Vancouver, Spokane, and Portland. Smaller airports can be found closer to Winthrop including Pangborn Field in Wenatchee, Omak City Airport Omak, Methow Valley State Airport between Winthrop and Twisp and the Twisp municipal airport. These airports hold the most potential to provide direct access to Winthrop.

Methow Valley State Airport, home of the North Cascades Smokejumper Base, is located about four miles south of Winthrop adjacent to the Eastside Winthrop-Twisp

Road. Originally developed by the U.S. Forest Service, this airport is now owned and operated by WSDOT's Aeronautics Division. The 5,049 feet lighted runway is stressed for 30,000 pound aircraft; it can accommodate all small airplanes and most commuter-type planes. The field has accommodated C-119's, DC-6's, and Lear Jets. Private planes may land and tie down; self-service fueling is available 24-hours per day.

Transportation Goals and Policies

Goal T1 Develop and preserve a safe, accessible transportation system for all users, including vehicular traffic, bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users.

Policy T1.1 Prioritize transportation/circulation improvements that enhance public safety and provide for all legal modes and system users of all abilities.

Policy T1.2 Plan for future transportation corridors that enhance connectivity with the existing system, and create a comprehensive, integrated circulation network for all legal modes of travel.

Policy T1.3 Develop and implement a “complete streets” policy to cover all transportation projects.

Policy T1.4 Adopt and implement design standards that achieve a connected, safe, accessible roadway network consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.

Goal T2 Ensure local transportation systems have strong links to regional and statewide routes so as to promote mobility of people and goods.

Policy T2.1 Participate in county and regional transportation planning efforts to promote strong regional and statewide links to the Methow Valley.

Policy T2.2 Develop and implement transportation improvements for reducing vehicular and pedestrian congestion and delays during peak periods.

Policy T2.3 Support and participate in the implementation of voter approved transit service through the Okanogan County Transit Authority (OCTA).

Policy T2.4 Support the development of electric vehicle charging facilities.

Goal T3 Develop and preserve a safe, connected, efficient and cost-effective transportation system.

- Policy T3.1 Preserve existing public roadways, shoulders, bike lanes, trails and sidewalks in functional condition.
- Policy T3.2 New development should dedicate roadways as public, with sufficient ROW width to meet design standards and provide for complete streets.
- Policy T3.3 New development should provide ROW easements from adjacent streets to adjacent developable property for purpose of connectivity.
- Policy T3.4 New development adjacent to or accessed by substandard streets should provide ROW easements for construction of standard width streets and pedestrian facilities.
- Policy T3.5 Wherever practical, require development of public roadways where public water and sewer utilities are located.
- Policy T3.6 Require new commercial development or redevelopment to complete transportation and access improvements concurrent with development.

Goal T4 Design transportation/circulation improvements to promote the town's economy and enhance Winthrop's "western" theme.

- Policy T4.1 Provide coordinated signage that enhances circulation, access and parking. Wherever possible, signs should be designed for consistency with the western theme.
- Policy T4.2 Encourage acquisition of sites for rest and scenic stops by purchase, lease, or gift where deemed appropriate to the public interest.
- Policy T4.3 Recognize and plan for the unique functions of SR 20 in the downtown core and the downtown and highway commercial districts:
- Downtown – SR 20/Riverside drive should reflect a traditional downtown feel. Access for all users of all abilities will be emphasized over mobility for through traffic. Context sensitive design should be employed for all transportation improvements.
 - Highway Commercial – SR 20 within the Highway Commercial districts should allow access to a vibrant mix of uses while preserving mobility for through traffic. Access

management should be employed to limit driveways/curb cuts.

Policy T4.4 Provide multimodal access from gate to gate along SR 20. Facilities for bicycles and pedestrians may be along convenient alternate routes where necessary, such as the Susie Stephens Trail.

Policy T4.5 Public access afforded by shoreline street ends should be made available and enhanced if appropriate. Potential street ends include Center Street, McLean Street, and Washington Street.

Goal T5 Provide for non-motorized transportation and circulation throughout the community with links to regional systems.

Policy T5.1 Provide connected walking and biking pathways throughout Winthrop.

Policy T5.2 Promote safe, connected foot travel and ADA access through the downtown core.

Policy T5.3 Provide sidewalks and bike lanes along arterial and collector routes, as well as significant local access routes.

Policy T5.4 Non-motorized facilities should connect with recreation facilities and regional trails.

Goal T6 Ensure that transportation/circulation improvements protect and enhance the environment.

Policy T6.1 Promote context sensitive transportation projects that minimize or mitigate impacts to the rivers and natural environment.

Goal T7 Manage parking availability to promote accessibility for all legal modes of transportation, all users and all abilities.

Policy T7.1 Manage on-street parking in the downtown core to preserve accessibility for all users, including well-placed ADA parking.

Policy T7.2 Require that development or redevelopment outside the downtown core provide sufficient parking to serve demand created by the development.

Policy T7.3 Public bicycle parking facilities should be developed to discourage parking of bicycles on boardwalks.

Policy T7.4 Explore and implement funding mechanisms to improve off-street and overflow parking serving the downtown corridor.

Policy T7.5 Develop and maintain overflow/satellite parking, including bicycle parking, with good access to downtown and local recreation amenities.

Known Transportation and Circulation Challenges

Over the years, the Town has come to recognize several challenges in providing for safety, accessibility, mobility, and connectivity. These are areas where we continue to look for creative, context sensitive solutions that work for all users. Solutions to these challenges, and any other transportation issues, should be guided by the goals and policies of this element.

