

White Salmon Special City Council Meeting
A G E N D A
July 28, 2021 – 6:00 PM
119 NE Church (Fire Hall) and Zoom Teleconference
Hybrid Meeting: In Person and Via Zoom Teleconference
Meeting ID: 893 3325 6850 Passcode: 267174



	Call in Numbers:	
669-900-6833	929-205-6099	301-715-8592
346-248-7799	253-215-8782	312-626-6799

The city council will hold a hybrid meeting – in person and via Zoom teleconference.

If attending via Zoom teleconference, we ask that those audience members call in instead of videoing in or turn off your camera, so video does not show during the meeting to prevent disruption. Thank you.

Individuals who are not fully vaccinated must wear a mask if attending the in-person meeting.

I. Call to Order, Presentation of the Flag and Roll Call

II. Business Items

A. Draft Comprehensive Plan

1. Presentation
2. Public Hearing

Written comments may be submitted to janb@ci.white-salmon.wa.us by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 28 noting in the subject line “Public Hearing – Final Draft Comprehensive Plan.” All written comments will be read during the public hearing. In addition, any individual who wishes to testify via the teleconference will be allowed to do so. You must register with the city (by contacting Jan Brending at janb@ci.white-salmon.wa.us by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 28) that you desire to testify via teleconference and provide your name and/or phone number as it will appear during the Zoom teleconference. Individuals will also be allowed to testify in person at the meeting.

3. Discussion
4. Action

III. Adjournment

File Attachments for Item:

A. Draft Comprehensive Plan

1. Presentation

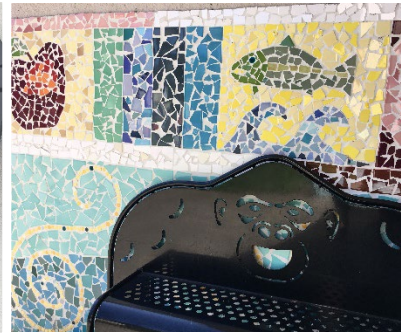
2. Public Hearing

3. Discussion

4. Action

City of White Salmon Comprehensive Plan

Volume I: Goals and Policies



Acknowledgements

City of White Salmon

City Council

- Mayor, Marla Keethler
- Position 1, Ashley Post
- Position 2, David Lindley
- Position 3, Jason Hartmann
- Position 4, Jim Ransier
- Position 5, Joe Turkiewicz

Planning Commission

- Chair, Greg Hohensee
- Seth Gilchrist
- Ross Henry
- Michael Morneault
- Tom Stevenson

Staff

- Pat Munyan, City Administrator/Public Works Director
- Jan Brending, City Treasurer/Clerk
- Erika Castro-Guzman, Permit Technician

Consultants

- WSP USA Inc.
- E² Land Use Planning Services, LLC
- 3J Consulting

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"I would love to see more parks, public transportation, and housing options."

"I love the friendly atmosphere and the beauty."

White Salmon 2040

Background

White Salmon 2040 is an update of the City of White Salmon’s comprehensive plan. The purpose of the update is to ensure that in 2040, the City—which was incorporated in 1907—remains an innovative, diverse and thriving village. In 1990, the state adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA) with the goal of managing growth of cities that had previously grown in an uncoordinated fashion. Not all GMA requirements pertain to the City of White Salmon as it is “partial planning” city as allowed by state statute.

Vision

In 2040, White Salmon is a thriving village bounded by mountains, rivers and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. We nurture innovation and diversity, creating opportunities and partnerships that foster a prosperous community. Our unique location affords residents and visitors a gateway to explore the surrounding natural beauty. The city offers small streets and pedestrian paths that allow residents to walk to a variety of destinations, interact regularly with neighbors, and support a vibrant downtown business district. Our quality of life is based on balanced and sustainable growth that contributes to the community’s authenticity and prosperity.

Existing Conditions

The GMA requires municipalities to consider the provision of utilities and services necessary to serve new residential subdivisions, commercial centers and industrial areas before approving their development. The last major update to the City’s comprehensive plan was in 2012 when White Salmon was a community of approximately 2,275. The population in 2020 was estimated to be 2,710. White Salmon continues to maintain its small village-like feel even though in eight years the population has grown by 19 percent.

Visioning Process

The City of White Salmon went through a visioning process in 2019. The vision is written in the present tense, describing the city as it may exist in 2040. Many aspects of the vision are found in White Salmon today, while others represent the aspirations of the community. The 2019 vision has helped drive the update of the comprehensive plan and provides a framework for the goals and policies of the elements contained in the plan.

The Community’s Vision

- Small streets and pedestrian paths
- Right-sized infrastructure
- Zoning amendments to manage growth
- Affordable housing and long-term rentals
- Small-scale, local businesses
- Connected parks and trails
- Access to nature and recreation

The visioning process involved “Community Conversations” that were held with small groups in homes, at the Farmers’ Market, Movies in the Park, Rotary, Klickitat County Senior Center, Everybody’s Brewing, and other locations. The City received more than 350 unique comments and received 159 community surveys. The majority of respondents lived within the city limits, with additional respondents living in the White Salmon Urban Exempt Area, greater Klickitat County and the city of Bingen. This reflects that many see this area as a community which is not necessarily confined to the city limits of White Salmon.

The responses identified the following:

What do people love about White Salmon?

- Walkability, the beauty and views, friendliness, parks and greenspace, library and schools, farmers markets, trails and the small-town feeling.

What makes White Salmon special that you want to protect or enhance?

- Small town character, natural beauty and views, access to nature and recreation, public spaces, small geographic size and vibrant downtown.

What would you like to change or improve in White Salmon in the future?

- Variety of affordable housing types, road maintenance, walking and biking opportunities, connected park system, amenities for youth and seniors.

What actions should the City take to achieve the vision for White Salmon?

- Use small streets and pedestrian paths, keep business small-scale and local, use right-size infrastructure, manage growth through zoning amendments.

Focus Areas

At the outset of the comprehensive plan update, four key focus areas were established: (1) housing and land use, (2) transportation, (3) facilities and capital improvements, and (4) parks and recreation. Focus area statements, created during the community visioning process, guided the creation of the goals and policies within these four key comprehensive plan elements:

Housing and Land Use

The built environment in White Salmon is integrated with the beauty of its setting. An established area for future growth underscores the important contribution each new development brings and the obligation to reinforce our village’s character. Natural features and views from the bluff to the Columbia River and Mt. Hood are central to the city’s sense of place. Defined neighborhoods surround the historic business district along Jewett Boulevard. A diverse stock of quality, well-designed homes serve the full range of ages, incomes and households. New neighborhoods expand housing opportunities and add to a network of green spaces. A secondary, mixed-use area on annexed county land north of town and close to the city utilities complements downtown and maintains the city’s walkable character.

Transportation

The transportation system reflects the city's desire to develop at a human scale. Sidewalks, pedestrian paths and bike routes conveniently connect residents to downtown, nature trails and neighborhood destinations. An integrated system of wider, centrally located roads and narrow shared residential roadways provide connections within and among neighborhoods, and safely accommodates all users. Public and private transportation options connect residents to regional destinations on both sides of the river.

Facilities and Capital Improvement Plans

Quality public facilities, services and utilities contribute to a high quality of life. White Salmon residents value planning for public facilities to ensure they are scaled to manage growth responsibly. Vital community centers and activities connect residents – young and old – and encourage civic engagement. The library and schools are well planned and maintained to accommodate current and future residents.

Parks and Recreation

Surrounded by natural and scenic beauty, White Salmon is at the center of a recreational wonderland. A city-protected trail system offers opportunities for hiking, mountain biking and kayaking. Residents enjoy a variety of parks, green spaces, trails and facilities. A network of neighborhood parks and playgrounds provide daily access for residents to enjoy. Sports fields, specialty parks, a community pool and recreation center promote community gathering and outdoor exercise. Natural areas provide wildlife habitat and enhance local ecosystems. Health and aesthetic benefits are derived from the ample tree canopy. Access to the Columbia riverfront is maintained so that all can appreciate this precious and defining recreational asset.

Comprehensive Plan Development

The City has developed each element's goals and policies with input from the public via public comment at planning commission meetings. Public comment was submitted via email and read into the record at each planning commission meeting. Two public hearings were held (one before the planning commission and one before the city council) where individuals were allowed to testify in person via teleconference. The planning commission received numerous comments and spent hours reviewing the comments and incorporating the recommendations, where appropriate, into the goals and policies.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

White Salmon 2040 guides land development and public facility investment decisions from the present to 2040. White Salmon 2040 has nine elements that work together to achieve the community's vision and ensure long-term economic vitality while maintaining the community's village feel.

- History and Historical Places
- Parks and Recreation
- Economics
- Environmental Quality and Critical Areas
- Transportation
- Public Facilities and Services
- Land Use and Urbanization
- Housing
- Capital Improvements

Each element sets goals that will implement components of the White Salmon 2040 vision and provides policies that will guide land use and infrastructure decisions for the 20-year planning horizon. The elements are supported by the comprehensive plan map, which identifies land use designations through the city and within the urban exempt area.

Why Plan?

Planning is part of our everyday lives; it's about choosing what to do and how and when to do it. The City's comprehensive plan is the basis of coordinated action—enabling public and private interests to undertake projects that we want to accomplish—in a day, in the next six months, or the next two to twenty years.

As a code city in the State of Washington, White Salmon is required to prepare a comprehensive plan for anticipating and influencing the orderly and coordinated development of land and building use of the code city and its environs (RCW 35A.63.060). Unlike the majority of the cities in Washington, White Salmon's comprehensive planning requirements come from RCW 35A.63 – Planning and Zoning in Code Cities, and it is not required to fully plan under RCW 36.70A, the Growth Management Act. White Salmon is given a greater latitude in determining the course and components of its planning system, whereas cities planning under the Growth Management Act are required to establish and continually amend Urban Growth Areas, gain state approval of all development regulations prior to adoption, and include a larger number of studies and components within their ongoing planning activities.

The area immediately adjacent to the city of White Salmon located in Klickitat County is designated an Urban Exempt Area by the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act (Scenic Area Act). The Scenic Area Act designated urban exempt areas for urban development. These areas are exempt from the Scenic Area Act. The White Salmon Urban Exempt Area acts as an urban growth area for the city of White Salmon and, as such, the land use designation map included with this plan provides designations for this area.

The goals and policies included in this plan are implemented through development regulations established in the White Salmon land use code as well as the standards set forth in other existing plans and policy documents.

White Salmon 2040 helps the City identify deficiencies and take steps to remedy them. Planning helps the City find desirable and reasonable solutions before problems are beyond the community's economic capabilities. The Plan is critical to avoiding uncoordinated activities as the City adapts to changing conditions and experiences growth.

The plan is not intended as a rigid set of goals and policies, but it is:

- Long range—looking ahead as far as practical to anticipate growth and resulting community needs.
- Comprehensive—relating and integrating all types of uses and necessary public facilities.
- General—establishing general locations and areas for the elements and indicating relationships to each other and the population served.
- Responsive—through regular updates, the plan adjusts to changing conditions, unforeseen circumstances, and local and regional trends.

The White Salmon 2040 Comprehensive Plan is designed to inform and guide future decisions while ensuring that White Salmon remains a place where people want to live, work, and conduct business while maintaining its small-town village-like character.

The Comprehensive Plan also provides support securing funding from public and private sources and identified City projects for inclusion in regional and state-wide plans.

How does the Comprehensive Plan Relate to Other City Plans?

White Salmon 2040 is part of a family of regional and local plans. Some set the overall planning framework and guide the content of the comprehensive plan while others, like plans that are specific to particular subareas, supply more details information about individual topics or smaller parts of the city.

County Planning Documents

- Klickitat County Solid Waste Management Plan, 2020
- Klickitat County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2020
- Klickitat County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, 2018
- Klickitat County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2018

It should be noted that one of the goals of the City is to work with Klickitat County in developing a coordinated process for development occurring in the Urban Exempt Area adjacent to the city. The City will initiate an interlocal agreement identifying how the coordinated process will work in 2021.

Local Plans

- White Salmon Water System Plan, (to be updated in 2021)
- Bingen-White Salmon Wastewater Treatment Facility Plan
- White Salmon Transportation Plan (being developed in 2021)
- White Salmon Park Plan, (to be updated in 2021)
- White Salmon Urbanization Study, 2020
- White Salmon Design Standards
- White Salmon Shoreline Master Program (2016)
- Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan (updated annually)
- Capital Facilities Plan Project List (to be updated in 2021)

How will the City Carry Out the Plan?

The City moves toward the White Salmon 2040 Vision through use, code implementation, evaluation and, when necessary, amendment of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan can only be amended once a year except in very specific situations. The Comprehensive Plan is a living document that is both firm enough to hold the City to a chosen course made with public input over an extended period of time, yet flexible enough to accommodate a wide variety of anticipated and unanticipated conditions. The desires of citizens will change over time as demographics changes, political environments change, and as the goals of the plan are accomplished. Establishing and carrying out an amendment cycle for the Comprehensive Plan and all of the City's plans is important in implementation and ensures the plan's relevance.

When implementing the plan, the City uses all available tools, including county and local plans, and policy direction from the City Council. This includes Resolution 2019-07-489, which adopts a policy of diversity and inclusion. It is the City's intent that White Salmon 2040 can only be achieved in a way that provides equity for all residents. Resolution 2021-03-517, Declaring a Global Climate Crisis, was adopted by the City. This policy is also expected to be used in implementing White Salmon 2040. The creation of the CityLab Board in 2021 provides a tool which will be used as a "lens" when developing codes, policies and procedures that implement the White Salmon 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use and Urbanization



"Protect existing neighborhoods, and provide new mixed-use areas."

"Right-sizing infrastructure to meet growth needs and maintain character."

Land Use and Urbanization

Background

Land use and urbanization policies are major focal points of this Comprehensive Plan and this element helps build a policy foundation for the other elements, including housing, economic development, and transportation. The following focus area statement, created during the community visioning process, guides the goals and policies included in the Land Use and Urbanization Comprehensive Plan element.

Focus Area Statement

Through the community visioning process that occurred in 2019, residents described their vision for a White Salmon that is walkable and compact, with a vibrant downtown full of small businesses, easy access to nature and recreation, and small-town character. To achieve this vision, residents identified several priority actions, including developing a network of small streets and pedestrian paths, right-sizing infrastructure, supporting local business needs, and implementing zoning amendments to encourage a diverse housing stock.

This community vision and supporting actions are related to land use and urbanization policies. The land use and urbanization context of a community sets the framework for how residential, commercial, industrial, and public land uses are organized across a community and the community's allocation of these land uses to meet anticipated growth.

“The built environment in White Salmon is integrated with the beauty of its setting. An established area for future growth underscores the important contribution each new development brings, and the obligation to reinforce our village’s character. Natural features and views from the bluff to the Columbia River and Mount Hood are central to the city’s sense of place. Defined neighborhoods surround the historic business district along Jewett Boulevard. A diverse stock of quality, well-designed homes serve the full range of ages, incomes, and households. New neighborhoods expand housing opportunities and add to a network of green spaces. A newer, mixed-use area in annexed county land near town and close to city utilities has been identified and planned to complement the downtown and maintain the city’s walkable character.”

The Community’s Vision

- Small streets and pedestrian paths
- Right-sized infrastructure
- Zoning amendments to manage growth
- Affordable housing and long-term rentals
- Small-scale, local businesses
- Connected parks and trails
- Access to nature and recreation

Existing Conditions

The Land Use and Urbanization element and the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map (see Figure 1) are two major focal points of the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Land Use and Urbanization element is to establish goals and policies to help accommodate population and housing growth that contributes to quality of life in White Salmon. By combining land use designations and urbanization strategies with goals, policies, implementation measures, and code enforcement, the Land Use and Urbanization element will help the City of White Salmon protect its character as a walkable, vibrant community with a strong sense of place.

Land Use in the City of White Salmon and Its Urban Exempt Area

For the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, the term “city” means the land within the incorporated area of White Salmon. The term “Urban Exempt Area” means the area outside of the city of White Salmon, that is exempt from the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act (Scenic Area Act) regulations that were established by the U.S. Congress in 1986 and intended to accommodate the future growth of the city. Among other purposes, the Scenic Area Act legislation encourages sustainable growth in existing urban areas. Scenic Area Act regulations do not apply within the White Salmon incorporated area and the Urban Exempt Area. As a result, this means that most of the future residential and job growth in the White Salmon area must occur in the city and its Urban Exempt Area because urban densities cannot be achieved in the National Scenic Area outside of cities and urban exempt areas. Perhaps even more crucial, the Urban Exempt Area is the only area where White Salmon can grow outward, so it is especially important that land be planned and used efficiently. The Urban Exempt Area, consisting of approximately 1,464 acres, is now developed with low-density residential uses and some commercial uses, and remains under County jurisdiction until properties are annexed into the city.

In addition to the Scenic Area Act, the land use regulatory framework in the city of White Salmon and Klickitat County is established by the Washington State Growth Management Act, the Shorelines Management Act, and various other state and local requirements – all adapted to meet local community development needs. These state and federal acts influence where new development can occur in White Salmon and its Urban Exempt Area, in addition to local regulations, like comprehensive plan designations, zoning, and development standards. Understanding and working within this context are important for achieving the community’s vision.

Existing Plans and Development Regulations

The Land Use and Urbanization Element of the Comprehensive Plan serves to provide a policy framework for the future use of land throughout the city and guide how development can occur. The Comprehensive Plan is used as a policy directive when development regulations conflict or when zone changes are requested. Specific development standards, including permitted uses, site planning, design, and land division standards, are found in the White Salmon Municipal Code, as well as other applicable City regulations. The County has adopted the Bingen/White Salmon Urban-Exempt Area Plan (dated November 1991) as a subarea plan within their Comprehensive Plan.

The Urbanization Study by FCS GROUP (Appendix B) evaluates both the land demand for a variety of different uses, and the amount of land that is available for development, also known as “buildable lands.” The Urbanization Study also analyzes the development potential and associated challenges of the Urban Exempt Area.