- **Narrow downtown corridor.** Downtown Winthrop is sandwiched between the Chewuch and Methow Rivers to the west and a steep hillside to the east. Downtown was platted and the built environment established more than one hundred years ago, and the existing pattern of development remains set. This leaves a narrow corridor along Riverside Avenue, part of which doubles as “Main Street” and state arterial. SR 20 through downtown exists prescriptively, and many existing buildings extend to front and side property lines. Angle and parallel parking is provided throughout downtown. Consequently, boardwalks tend to be narrow and pedestrian circulation tightly confined. Improvements consistent with ADA would improve circulation. A reconfiguration of parking may preserve access while improving pedestrian circulation. A RiverWalk may allow pedestrian traffic more access options.
- **Coordination with WSDOT.** In addition to the physical constraints, the fact that Winthrop’s “Main Street” is also a state highway necessitates coordination with WSDOT. WSDOT’s controlling interest in the highway may limit implementation of Westernization or other local priorities, as well as increase costs and permit requirements associated with local projects. The Town needs to work closely with WSDOT to ensure highway projects align with local needs and priorities as much as possible.
- **Four-way stop.** Winthrop’s most significant traffic congestion occurs at the four-way stop during the height of the tourist season. Due to its location in the heart of downtown, and pedestrian use of crosswalks on each of the four legs of the intersection, traffic through the intersection slows causing traffic to backup. The configuration of the roadways and crosswalks creates some vulnerability for pedestrians, and ADA improvements would enhance safety.
- **Pedestrian and bicycle access throughout town.** The built environment, including existing streets were constructed long ago without pedestrian or bicycle facilities. Problems with safe non-motorized circulation are most pronounced

along SR 20 due to higher levels of traffic among all users; however, the lack of sidewalks and bike lanes along other primary routes inhibits safe foot and bike travel, and means fewer people feel comfortable accessing local businesses, services and parks on foot. Although Methow Valley schools are located outside of town limits, another concern is the lack of a safe non-motorized route to the schools.

- **SR 20-Methow River bridge alignment and White Avenue “Y” intersection.** The Methow River (metal) bridge aligns at an angle rather than perpendicular to the intersections at either end. The alignment creates a sight distance problem on the east side of the river where SR 20 bends to the southwest and intersects with Main Street. For traffic heading straight onto Main Street it can be difficult to see cars approaching on the bridge. On the west side of the bridge, a wide open “Y” intersection of SR 20 and White Avenue compromises safety for pedestrian, bicyclists and motorists.
- **Lack of connectivity.** Due to the pattern of development and a lack of policy emphasis on connectivity, there are areas of town that can only be accessed by dead end or loop roads without through connections. This pattern inhibits access and connectivity for all users of the transportation system.
- **Signage.** The SR 20 corridor and particularly the downtown core and recreation amenities lack comprehensive signage. A few consequences of poor signage are poor wayfinding among visitors unfamiliar with Winthrop and underutilization of satellite parking areas (the Barn and Trailhead). Inadequate signage contributes to confusion, compromising the overall safety of our transportation system.

Undoubtedly, additional challenges will be identified over the life of this plan. In such cases, the goals and policies of this section provide important guidance for addressing any transportation issues that arise.

Recommendations for Action

The following recommendations for action should be considered; the list is not in priority order:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive signage program. Place signs to easily direct users to destinations and public facilities such as parks, parking, bike routes, trail heads, shopping areas, museums, etc.
2. Continue use of Six-Year Street Plan and Capital Facilities Plan processes to program resources for construction projects.
3. Pursue opportunities to complete a Downtown Streetscape study, looking at lane configuration, parking, signage, lighting

4. Develop and improve satellite parking areas, including areas designated for oversized vehicles and convenient ADA parking. Ensure parking areas are connected to downtown with good pedestrian access and signage.
5. Continue to seek context sensitive and creative solutions to parking and pedestrian access in the downtown and highway commercial districts. Coordinate with WSDOT to ensure projects along the SR 20 corridor implement of the goals, policies and recommendations of this Plan.
6. Establish multiuse trails/pathways throughout the Town with connections to other trail systems and town parks. Priorities include completion of the Susie Stephens Trail and the RiverWalk. Explore potential routes which connect to Methow Valley Elementary and Liberty Bell Junior-Senior High School, Pearrygin Lake State Park, Methow Trails facilities, and a loop through North Village from SaTeekhWa Park to Mack Lloyd Park.
7. Adopt a Complete Streets Ordinance to implement the goals and policies of this Element.
8. Complete sidewalks, curb and gutter, storm drainage, and bike lanes along Castle Avenue from Bridge Street to Roses Hill.
9. Complete sidewalk, curb and gutter, and storm drainage from Corral Street to Riverside Avenue. (Bike lanes probably won't fit.)
10. Explore the potential for Lufkin Lane to become a dedicated town street.
11. Encourage greater roadway connectivity through:
 - Development of a network of transportation corridors that support connectivity in the south end commercial district;
 - Connection of dead end streets in existing neighborhoods;
 - Development of a transportation corridor to directly connect the Horizon Flats Industrial and Residential zones with SR-20; and
 - Requirements that new development provide ROW easements from adjacent streets to adjacent developable property for purpose of connectivity.