Table 1. Existing Plans and Development Regulations

Plan or Development Regulation
Title 16, Land Divisions, White Salmon Municipal Code Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design Standards (16.45)• Short Plats and Short Subdivisions (16.65)• Boundary Line Adjustments-Review and Approval• Illegally Divided Land (16.85)
Title 17, Zoning, White Salmon Municipal Code Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use Districts and Boundaries (17.16)• Design and Use Standards (17.68)• Mixed Use Planned Unit Development (17.74)• Residential Planned Unit Development (17.75)
Title 19, Administration of Land Development Regulations, White Salmon Municipal Code Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulation Amendments (19.20)
White Salmon Urbanization Study (2020)

Land Use Designations

Comprehensive Plan land use designations and development regulations help encourage development that is consistent with the City's goals and policies, including space for a variety of housing types, offices and businesses, industrial uses and warehouses, shopping and restaurants, schools and libraries, fire and police stations, medical facilities, parks and recreation areas, roads and streets, and land for utilities.

To help achieve the City's vision, lands are designated for a range of land uses and intensities. The Comprehensive Plan, supported by the Land Use Map, identifies different lands in the city designated for residential, commercial, industrial, or other purposes.

The intent of the Comprehensive Plan designations and Land Use Map are to provide guidance for the desired use, intensity, relationship of land uses to each other, and the desired character for development. Additionally, these land use designations serve as an underlying guide for the zoning ordinance and map, which dictates specific allowed uses and development standards. The zoning ordinance and zoning map are the implementation tools of the Comprehensive Plan, and help the City evaluate and regulate land use proposals according to the vision presented in the Comprehensive Plan.

Residential Land

Low-Density Residential (LDR)

Lands designated as Low-Density Residential, or LDR, are areas predominantly characterized by single-family detached homes. These areas are found primarily on the north and west sides of the city and have larger lot sizes to maintain the area's suburban character and sense of privacy between lots. Single-family detached houses may include manufactured or mobile homes.

Medium-Density Residential (MDR)

Lands designated as Medium-Density Residential, or MDR, are areas that are usually already developed and are located closer to the center of town. Lands with this designation allow more urban-type development, that includes single-family detached housing, as well as two-family homes, such as duplexes or townhomes, and manufactured home parks. Additional housing types allowed in this area include accessory dwelling units and cottage housing.

Mobile/Manufactured Home Residential (MMHR)

Lands designated as Mobile/Manufactured Home Residential, or MMHR, are areas that are typically already developed with mobile home or manufactured home parks. Lands with this designation encourage medium- and high-density, attainable housing by preserving existing and allowing new mobile home and manufactured home parks, and other types of high-density, affordable housing.

High-Density Residential/Mixed Use (HDR/MU)

Lands designated as High-Density Residential/Mixed Use, or HDR/MU, are intended to serve as high-density residential areas and act as buffers between commercial areas and LDR neighborhoods. Lands with this designation are primarily intended for multifamily structures and apartment buildings. Other housing types, such as accessory dwelling units and cottage housing, are also allowed in these areas. Commercial uses are also allowed in this area as part of a mixed-use development (primarily in the form of ground-floor retail or commercial office space).

Commercial and Industrial Lands

There are lands designated in both the city of White Salmon and the Urban Exempt Area that are designated for commercial uses. Currently no lands specifically designated for industrial uses are within the incorporated area, as the city is limited in the ability to provide larger sites for industrial development that are free from critical areas and appropriately served by infrastructure.

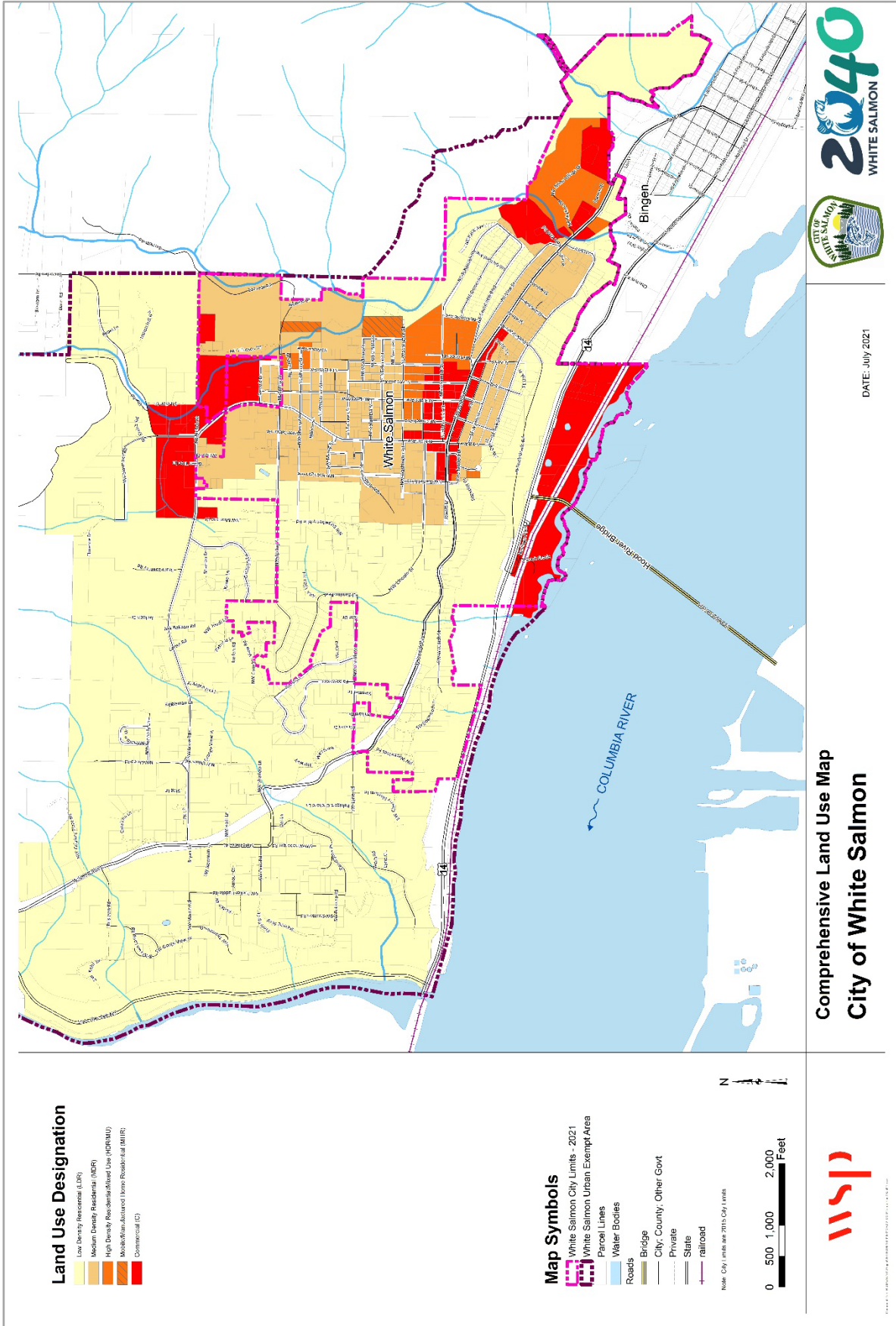
Commercial (C)

Lands designated as Commercial, or C, are envisioned as primarily retail, hospitality, and commercial office areas. Businesses that would likely operate in these areas include grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants and breweries, banks, hardware and home improvement stores, personal services, and convenience goods for local residential neighborhoods, nearby communities, and visitors alike. Hotels and short-term rental properties are also permitted within this designation, uses which add to the diverse character of this designation. There are three areas designated for commercial use, including one on the north side of the city, adjacent to similar commercial areas in the Urban Exempt Area. These areas are largely developed, and infill and redevelopment are expected to continue over the next 20 years.

Land Use Designations and Zoning

While Comprehensive Plan designations serve to help the community maintain sufficient land for all the various uses, and provide guidance about the general character and structure of uses in those respective areas, zoning serves as the official set of regulations, restrictions, and development standards that regulate the use of land. The City's zoning code closely implements the underlying Comprehensive Plan designations. The Public Use Overlay (PU) provides areas for public and quasi-public uses, publicly owned or controlled parks and recreation facilities, and governmental buildings. This "district" may act as an overlay to any underlying district where the proposed use is permitted subject to site plan review and approval, or as a "conditional use" if the proposed use is a public facility under public ownership. Some proposed uses may be authorized as a conditional use by the planning commission if the use is compatible with and will not negatively impact the surrounding district. Figure 1. Land Use Map depicts the planned distribution of land uses in White Salmon.

Figure 1. Comprehensive Plan Map



Urbanization¹

Overview

Planning for the Urban Exempt Area is important to control urban sprawl and discourage “leapfrog development.” Leapfrog development is characterized by intensive residential, commercial, or industrial development separated by parcels of rural or agricultural land. Due to expected population growth, the city will eventually need to expand and will likely incorporate portions of the Urban Exempt Area into city limits through annexation. This process will help the City provide urban services, such as water, wastewater, and sidewalks, to the annexed land; in turn, these areas are expected to become developed at urban intensities over time. The presence of the National Scenic Area beyond the Urban Exempt Area makes it imperative that the City work with Klickitat County to plan for and consider annexing the Urban Exempt Area.

Understanding the services available in the Urban Exempt Area is important in identifying how much growth can be accommodated in the future. Residential development at urban densities is reliant on sufficient road, water, and wastewater networks; while White Salmon is reasonably positioned to benefit from economic growth and development in the region, the amount of development in the Urban Exempt Area is directly dependent upon the City’s ability to provide adequate infrastructure service to sites and buildings.