CAPITAL FACILITIES AND UTILITIES ELEMENT

This element focuses on the physical improvements that enable our community to thrive. It combines consideration of utilities and public facilities. Utilities such as sanitary sewers, water, storm drainage, solid waste disposal, telephone, and electricity enable us to live in concentrated “urban” settings. Other key public facilities include municipal government buildings, parks and recreation facilities, fire and emergency services departments, police departments, schools, libraries, and streets. All together, these “capital facilities” represent our combined investment in an orderly, healthy, and functional community.

Planning for capital facilities, whether pipes in the ground, buildings, or parks, is essential to maintaining the Town’s livability and economic well-being. We need to have a good understanding of appropriate location, sizing and function of our utilities and public facilities; we need to ensure our investments are efficient, cost effective, environmentally sound, and in service of a healthy, well-functioning town into the foreseeable future. Planning for capital facilities should be used to correct existing problems and as a tool to shape future growth.

Winthrop maintains comprehensive water system and sewer system plans, and a transportation improvement plan that help inform the Capital Facilities Plan. These and other detailed infrastructure plans and their periodic updates, once adopted by the Town Council, are hereby incorporated by reference as part of this comprehensive plan.

The Capital Facilities Plan contains a six year spending plan for capital purchases; this plan is updated annually and forms the basis for capital budgeting. Generally, items will be included if they are over a specific amount determined by the Town and have a life span of greater than three years. The Capital Facilities Plan should reflect the priorities of this Comprehensive Plan.

Town-Owned Facilities

The Town owns, operates and maintains water and sewer systems, a network of roadways, and a collection of properties and buildings that fulfill public functions. These are the primary focus of our capital investments.

Water system – Winthrop’s water system supplies potable water within town limits. The Water System Plan (adopted in 2011, as amended or replaced) provides a detailed inventory, analysis of the system’s function, and a schedule of capital improvements necessary to maintain and improve the system according to state and federal standards. The system is operated and maintained by the Public Works department.

The system includes a primary well with a water right certificate; an emergency backup well; two concrete standpipes and one concrete reservoir for storage; one booster pump station (serving North Village PD); and over 11 miles of water distribution lines. Much of

the system was rebuilt in 1985; however, poor design, improper installation and inadequate inspection during that project continues to present maintenance problems. The Town installed water meters on all services in 1992, and adopted a rate structure aimed at promoting conservation.

Scheduled system improvements include replacing certain sections of distribution line with larger pipe to provide required fire flow demands and upgrading the touch-read water meters with radio-read capability. Future planned improvements include the construction of a second river crossing in order to achieve redundancy. **The Water System Plan anticipates that the Town will approach or exceed the limits of our water rights within the 20 year planning horizon, and recommends attention to securing additional rights.**

Sewer system – Winthrop’s sewer system initially came on line in 1971. Sewer collection lines have extended to most properties throughout the town. The Town’s General Sewer Plan was last adopted in 1987.

The sewage collection system is comprised of a network of pipes ranging in size from 6” to 10” (predominantly 10”) that connect to an aerated lagoon treatment system located at the south end of the Heckendorn neighborhood. The original lagoon treatment facility was built on an 8-acre site, which was later increased by another 14 acres in 1994, in anticipation of future expansion and the advent of development of the adjacent land that might have precluded such purchase in the future.

The lagoon facility serves a year-round population of approximately 500 people. The Town also treats sanitary sewage from the nearby Sun Mountain Resort. The treatment facility consisting of a collection system, a two-cell aerated lagoon, a non-aerated polishing cell, a chlorine contact tank, and a dechlorination pond. In October 1990 significant modifications to the facility included a pipeline constructed to convey wastewater from the Sun Mountain Resort, additional aeration installed in the treatment lagoon to increase BOD treatment capacity, a new chlorine contact chamber, and a new outfall and diffuser.

The Town owns and maintains approximately 6.6 miles of gravity sewer line and 650 ft. of force pressure main, and maintains under contract, approximately 4.5 miles of gravity sewer line and 1,200 ft. of force pressure main for Sun Mountain Lodge Resort. In addition the Town has three lift stations. Lift Station #1 serves as the main collection point for the Town’s gravity flow system and the Sun Mountain Resort. Lift station #2 is dedicated to Sun Mountain Resort flow only. Lift station #3 is a new addition which serves the North Village planned development.

Streets – The Town’s street system consists of just under 10 miles of roadways, including 6.5 miles of town streets, 1.7 miles of state highway, and 1.5 miles of private roads. The street system includes associated bicycle and pedestrian facilities in some locations. More detail on the street system, including deficiencies and needs, is available in the Transportation Element and the 6-Year Street Plan.

Town Hall – Winthrop Town Hall houses most of the Town’s administrative functions, including the Clerk/Treasurer’s department, Planning and Building services, the Winthrop Marshal’s office, a Visitor Information Center and public restrooms. Town Hall is one of Winthrop’s oldest buildings. Despite its history, the building has seen too many additions and modifications over the years to be registered as a historic structure.

Being an old structure, Town Hall would benefit from a full assessment of the structure and building maintenance needs. During the summer of 2014, the building suffered flooding and mold resulting from runoff during a rain event, thus the foundation and basement need to be assessed and repaired to prevent future problems. The roof also appears to have problems that lead to runoff seeping down a basement wall and steps. Leak problems have caused ongoing issues with rotting wood and mold that need to be addressed for the ongoing integrity and safety of the building.

Other identified needs for Town Hall include: a backup power generator, exterior paint, roof and ceiling repairs, basement sump pump, replacement of worn carpeting, repairs and improvements to visitor restrooms, and ADA access to the basement. Another identified need, which could be met in another location, is a permanent meeting room for Town Council, Planning Commission and other meetings.

Marshal’s Department – The Marshal’s Office, located in the basement of Town Hall, lacks adequate space, ADA access and safety features. In 2010, a Public Facilities Sub-Committee, including the Mayor and members of the Planning Commission and Town Council, found the current location inadequate and identified a need for a completely new facility.

Capital expenditures for the Marshal’s Office include vehicles and police equipment. Two new vehicles were purchased in 2014. The Marshal’s office proposes to purchase one more vehicle, creating a fleet of three dedicated police vehicles. The Town needs to budget for regular maintenance and replacement of these vehicles, and other necessary police gear.

Town Shop – The Town Shop provides storage and work space for the public works department. For many years, the Town Shop was located on town-owned property at the intersection of Bluff and Corral Streets for many years; in 2015 the Public Works Department purchased a new shop in the Horizon Flats Industrial zone. The old shop will be demolished and the property will be sold. The new shop provides office space and three heated bays, as well as adequate area to store public works equipment.

Library Building – The Winthrop branch of the North Central Regional Library is located in a Town-owned building, on the west end of the Mack Lloyd Park property.

Winthrop Auditorium – Known locally as “the Barn”, the Winthrop Auditorium offers a large meeting hall with a kitchen, stage, bathrooms, two smaller meeting rooms and a small office space. The Barn is located adjacent to the Mack Lloyd Park. It is owned by

the Town, but operated and maintained through agreement with the Winthrop Barn Association.

Fire Hall Property – The Town owns the Fire Hall property on Englar Street, which is currently utilized by Fire District 6 as part of their operations under contract with the Town. The Fire District intends to build a new facility in Winthrop in the near term. Once that happens, the existing structure could serve another purpose or be sold to generate funds for some of the public facility needs called out in this Plan.

Parks – Winthrop owns a handful of parks, including Mack Lloyd Park at the west entrance to town, the Town Trailhead and Ice Rink, Heckendorn Park, and an undeveloped park parcel in Summerset addition. Winthrop's park facilities are thoroughly inventoried in the *Winthrop Parks and Recreation Plan*, last updated in 2012, and that plan is included (as amended hereafter) by reference in this Comprehensive Plan. The Park plan presents analysis of park needs and proposes a capital improvement program.

Trails – The Town owns right-of-ways for the Susie Stephens Trail and efforts are underway to obtain right-of-ways for the RiverWalk Trail. As trails are developed, the Town needs to provide for maintenance and capital improvements to ensure their good function.

Other Public Facilities

In addition to Town-owned facilities, our community relies on crucial services provided by other public and private entities; these include fire and ambulance services, electric service, propane service, schools, a public library, solid waste disposal, recycling, telecommunications and internet services:

- Emergency response services are provided through Aero Methow Rescue Service and Fire District 6, both of which have the ability to levy taxes with voter approval to support their operations and capital needs. Both Aero Methow and Fire District 6 utilize buildings within Winthrop, as well as other locations to provide services valley-wide.
- Local residents purchase electrical service and propane from the Okanogan County Electric Coop, a private entity governed by a board of directors elected by the Coop members. OCEC offices are located near Winthrop
- Methow Valley School District provides K-12 public education services to an area that encompasses the Methow Valley from Carlton north. Elementary, Middle and High schools are located on a campus a few miles south of Winthrop. An alternative High School is located in Twisp.
- The North Central Regional Library system provides a branch library in Winthrop; the public library is located in a Town-owned building adjoining Mac Lloyd Park.

- Solid waste and sanitary landfill services are accomplished through Okanogan County and a private collection service. Wastewise collects waste from customers in Winthrop, and Okanogan County provides a transfer station in Twisp. Waste ends up in a landfill on the outskirts of Okanogan.
- A nonprofit organization, Methow Recycles, formed to collect a variety of recyclable materials. The recycling facility is located in Twisp next to the County transfer station.
- Telecommunications are provided through a variety of private corporations. The local telephone lines are operated by Century Link. Cell service is somewhat limited compared to more urban areas, with only two carriers – Verizon and AT&T – providing adequate signals for communication from Winthrop.
- Fiber optic lines have been brought into Winthrop through a combination of public and private investments, including Okanogan County Public Utility District and a handful of private companies. Several companies provide a combination of DSL and wireless internet services.

Goals and Policies

Goal 1 Maintain town-owned utilities and public facilities in good functional condition.

- Policy 1.1 Routinely assess and document the condition of utilities and public facilities.
- Policy 1.2 Establish standards for maintaining and extending utility systems. Such standards should include protection for utilities in critical areas.
- Policy 1.3 Ensure the location, design, construction and operation of utility systems are subject to all applicable local, state or federal standards and regulations.
- Policy 1.4 Install utilities within, or adjacent to, existing utility or transportation corridors/ easements whenever feasible.
- Policy 1.5 Whenever possible, utility corridors and easements should serve multiple uses such as transportation routes, pathways or recreational trails.
- Policy 1.6 Require underground placement of utilities wherever feasible.
- Policy 1.7 Update and implement water and sewer system plans according to state and local requirements.
- Policy 1.8 Develop a long-term and comprehensive schedule for the correction of utility system and other public facility deficiencies.

Policy 1.9 Utilize partnerships with other public and private entities to ensure necessary public facilities remain accessible to Winthrop residents and business owners.

Goal 2 Plan for upgrades, replacement and expansion of town-owned utilities and public facilities as needed to provide opportunities for growth consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 2.1 Establish utility service areas and criteria for extending public utilities.