The Urban Exempt Area currently receives services from both Klickitat County and the City of White Salmon, and the County maintains the road system within it. Some residential properties are connected to the City of White Salmon’s water and sewer systems, but most use private wells and septic systems. Law enforcement is primarily provided by the County Sheriff but the Bingen-White Salmon Police Department patrols and responds to incidents in the Urban Exempt Area through a mutual aid agreement between the County and City. The Urban Exempt Area is in Fire Protection District 3, but the City of White Salmon Fire Department responds to all fire calls in the area. The Urban Exempt Area receives ambulance service from Klickitat County Emergency Services District No. 1, but Fire Protection District 3 also has an emergency response vehicle.

Currently, the Urban Exempt Area is predominantly composed of subdivided lots ranging from 1/2 acre to more than 20 acres. Some developments have established covenants, conditions, and restrictions, which regulate the form of development allowed.

¹ *The Urbanization Study, authored by FCS GROUP in May 2020, serves as a significant source of data for the urbanization portion of this element, and includes information sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau, as well as original data collection and analysis. References for this study are established at the beginning of each subsection and subsequent data can be assumed to be sourced from the same study unless cited differently. The complete Urbanization Study can be found in Appendix B.*

Planning in the Urban Exempt Area

Klickitat County is the permitting jurisdiction and exercises sole planning authority over the Urban Exempt Area. It is vital that the City of White Salmon and Klickitat County coordinate planning and management of development within the Urban Exempt Area to promote development in a sensible, well-planned manner. To achieve this coordinated planning and management, the City seeks to develop, adopt and maintain an interlocal agreement with Klickitat County that directs how the Urban Exempt Area will develop.

Buildable Lands and Forecasted Land Needs

Buildable land supply in White Salmon and the Urban Exempt Area is limited, as documented by the Urbanization Study, completed by FCS GROUP (Appendix B). The study identified limitations in the supply of land across all categories (residential, commercial, and industrial), making it especially important that the City coordinate with Klickitat County to plan future land uses in the Urban Exempt Area. Key findings from the Urbanization Study include the following.

City of White Salmon

- There are approximately 117 acres of vacant, partially vacant, or redevelopable land in White Salmon, the vast majority of which is zoned for LDR uses. This land at current densities could accommodate 479 dwelling units.
- There is no industrial land in White Salmon, and there are only a few vacant commercial parcels, mostly located within the riverfront area along State Route 14. There are approximately 14 acres that could be redeveloped with higher-intensity commercial uses over time.

Urban Exempt Area

- There are approximately 369 acres of vacant, partially vacant, or redevelopable land in the Urban Exempt Area, but most of it is designated for LDR development. A few properties are zoned for MDR housing, but they are either already developed or have development constraints resulting from environmental features
- In contrast to the city of White Salmon, the Urban Exempt Area has parcels zoned for industrial development in addition to commercial land. There are approximately 8 acres of vacant land for commercial use and approximately 76 acres of vacant industrial land at the Port of Klickitat. There are industrial development opportunities in the Urban Exempt Area as well. Industrial lands at the Port of Klickitat and in Bingen serve as critical economic infrastructure for the city of White Salmon and its residents, many of whom work at the Port or other businesses and industrial facilities in Bingen.

Forecasted Potential Land Needs

- White Salmon may need about 1,020 new dwelling units over the next 20 to 30 years in order to accommodate expected population growth. This forecasted housing would require approximately 182 acres of land, but only 117 acres of land is available in the city limits. White Salmon would need to annex up to 76 acres of land in the Urban Exempt Area to accommodate this growth.
- Over the next 20 to 30 years, White Salmon will need to develop between 9 and 18 acres of land for commercial purposes and between 9 and 22 acres of land for industrial uses.

Aesthetics and Design

The aesthetics of a community are a core component of defining a “sense of place,” which is the sentiment that a town or place has a strong sense of identity that is proudly embraced by residents and easily recognizable to outsiders. Achieving a sense of place requires investing in a variety of placemaking strategies, such as building and supporting vibrant public spaces.

Urban and architectural design standards for development may have an important role in setting character-defining qualities of a town, and most commonly use themes, such as massing and scale, materiality, and landscaping to support a community’s vision for the “feel” of their town. Visual interest provided by streetscapes with strong design standards supports walkable and pedestrian-friendly environments. These efforts make good economic sense according to Main Street America, an economic revitalization organization that is well known for supporting vibrant and prosperous downtowns and Main Streets across the country. Their Main Street Approach™ relies on design as one of its core Four Points and is a critical part of their transformation strategy. More information about the Main Street America organization and their approach to revitalizing downtowns and main streets across America can be found by visiting their website at www.mainstreetamerica.org. From an economic development perspective, design encourages locals and tourists to patronize local businesses because of the inviting atmosphere.

Ultimately, the intention of design and aesthetic standards is to ensure an objective and attainable level of site and building design and construction quality without eliminating or overly limiting creativity and flexibility. As White Salmon grows, it will be important that the Comprehensive Plan sets the stage for aesthetic considerations to preserve the city’s identity, and maintain the visual qualities that make it attractive, while discouraging incompatible development. Maintaining the existing village character and small-town feel in both the downtown and existing neighborhoods is vital to White Salmon residents.

Goals and Policies²

Land use and urbanization goals and policies will help ensure that future development is consistent with the community vision, and that growth occurs in an orderly manner according to the community's values. Goals and policies are presented for three land use and urbanization topic areas.

- Compact and Efficient Land Use – focuses on land use patterns and supporting housing and employment choice
- Urbanization – focuses on policies for the Urban Exempt Area and accommodating growth
- Aesthetics and Design – focuses on maintaining community character and enhancing White Salmon's sense of place

Compact and Efficient Land Use Goal

GOAL LU-1: Establish and maintain a land use pattern that accommodates the current and future needs of the City and provides housing and employment choices that are cohesive with the community's vision.

Policy LU-1.1: Promote new development in areas with existing public services and near transportation networks and essential facilities, to better support a variety of housing and employment choices. Discourage suburban sprawl and "leapfrog" development by promoting redevelopment or infill development to support the efficient use of land downtown, and near the hospital commercial area.

Policy LU-1.2: Revise White Salmon's Land Use Map to provide clear guidance to property owners on which lands can accommodate future residential, commercial, and industrial growth consistent with the City's vision.

Policy LU-1.3: Encourage mixed-use development, with residential and commercial components, that fosters small business development, an increase in net new housing and employment opportunities and a walkable, compact community that reduces car trips.

Policy LU-1.4: Support the City of Bingen's and the Port of Klickitat's economic development and industrial development objectives that provide jobs to White Salmon residents.

² All goals and policies are of equal value and are numbered for reference purposes only.

Urbanization Goal

GOAL LU-2: Collaborate with Klickitat County on land use planning for the Urban Exempt Area, ensuring a common vision for development, orderly land division and infrastructure provision, and the ability to accommodate future residential and employment needs.

Policy LU-2.1: In partnership with Klickitat County, consider developing a subarea plan for the Urban Exempt Area in conjunction with a “planned action” environmental impact statement. This subarea plan and associated planned action environmental impact statement would address the following.

- Identifying and mapping appropriate land use designations for the Urban Exempt Area, considering future land use needs, development demand, and current adjacent land uses.
- Planning for adequate public infrastructure and facilities—especially water and wastewater infrastructure—in a way that is efficient, cost-effective, and supportive of future desired development and annexation.
- Planning for phasing of annexation.

Policy LU-2.2: Negotiate and adopt an Inter-Governmental Agreement with Klickitat County, that establishes a common vision for future development, and coordinates land use planning and decision making within the Urban Exempt Area. This Inter-Governmental Agreement should include common development standards and review procedures for the Urban Exempt Area, to ensure that infrastructure improvements take place concurrently with development. This Inter-Governmental Agreement should be implemented jointly and periodically updated and renewed as necessary to remain effective.

Policy LU-2.3: Participate in Klickitat County’s long-range planning efforts by ensuring City consistency with Countywide planning policies, reviewing and commenting on proposed development in the Urban Exempt Area, coordinating on current planning actions when mutually beneficial, providing updated data, and proposing mutually beneficial urbanization policies during County-led planning processes.

Policy LU-2.4: As part of the Inter-Governmental Agreement process, work collaboratively with Klickitat County to establish a mutual set of urbanization policies for the Urban Exempt Area, including formalizing development standards and coordination between City and County on topics resulting from the subarea plan and associated planned action environmental impact statement. These topics may include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Road development standards that are reasonably practicable for rural dwellers to achieve, but that can and will be readily improved to meet City standards upon annexation.

- Future street connection plans that ensure access routes are adequate and connectivity is maintained in the long term.
- Regulations that address water and wastewater connection requirements and whether individual, permit-exempt wells may be allowed in the City's water service area.
- Uniform standards for implementation and maintenance of alternative wastewater treatment systems when they are deemed necessary and feasible as best means of service expansion.
- Requirements for minimum lot size, minimum lot dimensions, and dwelling unit density targets that support lot division that accommodates urban residential densities and typologies.
- Requirements for shadow platting to help predict and accommodate future land division and development.
- Coordination on critical areas issues, including mitigation, such as banking and off-site restoration and enhancement in lieu of on-site mitigation for larger project impacts elsewhere in the County.
- Identifying best tools to ensure equitable landowner participation for necessary improvements to roads or other service upgrades at time of annexation.
- Transfer of Development Rights from Wild and Scenic River Management Area into the Urban Exempt Area or less developed portions of the Urban Exempt Area.