Policy 2.2 Participate in the watershed planning and pursue adequate water rights to support the land uses and growth pattern provided for in this Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 2.3 The costs of extending or upgrading utilities, roads or other public facilities to serve development demands should be borne by developers or appropriate public-private partnerships.

Policy 2.4 The costs of on-site improvements or site preparation for development, such as access, parking, stormwater systems, and water and sewer services, should be borne by private enterprise.

Policy 2.5 Utilities should be located, sized and designed to meet at least the 20-year demand forecast of the Town's Capital Facilities Plan, Comprehensive Water Plan, and General Sewer Plan.

Policy 2.6 Require that necessary utilities and public facilities be provided concurrently with new development. Development proposals should be allowed to proceed only on a finding that adequate public utilities/facilities are available prior to occupancy.

Policy 2.7 Where Town utilities are available, Winthrop should not permit new uses which are not connected to town utilities.

Goal 3 Utilize capital facilities planning to provide for efficient, financially sustainable investment of available funds for maintaining, upgrading, replacing or expanding town-owned utilities and public facilities.

Policy 3.1 Establish an on-going process for prioritizing and scheduling capital expenditures over a six-year period.

Policy 3.2 Prioritize capital expenditures so as to accomplish necessary maintenance, replacement, or upgrade of existing utilities and

public facilities; and construction of new public facilities that implement goals, policies and action items identified in this plan.

Policy 3.3 Capital facilities planning should focus on projects for which funding has been identified, as well as priority projects for which funds are sought.

Policy 3.4 Inform Winthrop’s citizens about the maintenance and improvement needs, and the financial requirements for meeting those needs.

Policy 3.5 Prioritize improvements necessary to correct existing deficiencies for existing residents over improvements that provide capacity for future growth.

Policy 3.6 When urgent capital improvements are needed to protect public health and safety, such improvements will be pursued regardless of the Capital Facilities Plan schedule.

Goal 4 Construct and maintain town-owned utilities and public facilities in a manner that protects critical areas, conserves water and water quality, and fosters sustainable use of resources - both environmental and financial.

Policy 4.1 Implement and enforce the conservation measures recommended in the water system plan.

Policy 4.2 Ensure that design, location and construction standards for utilities and public facilities include protections for critical areas.

Policy 4.3 Ensure all utility and public facility projects plan for and implement stormwater drainage in accord with appropriate standards.

Policy 4.4 Strive to improve energy efficiency and conservation in the operation, maintenance and upgrade of town-owned utilities and public facilities. Consider the use of alternative energy sources where feasible and cost effective.

Goal 5 Engage in collaborative efforts to ensure long-term preparedness for emergencies and disasters.

Policy 5.1 Develop a local plan for emergency and disaster preparedness that address needs specific to Winthrop, including those related to evacuation.

- Policy 5.2 Plan for and implement back-up power sources and communication systems for all utilities and public facilities that provide functions necessary for public health and safety.

Capital Facility Action Items

Capital projects may be funded through a variety of mechanisms most commonly including grants, loans, or town budgetary appropriations. The Town should continue to explore fiscally sustainable methods for funding capital improvements to our utilities, streets, parks, and other public facilities. The following list included general action items, all of which are important to the wellbeing of our community. The order in which they are listed does not imply any ranking.

- Maintain and improve water system per the recommendations of the Water System Plan (2011, or as hereafter amended).
- Work to secure additional water rights to support anticipated development.
- Complete a new Sewer System Plan.
- Maintain and improve our sewer collection system as needed to serve development consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.
- Maintain our roadway network in good condition, and construct improvements per the Six-Year Street Plan.
- Plan for relocation of the Marshal's Office.
- Assess and carry out Town Hall maintenance and structural repairs.
- Obtain backup generators for all critical public facilities and utilities.
- Construct the remainder of the Susie Stephens Trail and the RiverWalk per the Parks and Recreation Plan.
- Maintain our existing parks and public facilities in good functional condition.

HOUSING ELEMENT

Four hundred residents call Winthrop home, and we can expect more people to live here as the population of Washington grows. Meeting needs for housing is one of the most essential factors in maintaining a balanced, sustainable community. As with many tourist-oriented communities, Winthrop wrestles with a shortage of affordable housing to meet the needs of both year-round and seasonal residents. This element seeks to establish goals and policies that guide us towards inclusive, affordable and diverse housing opportunities.

Housing Patterns in Winthrop

Data from the 2010 US Census, Okanogan County Assessor's records, Winthrop's utility accounts, local zoning, and visual surveys of the Town help us develop a current picture of how Winthrop's population is housed.

- **Number of Housing Units.** At the time of the census, Winthrop had approximately 300 housing units, of which 205 were occupied; thus just over two-thirds of homes in Winthrop were occupied. Of the unoccupied homes, 60 (two-thirds) provide seasonal, recreational or occasional use. The remaining homes were typically for rent or sale.

Using Okanogan County property use tax codes, we identified 258 parcels developed with single family homes, 22 with duplex units, two with multifamily units, and one assisted living facility. The Assessor's records also identify 45 parcels with lodging and overnight rentals. Many of these units are intermingled with residential housing stock. This results in a somewhat higher tally of housing units than census data indicates. All combined, approximately 23% (120 acres) of Winthrop's land base is developed with housing units. A small amount of additional housing is also provided as an accessory to existing commercial development.

- **Household Composition.** Our household profile shows considerable variation from national and state averages. We have a fairly even mix of "family" (109) and "nonfamily" (96) households³ while at the statewide and national scale, the ratio is two-thirds family households to nonfamily households. At 1.92, Winthrop's average household size is considerably lower than national and state averages, 2.58 and 2.51 respectively. Our family size is also lower – 2.59 in Winthrop versus 3.14 nationally. While across the US, only about 27% of people live alone, in Winthrop 43% live alone. In sum, we have relatively fewer people per housing unit.
- **Rent vs. Own.** Home ownership trails Okanogan County (68%), Washington (64%), and the US as a whole (65%). Of the occupied housing units in Winthrop, 59% are owner occupied and 41% are renter occupied. Household size is larger in owner

³ Family households consist of a householder and one or more other people related by blood, marriage, or adoption.

occupied units – 2.08 for owner occupied housing versus 1.69 for rental housing. The census identified 91 units of rental housing, of which seven were not currently occupied. Given the higher ratio of renter occupied housing compared with broader trends, it stands to reason our community needs to preserve existing rentals and encourage development that meets needs for rental and seasonal housing. Anecdotally, we hear that businesses struggle with helping employees find suitable housing, particularly for the busy summer tourist season.

- **Housing Costs/Affordability.** The 2009 – 2013 American Community Survey performed by the Census Bureau estimates Winthrop’s median monthly housing cost at \$773. Housing costs for rentals are slightly lower than owner occupied units, depending in part on whether the owner is paying a mortgage. Housing is deemed “affordable” when the cost of rent/mortgage and utilities add up to 30% or less of household income.

According to Census Bureau figures, the median value of owner occupied homes is estimated at \$259,000. Median household income in the 2010 census was \$40,605. Under hypothetical conditions including a median household income, 5% down, good credit and current low interest rates, the monthly payment for such a home would be around \$1,500 per month, over 40% of the household income.

The 2006 *Okanogan County Housing Needs Assessment*⁴ notes that real estate prices in Winthrop (and the Methow Valley) are higher than the rest of Okanogan County, “making it difficult for low income families to find housing.”(p 48) The report shows that in 1995 the average sale price for a home in Winthrop was \$77,916 (10 sales), while ten years later, in 2005, the price average price was \$172,189 (16 sales). Over that decade, home prices more than doubled! While the trend across the entire Methow Valley was similarly high, Winthrop showed the highest home prices in all of Okanogan County. (p 56)

Statistics compiled for single family home sales in Winthrop for 2010 through 2014 indicate that home prices remain high on average from the standpoint of affordability:

- Highest sale price - \$384,700 for a 1,300 square foot home on .6 acre lot on the Methow River.
- Lowest sale price - \$53,000 for singlewide mobile home on a 10,000 square foot lot.
- Median sale price – \$194,300
- Average sale price - \$186,500

The issue of housing cost and affordability became even more pressing following the Carlton Complex and Rising Eagle wild fires, which claimed several homes in the

⁴ Network Consulting and Management, Ltd for Okanogan County. *Okanogan County Housing Needs Assessment*. March, 2006. 79 pages.

Methow Valley. In response, disaster case managers found that rents increased substantially as the availability was strained, and some families were displaced.

- **Housing Character.** Single family homes predominate throughout Winthrop's residential districts. Most housing is located within the three zones established for residential uses. In established, older neighborhoods and subdivisions, houses tend to be relatively small and located on small to medium sized lots. The Heckendorn neighborhood and the residential area to the east of downtown have seen a significant amount of infill, with development focused on maximizing use of small lots and allowed density.

Several large residential lots in Horizon Flats (typically one acre) have been broken up into 3-8 unit developments; however, only a few homes have subsequently been constructed in that district. Subdivisions along Wister, Waring, and Summerset offer medium to large lot sizes and have typically developed with larger homes. The Cascade Condominiums and North Village offer new homes with a more clustered pattern of development. The Cascade Condominiums are characterized by a mixture of year-round residences and vacation rentals.

Winthrop offers few multifamily developments. The largest, a sixteen unit apartment building, was constructed in 1990 with the help of the Farmers Home Administration. This was the first apartment building in Winthrop, and it filled to 100% occupancy within one year. In 2010, a four unit apartment building was built on Englar Street, and it has also maintained continual occupancy. Most recently, based on zoning amendments permitting multifamily development in the B-3 zone, a condominium project utilizing existing structures added three more multifamily units.

- **Zoning for residential uses.** Under existing regulations, the broadest range of housing types can be found in the B-1, R-3 and Tourist Residential zones. The R-1 and R-2 zones primarily allow single family homes and duplex units, and multi-family may be permitted with a planned development in R-2. Housing may also be located in the downtown and highway commercial zones provided there is a primary commercial use on the site.
- **Residential Construction Activity.** In the five years from 2005 to 2009, the Town issued 28 permits for new residential structures; from 2010 to 2014, the number of new residential permits dipped to 16, reflecting the downturn in construction with the recession. At the peak during 2007, 13 permits were issued.

Housing Needs & Available Land Base

According to population projections from the introduction, at a growth rate averaging 1% per year, Winthrop's population would grow by about 100 people. If the trend in smaller household sizes holds, Winthrop would need around 50 more housing units, with a strong emphasis on rentals and seasonal employee housing. Affordability remains a

pressing problem. Winthrop, more so than other communities in Okanogan County, suffers from a severe gap between housing prices and typical incomes.