Policy LU-2.5: In response to urbanization needs and with support from Klickitat County, encourage and support annexation of lands within the Urban Exempt Area into the city by:

- Developing an annexation policy and codes to guide the process.
- Cooperating with property owners that have requested annexation.

Aesthetics and Design Goal

GOAL LU-3: Establish and maintain design and aesthetic standards for public places that preserve and enhance White Salmon's "sense of place."

Policy LU-3.1: Support vibrant and attractive public spaces and streets that are walkable and pedestrian-friendly.

Policy LU-3.2: Consider the establishment of auto-free, pedestrian/bicycle zones or public spaces, such as alleys and squares in or near downtown.



*"Large-lot
development
along with
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*"Continue with
White Salmon
feel in new
development."*

Housing

Background

Housing is a key focus area of White Salmon’s Comprehensive Plan update. The following focus area statement, created during the community visioning process, guides the goals and policies included in the Housing Comprehensive Plan element.

Focus Area Statement

The community identified the importance of attainable housing throughout the visioning process. A variety of housing types, including affordable housing and housing for seniors, was the top response when 2040 Vision Survey participants were asked what they would like to see change or improve in the White Salmon of the future. In the survey, residents also identified taking action on affordable long-term rental housing as a top priority for achieving their vision for White Salmon.

“The built environment in White Salmon is integrated with the beauty of its setting. An established area for future growth underscores the important contribution each new development brings, and the obligation to reinforce our village’s character. Natural features and views from the bluff to the Columbia River and Mount Hood are central to the city’s sense of place. Defined neighborhoods surround the historic business district along Jewett Boulevard. A diverse stock of quality, well-designed homes serve the full range of ages, incomes, and households. New neighborhoods expand housing opportunities and add to a network of green spaces. A secondary, mixed-use area on annexed county land near town and close to city utilities complements downtown and maintains the city’s walkable character.”

Existing Conditions

The City of White Salmon and its Urban Exempt Area offer a variety of housing types for a range of income levels, though the diversity of housing is limited. There is a high concentration of single-family dwellings, but duplexes, multifamily dwellings (such as apartments), manufactured homes, townhomes, condominiums, mixed-use housing, and senior citizen housing, are only present in much smaller numbers. Thanks to its scenery, mild climate, and small-town character, White Salmon is known throughout the Columbia River Gorge region as a unique and desirable community, and the City anticipates growing demand for residential development.

The Community’s Vision

- Small streets and pedestrian paths
- Right-sized infrastructure
- Zoning amendments to manage growth
- Affordable housing and long-term rentals
- Small-scale, local businesses
- Connected parks and trails
- Access to nature and recreation

Resulting from its proximity to the Portland metropolitan area and because of its growing notoriety as an outdoor recreation hub, property values started to increase dramatically in the early 1990s as the number of second homes, vacation homes, and short-term rental properties grew. Short-term rentals affect overall housing attainability by reducing the number of properties available for long-term renters and driving up housing costs. That trend has continued throughout the first two decades of the twenty-first century, increasing both rental costs and average purchase price, as well as narrowing the available housing stock.

Data Sources

The Urbanization Study, authored by FCS GROUP in May 2020, serves as a significant source of data for this element, and includes information sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau, as well as original data collection and analysis. References for this study are established at the beginning of each subsection and subsequent data can be assumed to be sourced from the same study unless cited differently. The complete Urbanization Study can be found in Appendix B.

Housing Diversity and Supply

As of 2018, there were approximately 1,396 housing units in White Salmon. Single-family detached homes are the predominant housing type, accounting for 69 percent of all units, while townhomes and multifamily housing represent just 20 percent of the housing stock. Opportunities for mobile home living in White Salmon are even more limited, and mobile homes were only 11 percent of the housing stock in 2018. This represents a decline in the proportion of mobile home housing from the year 2000, when they were 14 percent of total housing stock (see Appendix B, Urbanization Study, May 2020, FCS GROUP). This is partly the result of mobile home park closures, such as the loss of the 30-space Columbia Crest Mobile Home Park (also known as Tim’s Trailer Court) in 2007. Table 2 provides the breakdown of housing by type in White Salmon in 2000 and 2018 and the change between these years.

Table 2. White Salmon Percent Change in Housing Types, 2000 - 2018

	2000	2018	Percent Change 2000-2018
Single Family Detached	64%	69%	+5%
Townhomes/Plexes/Apts.	22%	20%	(-2%)
Mobile Homes/Other	14%	11%	(-3%)

Source: *Urbanization Study*, May 2020. FCS GROUP. Appendix B.

White Salmon’s opportunities for mobile home living have become even more limited since the closure of the 19-space Washington Street Trailer Court in the summer of 2020. These mobile home park closures have exacerbated the lack of attainable housing stock because mobile homes provide some of the most affordable housing options available to households and individuals living on limited incomes.

Housing Attainability and Affordability

A diverse housing market that provides options that are both attainable for middle-income earners and affordable for households and individuals living on a limited income is essential for the long-term prosperity of White Salmon. The City of White Salmon distinguishes the difference between “affordable” and “attainable” housing, and recognizes that attainable housing for White Salmon’s diverse population does not necessarily meet the definition of “affordable housing” as used by the state or federal government.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development considers households “cost-burdened” if they pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing; households are considered “severely cost-burdened” if they pay more than 50 percent of their income for housing. The share of cost-burdened homeowners and renters in White Salmon is significantly less than average in Washington. In White Salmon, 6 percent of homeowners and approximately 1 percent of renters are considered “cost-burdened,” versus 16 percent and 21 percent, respectively, for Washington as a whole (Appendix B, Urbanization Study, May 2020, FCS GROUP).

In Klickitat County, the average middle-income earning household (earning between 80 to 120 percent of median household income) should be able to afford between \$1,081 and \$1,622 per month for rent and between \$236,000 to \$353,000 for a mortgage. If households are paying more than these amounts, they are considered “cost-burdened” meaning they pay more than 30 percent of their gross monthly income for housing. Median household income in White Salmon is lower than that of Klickitat County as a whole, meaning that households in White Salmon will likely be “cost-burdened” at even lower rent- and purchase-price amounts than in the County. The City of White Salmon has established an Affordable Housing Threshold of 80 percent or less of Klickitat County median household income as estimated and revised in the future by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Home values in White Salmon continue to rise year after year, with the average sales price increasing 5.9 percent from \$427,000 in 2018 to \$454,000 in 2019. (Zillow.com Home Value Index; compiled by FCS GROUP). This recent increase is part of a long-term trend; home values in Klickitat County increased 34 percent from 1980 to 2000, and average sales prices in White Salmon went up from \$163,000 in 2006 to \$218,540 in 2009 (White Salmon Comprehensive Plan, 2012). In White Salmon, the 2018 median rent was \$918, about 12 percent higher than the median rent in Klickitat County. If the rise in median rents and home sale prices continue to outpace incomes, housing affordability will become an even greater concern, with the share of “cost-burdened” households expected to rise.

Tenancy and Vacancy

The majority of people in White Salmon own the home they live in, but the share of vacant or seasonal or short-term rental housing has increased significantly over the past two decades, from 6 percent in 2000 to 21 percent of housing inventory in 2018. Most owner-occupied housing is single-family detached houses, while renters are more likely to live in attached housing (like townhomes) or multifamily housing (like apartments). Approximately 65 percent of people residing in mobile homes rent their units, while approximately 35 percent of mobile home residents own their units (Appendix B, Urbanization Study, May 2020, FCS GROUP).

Table 3. White Salmon Housing Tenancy and Seasonal/Vacant Supply

Housing Tenancy	2000		2010		2018	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Owner Occupied Units	507	53%	516	47%	660	47%
Renter Occupied Units	380	40%	405	37%	447	32%
Subtotal	887	94%	921	85%	1,107	79%
Other Units	61	6%	166	15%	289	21%
Total Housing Units	948	100%	1,087	100%	1,396	100%

*includes seasonally occupied units short term rentals and other vacant units.

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey 2013-2018 estimates

Source: *Urbanization Study*, May 2020. FCS GROUP. Appendix B.

Housing Construction

New residential building construction in Klickitat County is dominated by single-family housing, and Klickitat County has issued an average of 91 single-family permits per year since 2008 (Appendix B, Urbanization Study, May 2020, FCS GROUP).

Senior, Special Needs, and Low-Income Housing

Certain segments of the population have specific housing needs, including some seniors and those who may require some assistance with their day-to-day living. America has an aging population and between 2015 and 2060, the number of Americans over the age of 65 will increase more than 105 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

The Mid-Columbia and Columbia Gorge Housing Authority (Housing Authority) serves a five-county area throughout the Columbia River Gorge region, including Klickitat County. The Housing Authority administers housing programs and provides support to the Columbia Cascade Housing Corporation, which is an affiliated, nonprofit organization that acts as the “development” arm of the Housing Authority. Together, these organizations help to meet the housing needs for senior citizens, disabled people, and people on fixed incomes.

Homelessness

White Salmon does not experience homelessness on the same scale as larger cities on the West Coast. The total number of homeless individuals in Klickitat County has fluctuated over the past decade, and the point-in-time homeless count of 17 people in 2019 was down from 33 in 2018. The point-in-time homeless count for 2020 was not available at the time of writing, but anecdotal evidence from local homeless and housing nonprofits indicates that the number of homeless residents appeared to be increasing between 2019 and 2020 (Appendix B, Urbanization Study, May 2020, FCS GROUP).