The projected 20-year need for housing units can easily be accommodated on the vacant land available within the existing corporate limits. At current zoning densities, as many as 390 additional housing units could be built on existing vacant, residentially zoned land. With planned water system improvements, water and sewer systems should be sufficient to serve the projected population growth; however the Water System Plan indicates that the Town will approach or exceed the limits of our water rights within the 20 year planning horizon. At that point growth will be limited until additional water rights are secured.

Housing Goals and Policies

Goal 1 Pursue funding and expertise to complete an assessment of existing and needed housing.

Goal 2 Encourage the development of affordable homes, including rental units, multifamily and seasonal housing.

Policy 2.1 Support efforts of organizations and/or agencies with the capacity to promote affordable housing development in Winthrop.

Policy 2.2 Provide standards that encourage the development of multi-family housing.

Policy 2.3 Provide standards that accommodate needs for non-family and seasonal workforce housing.

Goal 3 Encourage a diverse mix of housing types and densities that is responsive to Winthrop's demographic trends.

Policy 3.1 Review and update Winthrop's development regulations in support of a diverse range of housing types and densities.

Policy 3.2 Provide for planned developments as a tool to reach higher allowed densities while retaining neighborhood character.

Policy 3.3 Provide standards for integrating accessory housing units in residential areas.

Policy 3.4 Consider standards for zero-lot-line/attached single family development, clustered and cottage housing, shared parking or other potentially innovative strategies.

- Policy 3.5 Allow placement of manufactured homes that meet HUD, State, and local standards as single-family homes on individual lots.
- Policy 3.6 Provide for some of the residential housing needs to be met in Mixed Use and Commercial areas.
- Policy 3.7 Allow the integration of adult family care homes and day care facilities into residential areas, with standards that maintain neighborhood character and safety.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

With the adoption of the Western theme and the opening of the North Cascades Highway in 1972, Winthrop's economy shifted from a traditional rural, resource-based economy (logging, mining, and agriculture) towards tourism and recreation. Following that shift, recreation and tourism gained increasing influence on the economy of the entire Methow Valley.



Winthrop's Western Theme celebrates the era of the late 1800s to early 1900s, and identifies Winthrop with its early settler history. With financial backing from Katherine Wagner and the architectural expertise of Robert Jorgenson, business owners transformed downtown to look like the frontier town it once was. This proved a solid strategy to draw visitors and remains a central force in Winthrop's identity.



Winthrop Mountain Sports building before and after westernization, and as it looks today.



In parallel with the efforts put forth by local government and Winthrop's Chamber of Commerce to enhance the Town's appeal, Methow Trails – formerly the Methow Valley Sports Trail Association – has played a key role in Winthrop's economy by promoting and operating a wide network of recreational trails. Now Winthrop's businesses are largely geared towards attracting and serving visitors who come to recreate and enjoy local amenities. Winthrop sits at the center of a vast web of outdoor recreation opportunities, including hiking, biking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, ice skating, hunting, and many others.

The success of the recreation and tourism economy ripples in various ways through the community. Winthrop and the Methow Valley attract numerous second/vacation home owners, as well as numerous telecommuters choosing to live here for the access to recreation. Thus, construction remains another key driver of the local economy. During the economic downturn beginning in 2008, the local economy lost many jobs as housing

development dropped dramatically. As the economy has recovered, construction and real estate sales have rebounded.

The tourism economy produces numerous service oriented jobs – retail customer service, wait staff at restaurants, hotel/motel staff, etc. These jobs often are seasonal in nature and pay relatively low wages, which creates typical challenges related to affordable housing and low median household income relative to statewide and national numbers.

While tourism drives a substantial portion of the local economy, there are other key generators to consider. Salmon recovery efforts, ramped up during the 1990s, have infused millions of dollars into the local economy in the form of jobs and the use of local contractors and materials. The Okanogan Wenatchee Nation Forest operates the Methow Valley Ranger District from Winthrop, employing a seasonal and year-round work force. The local school district is another significant employer. Technology offers further potential for economic growth, as a few local companies strive to provide a growing array of services, and a significant number of people are able to work remotely for large companies in urban areas.

While tourism, recreation, and the natural environment are likely to remain central to our economy well into the future, it remains important for Winthrop to strive for a diverse, well-rounded economy that makes our town not only a fun place to visit, but a wonderful place to live.

Goals and Policies

Goal 1 Promote a diverse year-round economy based on tourism, recreation, and environmentally sound commerce in support of a livable community.

- Policy 1.1 Participate in local and regional economic development organizations and initiatives.
- Policy 1.2 Support development of amenities such as parks, trails, public facilities and water access that enhance recreation and tourism.
- Policy 1.3 Support development of the recreational access and commerce along shorelines in a manner that will enhance the public enjoyment of the shoreline while preserving the net functions of the shoreline environment.

Goal 2 Promote and implement the “Western” theme throughout commercial areas.

- Policy 2.1 Support continued adherence to and enforcement of western theme design standards for structures and signs.

Policy 2.2 Maintain an advisory committee to guide compliance and make recommendations regarding implementation of the western theme.

Policy 2.3 Emphasize themed gateway entrances to Town from the west and south on SR 20.

Goal 3 Develop a transportation and circulation system that functions to provide mobility and access for all modes of travel in support of the local economy.

Policy 3.1 Ensure good access to businesses and amenities such as parks, trails, historic/cultural sites, and river corridors.

Policy 3.2 Provide for a transportation system that fosters mobility of people and goods to and through Winthrop.

Goal 4 Ensure development proceeds within a framework that is reasonable, timely and equitable while protecting public health, safety and welfare, as well as valuable natural features and functions of the landscape.