Existing Plans and Development Regulations

The development of housing in White Salmon is regulated by development standards, which include provisions related to both the planning of housing (where housing can be built and what form it can take), as well as building and construction standards (contained within the building code). These development standards ensure that housing is habitable and safe, but, by the City's own account, White Salmon's zoning code has not fostered the quality, affordability, and diversity of housing stock needed. In 2020, the City revised its code to preserve the availability of mobile home and manufactured home parks, and encourage the developments with at least 55 percent of units meeting the affordable housing threshold. The City anticipates further revisions to its residential zoning codes, with a focus on attainability and development of multifamily housing. Provisions to address quality and overall community aesthetics are also envisioned within future code updates.

The Urbanization Study from FCS GROUP (Appendix B) provides critical data regarding long- and short-term housing trends, condition and composition of the current housing stock, and other information related to housing. This study provides a foundation for the development of housing policy.

Table 4. Existing Plans and Development Regulations

Plan or Development Regulation
Title 15, Buildings and Construction, White Salmon Municipal Code
Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building Code (15.04)• Mobile Homes and Mobile Home Parks (15.20 and 15.24)
Title 17, Zoning, White Salmon Municipal Code
Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use Districts and Boundaries (17.16)• Accessory Dwelling Units (17.64)• Manufactured Home Siting Standards (17.68.130)• Cottage Infill Projects (17.73)• Residential Planned Unit Development (17.75)
White Salmon Urbanization Study (2020)

Population and Housing Trends

Current population estimates are discussed in more detail in the Economics Element of this Comprehensive Plan.

The average age of a population is important when considering the adequacy of housing in a community. Different age or generational cohorts have different housing needs and place varying demands on a community’s housing market. Overall, White Salmon has an older population than average in Washington. In White Salmon, 21.5 percent of residents are over the age of 65, which is significantly more than the state of Washington as a whole, where 14.7 percent of all residents are over the age of 65 (Appendix B, Urbanization Study, May 2020, FCS GROUP).

Population Trends and Projections

The Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) provides long-term population forecasts for Klickitat County, and there is significant variation between the low-, medium-, and high-growth scenarios. For the 2020 to 2040 timeframe, under the low-growth scenario, Klickitat County is projected to lose population. Under the medium-growth scenario, Klickitat County is projected to gain only 240 people while the high-growth forecast assumes that 4,719 people will be added to the population of Klickitat County during the same time frame (Appendix B, Urbanization Study, May 2020, FCS GROUP).

The high-growth scenario is most consistent with population trends that have occurred over the past decade. White Salmon’s population increased from 1,861 year-round residents in 1990 to 2,610 in 2019. The total number of households and dwelling units also increased during this time frame, but the average household size decreased. The average household size in 2018 was 2.2, down from 2.43 in 1990. Like age, the average household size can affect a community’s response to housing demand. During this time frame, the total number of new dwellings increased at a faster rate than new year-round residents, reflecting an increase in second homes and short-term rental properties.

Table 5. White Salmon Households and Dwelling Units

	1990	2000	2010	2018	Change: 1990-2018
Households (HH)	763	887	889	1,107	344
Average HH Size	2.43	2.46	2.23	2.2	(0.2)
Dwelling Units	816	949	1,087	1,396	580

Source: U.S. Census, and American Community Survey 2013-2018 estimates.

Source: *Urbanization Study*, May 2020. FCS GROUP. Appendix B.

Long term, the amount of population growth that White Salmon and its Urban Exempt Area can accommodate is partly dependent on a number of factors. These include the amount of buildable land available, the relative cost of housing compared to other areas in the Columbia River Gorge area and Klickitat County, and continued economic development.

Table 6. Annual Average Population Growth Rate

Annual Averages Population Growth Rate, 2000-2019		
0.9%	0.8%	1.3%
White Salmon	Klickitat County	Washington

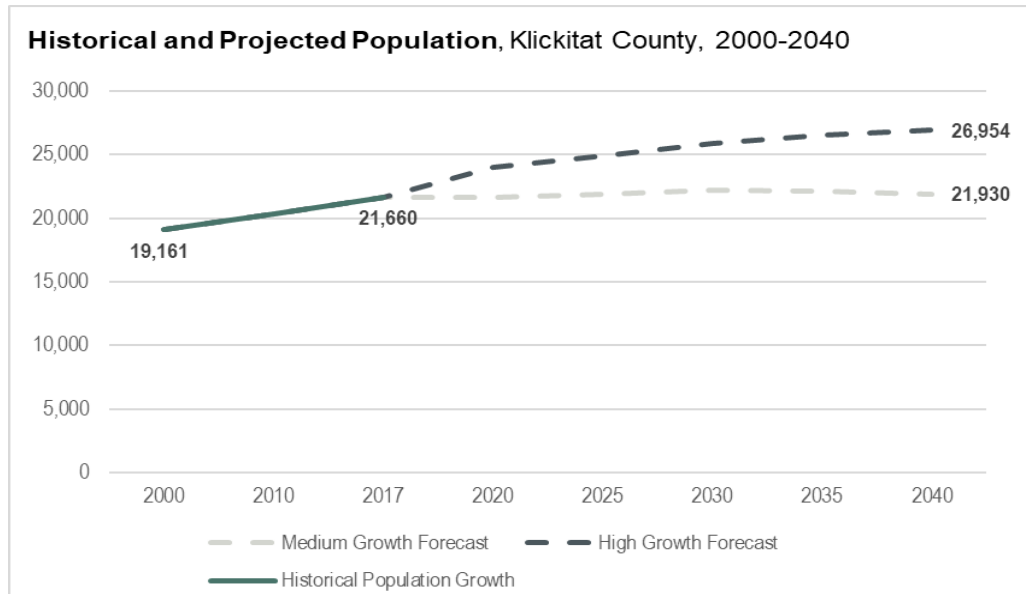
Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2019, compiled by FCS Group
 Source: *Urbanization Study*, May 2020. FCS GROUP. Appendix B.

Table 7. Population Trends

Population	2000	2010	2018	2019	2000 to 2019	2000 to 2019 AGR	2010 to 2019 AGR
Klickitat County	19,161	20,318	21,980	22,430	3,269	0.8%	1.1%
Alderdale	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bingen	672	720	735	750	78	0.6%	0.5%
Dallesport	1,185	1,202	1,313	1,331	146	0.6%	1.1%
Goldendale	3,760	3,407	3,530	3,535	(215)	-0.3%	0.4%
Husum	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lyle	530	499	535	536	6	0.1%	0.8%
Roosevelt	79	156	178	178	99	4.4%	1.5%
Tout Lake	494	557	605	621	127	1.2%	1.2%
White Salmon	2,193	2,224	2,505	2,610	417	0.9%	1.8%
Wishram	324	342	345	345	21	0.3%	0.1%
Washington State	5,894,141	6,724,540	7,427,570	7,546,410	1,652,269	1.3%	1.3%

Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management, Small Areas Estimate Program (Sep. 2019) and Estimates of April 1, Population.
 AGR = average annual growth rate.
 Source: *Urbanization Study*, May 2020. FCS GROUP. Appendix B.

Figure 2. Population Projections, 2000-2040



Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management
 Source: *Urbanization Study*, May 2020. FCS GROUP. Appendix B.

Income and Poverty

Household income in White Salmon is reviewed in more detail in the Economics Element of this Comprehensive Plan, but remains lower than the median household income of both Klickitat County and Washington. Actual median household income in White Salmon, may in fact be lower than the U.S. Census Bureau suggests; these estimates often include large “estate homes” outside of city limits that skew the data, reflecting stronger median household incomes (Appendix B, Urbanization Study, May 2020, FCS GROUP). While incomes are rising in White Salmon, they are growing at a slower pace than overall for Washington.

The United States uses a nationally recognized income threshold for determining poverty, known as the Federal Poverty Level. While establishing a national threshold helps in providing consistent data and benchmarks, it has some shortcomings; it is not based on the current cost of household necessities and is not adjusted for regional cost-of-living differences (except for Alaska and Hawaii). In 2016, 12.1 percent of White Salmon households met federal poverty thresholds, which was higher than the state average of 10.9 percent.

Housing Needs

As White Salmon grows, the demand for housing of all types, especially attainable housing, will increase, and accommodating this growth will be critical to the long-term success of the community. For Klickitat County, the Washington State OFM has forecasted a 0.96 percent annual population growth rate over 20 years. This will require approximately 2,259 net new dwelling units over 20 to 30 years (Appendix B, Urbanization Study, May 2020, FCS GROUP).

White Salmon has more water and sewer infrastructure capacity and buildable land than other communities in western Klickitat County and is located closer to a variety of public and private services in the Hood River-White Salmon-Bingen urban area and is, therefore, likely to experience the greatest market interest and development pressure over the coming decades. The White Salmon area is projected to “capture” approximately 45 percent of the overall net new housing demand, possibly accounting for approximately 1,019 units over the next 20 to 30 years.