Policy 4.1 Actively participate in the review and approval processes initiated by the county, state or federal governments on new developments and changes in regulations.

Policy 4.2 Ensure local permit processes are reasonably streamlined, and provide timely, equitable land use decisions.

Policy 4.3 Utilize appropriate permits and regulations to protect the environment in a manner that fosters a prosperous and livable community.

Goal 5 Preserve, protect and restore important historical, cultural, educational and scientific sites for public use and enjoyment.

Policy 5.1 Adhere to relevant federal and state regulations to identify and preserve cultural and historic resources.

Policy 5.2 Protect and highlight cultural, historic, or other educational values when acquiring and developing public lands.

Policy 5.3 Coordinate with Okanogan County Historical Society, Shafer Museum, the Colville Confederated Tribes, the Yakama Nation, or other interested parties in the preservation, protection and restoration of culturally significant sites or resources.

Goal 6 Recognize that an economically healthy community depends on access to health care, education, telecommunications, public infrastructure and government services.

- Policy 6.1 Ensure that local land use regulations provide good location options for health care, education, and other services that create a functional community.
- Policy 6.2 Maintain roads and utilities in good working condition.
- Policy 6.3 Support Okanogan County Transit Authority in the development of transit serving Winthrop and the Methow Valley, including bus stops and park and ride facilities at accessible locations.
- Policy 6.4 Cooperate/partner with other agencies and organizations in providing services and infrastructure that serve the economic health of the community.

Economic Development Initiatives

The economic health of our community results from long standing initiatives that represent the fruit of partnerships, efforts, and investments of the Town and various community groups. Facilities such as the Barn, Mack Lloyd Park, the Visitor Information Center, and the Winthrop Ice Rink are all facilities that illustrate the value of town government working with community groups to provide facilities that help make Winthrop a lovely place and foster a more vibrant economy. The following initiatives are ongoing efforts by the Town and our partner organizations to foster a healthy economy and livable community:

- **RiverWalk** – At the drafting of this plan, the first phase of the RiverWalk is being designed. Ultimately, the plan involves connecting the SaTeekhWa Bridge at the north end of downtown with the Spring Creek Bridge on the south end via a pedestrian pathway, offering river views and access to businesses from the river side. Phase 1 will construct an ADA compliant underpass of the Chewuch River Bridge. This project will engage landowners, Methow Trails and other community partners as it moves forward.
- **Susie Stephens Trail** – With Phase 1 of the Susie Stephens Trail complete, the Town continues efforts to build a multi-use trail connecting downtown with the Highway Commercial district. SST provides a safe route of travel for pedestrians and bicyclists, diverting them from the narrow shoulders of SR 20. Many locals have contributed passionately to this trail effort.
- **Winthrop Ice Rink** – This town-owned facility is operated and maintained by the Winthrop Ice and Sports Rink non-profit organization. Efforts are underway to

refrigerate the rink so as to provide more reliable skating opportunities and bolster winter tourism.

- **Town Trailhead** – The trailhead provides parking for winter access to Methow Trails, the ice rink, and the Susie Stephens Trail. Better signage and delineation of parking could help the trailhead function for downtown satellite parking.
- **Winthrop Auditorium aka “The Barn”** – The Barn has been a central community gathering place since its construction by a group of volunteers in 1980. Owned by the Town, the facility is lovingly operated and maintained by the Winthrop Barn Association. The building hosts everything from concerts to Kiwanis meetings.
- **Welcome Gates** – A rustic “gate” welcomes travelers from the West as they arrive in Winthrop. The gate is a focal point for visitors and one of our most photographed features. While still only a vision, a gate for the entrance from the South could help enhance a “gate-to-gate Western experience.”
- **Mack Lloyd Park** - Just inside the west gate to Town, Mack Lloyd Park offers a very visible spot to picnic, walk to the River, or enjoy any of a host of events that are held in the park throughout the year. Ongoing maintenance of the park and its trees help ensure this park facility continues to be a central attraction.
- **River Access** – Despite Winthrop’s location at the confluence of the Methow and Chewuch Rivers, people cannot easily access the river for boating or other passive forms of recreation. We recognize improved river access as an opportunity to add to Winthrop’s attractiveness and livability, and thus our economic vitality.
- **Trees** – Research from many corners suggests that trees in urban settings contribute economic value to property and can attract increased business. Winthrop’s trees are mostly in parks or on private property. Caring for our existing trees and planting new trees in appropriate locations provide simple ways to enhance the beauty and economic health of our community.

CRITICAL AREAS ELEMENT

The Critical Areas Element, adopted on December 5, 2007 by Ordinance #598 (as subsequently revised or replaced) is hereby appended by reference as the Critical Areas Element of this Comprehensive Plan. The Town anticipates updating the Critical Areas Element in accord with the timeline specified by the Growth Management Act.

PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

The Town of Winthrop Parks and Recreation Plan, adopted February 15, 2012 (as subsequently revised or replaced) is hereby appended by reference as the Parks and Recreation Element of this Comprehensive Plan. The Parks and Recreation Plan contains goals and objectives and a six-year capital improvement program. The Town updates the Parks and Recreation Plan at least once every six years.

SHORELINE ELEMENT

The Town of Winthrop Shoreline Master Program, adopted March 5, 1991 (as subsequently revised or replaced) is hereby appended by reference as the Shoreline Element of this Comprehensive Plan. The Shoreline Master Program contains goals and policies, along with implementing regulations. The SMP must also be adopted by Department of Ecology.