Over the coming decades, demographic and householder preferences will continue to shift, which means the housing mix will have to become more diverse and offer more housing product options. Findings in the Urbanization Study indicate that renters are much more likely to prefer multifamily housing choices, such as apartments or duplexes, over single-family detached dwellings. In contrast, single-family homes are the preferred housing choice as household incomes rise and renters start families. Although White Salmon has a population that is older than the state average, local elected officials have expressed the need to increase the amount of “workforce housing,” such as townhomes, apartments, manufactured homes, and accessory dwelling units. These types of housing are more attainable to middle-income households because they can be developed at lower cost- and rent-level per square foot when compared to single-family

detached houses. Reflecting this relationship between consumer cohorts and housing needs, the future optimal housing mix in western Klickitat County would be composed of about 60 percent detached single-family housing, 30 percent townhomes or multifamily low-rise housing units, and 10 percent mobile/manufactured homes. In White Salmon, the optimal mix would be 59 percent detached single-family housing, 33 percent townhomes or multifamily low-rise housing units, and 8 percent mobile/manufactured homes or cottage housing.

Table 8. Projected Housing 20- to 30-Year Demand in White Salmon Area

Housing Demand Forecast	Detached Homes	Mobile MFG Homes & Cottages	Townhomes/ Plexes/ ADU/MFL	Total
West County				
White Salmon	602	80	338	1,109
Bingen	114	19	57	189
Husum/Trout Lake	49	20	0	69
Lyle	34	14	4	53
Subtotal West	799	133	399	1,420
Total Klickitat County				
Residential Demand (Dwelling Units)	1,476	226	557	2,259

Source: based on market trends

Source: *Urbanization Study*, May 2020. FCS GROUP. Appendix B.

Goals and Policies³

The following goals and policies reflect the long-term outcomes and supporting actions for the City of White Salmon’s vision for housing, based on the 2019 community visioning process and the 2020 Urbanization Study. Goals and policies are presented for three housing topic areas.

- Affordability and Diversity – focuses on affordability of housing citywide and development of diverse, quality housing stock
- Design and Neighborhoods – focuses on residential development that supports the quality of life and small-town character of White Salmon
- Partnerships and Education – focuses on establishing a network of partners to ensure housing needs are met

³ All goals and policies are of equal value and are numbered for reference purposes only.

Affordability and Diversity Goal

GOAL H-1: Establish, support and maintain a diverse stock of housing that serves the full range of ages, incomes and household types, including long-term renters and people with special needs.

Policy H-1.1: Review and update land use and zoning regulations to remove unnecessary barriers and provide incentives for the development of affordable housing stock.

Policy H-1.2: Use and encourage innovative land use planning tools and strategies that result in the development of affordable “workforce housing.”

Policy H-1.3: Recognize mobile homes/manufactured homes as a necessary and functional affordable housing solution. Support the continued existence of this affordable housing option through the designation of land for mobile home/manufactured home parks.

Policy H-1.4: Lead local community outreach efforts to explore strategies that preserve long-term affordability of housing for both renters and homeowners, including, but not limited to, the following.

- Vacation/short-term rental restrictions
- Public/private partnerships
- Public/housing authority acquisitions programs
- Long-term affordability agreements with developers or property owners
- Inclusionary housing policies, which require developers to sell or rent a certain number of new units to lower-income residents in exchange for incentives, such as tax abatements, or flexible development code standards, such as density increases

Policy H-1.5: Promote and support the rehabilitation/renovation of existing, substandard housing.

Neighborhoods Goal

GOAL H-2: Maintain, support, and establish, neighborhoods that enhance the quality of life for city residents.

Policy H-2.1: Establish standards to help protect White Salmon’s small-town feel and other aspects of community character.

Policy H-2.2: Ensure residential development adds to the network of green spaces.

Policy H-2.3: Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle paths into residential site design to connect neighborhoods to each other, to adjacent commercial areas, and to the larger pedestrian and bicycle network.

Policy H-2.4: Require all residential developments to construct streets, associated pedestrian infrastructure and street lighting to City standards. Encourage the use of low impact development strategies, such as stormwater gardens, narrow streets, and native plant conservation, to promote minimal impervious surfaces and minimize runoff in residential areas.

Policy H-2.5: Promote safety and enhance the quality of life in existing and new residential neighborhoods by encouraging the implementation of “slow-and-safe” neighborhood street design features. These features should consider strategies that encourage slow-driving speeds, low-traffic volumes, shared-street behavior among users, narrow lanes where appropriate, and other elements that enhance pedestrian and bicycle networks within residential areas.

Partnerships and Education Goal

GOAL H-3: Engage with local and regional organizations that focus on housing education and data collection to ensure supportive policies that promote housing affordability.

Policy H-3.1: Develop an implementation plan in coordination with housing partners for education and data collection that supports specific strategies to prevent homelessness.

Policy H-3.2: Maintain existing and build new partnerships with local and regional organizations to ensure supportive policies that promote housing affordability.

Policy H-3.3: Continue to collect and evaluate data regarding the state of housing in White Salmon so that the City’s response and approach can be tracked, measured, and adjusted over time.

"Focus on smart development for our small-scale, local-serving businesses."

"Fill gaps downtown, and build on recent upgrades to City Hall."



Economic Development

Background

White Salmon's economy supports a relatively small labor force and economic base due to the small population of the city. However, the economy of White Salmon is closely tied with Klickitat, Skamania, and Hood River Counties and the cities of Bingen and Hood River because of the flow of goods, labor, and customers throughout the region.

Planning for a vibrant and diverse economy must begin by understanding past and current economic conditions in White Salmon and the region. Historically, logging, lumber production, and agriculture were the mainstays for the White Salmon economy. These sectors still play an important role in the community, but the economy has diversified in recent years. Recreation, tourism, health care, avionics, technology, and viticulture are becoming increasingly important industries providing jobs for White Salmon residents. Home-based businesses are becoming more prevalent, and the city has recently started to attract new businesses involved in arts and crafts production. In addition, the city has been experiencing a growing remote workforce of people who want to live in the Gorge and work for companies located elsewhere. Residential construction has been strong, providing seasonal job opportunities. Government services, the school district, and retail sales round out the economic picture for the community.

Existing Conditions

Major employers in White Salmon include Skyline Hospital and the White Salmon Valley School District. Major employers in Bingen, including SDS Lumber and Mount Adams Fruit, also provide employment opportunities for White Salmon residents. Opportunities in manufacturing and other industrial uses are limited in White Salmon but are provided nearby at the Port of Klickitat's Bingen Point Business Park and the Port of Hood River's Waterfront Business Park. White Salmon contains no industrially zoned land, but the General Commercial zoning district allow for limited light industrial uses. For example, Innovative Composite Engineering operates a roughly 65,000-square-foot facility in north White Salmon dedicated to composite manufacturing for a variety of clients. Insitu Inc., a Boeing company, designs, develops, and manufactures unmanned aerial systems (commonly known as "drones"), is a technology company on both sides of the Columbia River that is headquartered at the Bingen Point Business Park and has spread throughout the White Salmon and Bingen communities, including multiple suppliers of avionic components. If Insitu departed from the area or significantly downsizes due to increased competition for manufacturing drones or other market factors, it would be expected that the region would experience substantial negative economic impacts to employment and to local companies who supply Insitu with parts for their drones.

Commercial businesses are generally concentrated along Jewett Boulevard in the downtown central business district and near Skyline Hospital. Arts, crafts, food and beverage establishments, and recreation-related businesses have become more established in the city in recent years. The city currently has one hotel (Inn of the White Salmon) with a new hotel/restaurant in Bingen (The Society Hotel). There has been considerable turnover in retail sales establishments and restaurant businesses during the past 10 years. However, local restaurants and breweries in White Salmon are becoming more well-known and are major attractions for out-of-town visitors. There are two other commercially zoned areas of White Salmon, the area around Skyline Hospital along Jewett Boulevard and the area in north White Salmon off of Main Avenue/Loop Road. Other commercial and industrial uses (for example, Innovative Composite Engineering) have developed in these areas but most of the land is vacant or underutilized.

White Salmon residents often cross over the bridge to Hood River for entertainment, dining, and shopping as the Hood River area offers a wider range of these options than White Salmon. In addition, Washington consumers have an incentive to shop, and businesses have an incentive to locate, in Oregon because of the lack of sales tax in Oregon compared to a 7.5 percent tax in White Salmon. The Walmart in Hood River is an example of a retail hub that draws customers throughout the region. Conversely, as Washington does not have an income tax, White Salmon has been experiencing population growth of remote workers from higher income tax locations, such as Oregon.

Economic Data and Trends

The following information includes available industry, employment, and income data, as well as population, housing, and tourism trends, for Klickitat County and White Salmon. This background information highlights the economic conditions that the city is currently experiencing and provides some indication of where the city may be headed in the future. Additional economic and demographic information is detailed in the Urbanization Study, authored by FCS GROUP in May 2020, and can be found in Appendix B. As of this early 2021 plan update, the international COVID-19 pandemic is evolving, and it is unknown how the pandemic will affect White Salmon's economy in the short and long term.

Employment

Total employment within Klickitat County has been increasing steadily over the past decade, according to Washington State Employment Security Data. Between 2010 and 2018, the industrial sector added 1,339 jobs while the services sector lost 556 jobs. The retail sector gained 54 jobs, agriculture sector lost 96 jobs, and the government sector declined by 8 jobs. The total estimated employment within Klickitat County in 2019 was 7,452 workers (farm and nonfarm workers). The largest job sectors included industrial trades (including construction, manufacturing, high tech, utilities, and warehousing) with 32 percent of the job base. The government and the service sectors are the next leading categories with 24 percent and 22 percent of the job base, respectively. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing related jobs account for 17 percent of the overall job base, followed by the retail sector at 5 percent.

Employment counts are difficult to obtain for small jurisdictions in rural areas. According to the Urbanization Study, which used U.S. Census OnTheMap data, the total employment within White Salmon increased from 612 to 1,064 jobs between 2010 and 2017. Employment trends within White Salmon are exhibited below in Table 9.

Table 9. White Salmon Employment Trends

Sector	2010	2017	Change
Agriculture and Forestry	-	14	14
Industrial	104	296	192
Retail	62	78	16
Services	402	340	(62)
Government/Other	44	336	292
Total	612	1,064	452

Source: White Salmon Urbanization Study, Appendix B

Income

According to the latest U.S. Census estimate, the 2018⁴ median household income was \$54,056 for Klickitat County and \$55,677 for White Salmon. The 2018 median household income for Washington State was \$70,116. From 1999 to 2017, Klickitat County’s median household income increased from \$34,457 to \$51,258 (an annual average growth rate of 2.2 percent) while the median household income for White Salmon increased from \$34,750 to \$47,418 (an annual average growth rate of 1.74 percent). Median household income for Washington State increased from \$45,610 to \$66,174 over the same time period, an annual average growth rate of 2.1 percent.

Population and Housing Trends

White Salmon is projected to grow at a faster rate than in the past. The city has traditionally experienced moderate and steady population growth. From 1980 to 2010, White Salmon grew from 1,853 residents to 2,224 residents, an increase of 20 percent (0.7 percent per year) over the 30-year period, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s decennial census. From 2010 to 2018, White Salmon has grown from 2,224 residents to 2,619, an increase of roughly 18 percent (2.2 percent per year). The Urban Exempt Area has also seen substantial growth, primarily accommodating large-lot single family homes. Long-term population forecasts by Washington State Office of Financial Management assumes an increase of 4,719 people in Klickitat County from 2020 to 2040 using the high growth forecast, which is the most consistent forecast with trends established over the past decade.

⁴ 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Within White Salmon, the number of households increased from 763 to 889 between 1990 and 2018, an increase of 17 percent. Between this same time frame, number of dwelling units increased from 816 to 1,396, an increase of 71 percent. White Salmon's average household size also decreased from 2.46 in 2000 to 2.20 in 2018. The fact that number of dwelling units during this time frame increased at a rate much higher than year-round households, and average household size decreased is indicative of a growing second-home market.

The community has attracted many people who can both work and recreate in the area. The lifestyle in a small rural area is attractive to young couples with a desire to raise their children away from the metropolitan areas and professionals who enjoy the proximity to recreation. The relatively low property taxes and the absence of a state income tax also make White Salmon appealing to many retirees. Land prices, particularly land with views of the Columbia River Gorge and Mount Hood, have increased substantially.

Tourism and Recreation

Over the years, the Columbia River Gorge has become a major tourist and recreation destination, suggesting that the region is capitalizing on its comparative advantage in providing a range of outdoor recreation opportunities. Visitor spending continues to grow within Klickitat County. County residents and visitors enjoy access to abundant recreational activities afforded by the Columbia River, White Salmon River, Mount Adams Wilderness, Conboy Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Goldendale Observatory, Maryhill Museum, and several wineries and breweries. According to the Urbanization Study, nearly 400 additional lodging rooms could be supported in Klickitat County over the next 20 to 30 years based on forecasted growth in tourism, business, and group (for example, weddings, meetings, etc.) demand. New or expanded lodging facilities within White Salmon, along with an increase in short-term rentals, are very likely over the next decade. These lodging and rental facilities, as well as supporting uses such as restaurants, will help capture visitor spending in White Salmon.

Economic Development Partners and Plans

Partners

Ongoing coordination and collaboration with local, regional, and state partners, as well as private enterprises, will allow the City to leverage its resources to achieve mutually beneficial economic development goals. Maintaining relationships with the following public and private entities is key to achieving a diverse and vibrant economy.

- Columbia Cascade Housing Corporation
- Columbia Gorge Windsurfing Association
- Columbia Gorge Kiteboarding Association
- Gorge Technology Alliance
- Klickitat County Economic Development Department and Public Economic Development Authority (EDA)
- Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD)
- Mid-Columbia Housing Authority
- Mount Adams Chamber of Commerce
- One Gorge (consortium of ports, cities, counties, nonprofits, and industry)
- Port of Hood River
- Port of Klickitat
- Innovative Composite Engineering
- Insitu, Inc.
- Mount Adams Fruit
- SDS Lumber Company
- Skyline Hospital
- Washington Economic Development Association
- Washington Forest Protection Association
- Washington Gorge Action Program
- Washington State Department of Commerce
- White Salmon Arts Council
- White Salmon Valley School District
- Washington Tourism Alliance

Regional Economic Development Plans

Existing economic development planning efforts for the region include the Columbia Gorge Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022 for Hood River, Klickitat, Sherman, Skamania, and Wasco Counties from MCEDD and Advancing Economic Prosperity in Klickitat County – 10-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan from Klickitat County Public EDA. These planning efforts present the regional economic landscape, including unique economic opportunities and challenges that the region faces. The culmination of these plans are various goals and strategies that can inform local economic development policies that address economic challenges and capitalize on economic opportunities.

Columbia Gorge Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022

Every five years, MCEDD develops a regional comprehensive economic development strategy as a guide to understanding the economy and to develop goals, strategies, and actions to create jobs, raise income levels, and diversify the economy. The strategy highlighted the region's primary economic vulnerabilities, including lack of industry diversification, aging infrastructure, unattainable housing, labor force constraints and workforce shortages, and economic disparities between demographic groups. The strategy focused on the following priority goals, in order by priority, and developed action plans for each category.

- **Housing:** Plan for, maintain, and reinvest in housing, including attainable housing, to provide for current population demands and support future economic development opportunities.
- **Financial Capital and Entrepreneurial Environment:** Enhance the retention and expansion of businesses in the region, coordinating resources to diversify the economy, and create sustainable quality jobs.
- **Workforce:** Nurture, educate, attract, and maintain a regional workforce that is career-trained and work ready.
- **Infrastructure:** Plan for, maintain, and reinvest in water, wastewater, transportation, and broadband infrastructure to provide for current population demands and support future economic development opportunities.
- **Regulatory Environment:** Collaborate as a region to simplify and decentralize regulatory processes.

Advancing Economic Prosperity in Klickitat County – 10-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan, 2017

The strategic plan is intended to guide Klickitat County's economic development efforts until 2027. The plan is organized around five goals, with supporting strategies and specific actions designed to grow the regional economy. Those goals include:

- **Foundational Initiatives:** The bedrock of successful community economic development is its physical and civic infrastructure, including transportation, communications, and water/wastewater, as well as supportive government policies and positioning the community and its needs so that they are visible with the proper local, state, and federal audiences.
- **Catalyst Opportunities:** Taking advantage of short- and long-term opportunities to accelerate economic growth. Opportunities in west Klickitat County, which includes White Salmon, that were highlighted were (1) the tech industry, especially UAS, as a catalyst opportunity, (2) composite materials by leveraging the county's existing composites industry, and (3) promoting and expanding the primary and secondary forest products industry.
- **Real Estate Development:** Includes strategies to stimulate public and private real estate investment and development, creating a buildable lands inventory, using various funding mechanisms, and increasing workforce housing.
- **Workforce Development:** Enhancing local training and job placement, cultivating and maintaining strategic partnerships, and developing workforce attraction/retention tactics. It is essential that public agencies work with the business community to identify talent needs.
- **Klickitat EDA Programs and Services:** Organizational activities such as business retention and expansion, business attraction, marketing, and entrepreneurship.

Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies strive to capitalize on and strengthen existing community assets, diversify the local economy, create a vibrant downtown commercial district, and provide stable employment opportunities and family-wage jobs. These goals and policies are not meant to be used independently of each other but are designed to be used in combination with each other for a successful economic strategy.⁵

GOAL EC-1: Create a distinctive downtown along Jewett Boulevard that is an attractive place to walk, dine, shop, and gather.

Policy EC-1.1: Support the creation of a downtown central business district association made up of downtown merchants, policy makers, and other interested parties. A strong organizational foundation ensures that all resources (funding, volunteers, etc.) are mobilized to achieve a common vision for White Salmon's downtown.

Policy EC-1.2: Support enhanced pedestrian and bicycle improvements in the downtown core that help capture pedestrian and bicycle consumers. Downtown pedestrian and bicycle improvements should connect to other key areas of the city.

Policy EC-1.3: Support mixed-use and a variety of housing options in downtown, contributing to a recognizable town center that supports local businesses. For mixed-use buildings, the ground floor should be reserved for commercial/office uses with residential uses located above.

Policy EC-1.4: Establish incentive-based design guidelines for new development that is proposed along Jewett Boulevard. Provide incentives for existing businesses to make design improvements to meet these guidelines.

Policy EC-1.5: Enhance the look and character of downtown with the inclusion of public art, including filling blank walls with murals by local artists, painted crosswalks, and establishing art near gateway locations and where human activity is desired to be concentrated.

Policy EC-1.6: Establish a community art program in supporting White Salmon as a destination in the Gorge for the creative arts and creative industries.

⁵ All goals and policies are of equal value and are numbered for reference purposes only.

GOAL EC-2: Support and expand on a robust tourism industry by capitalizing on the scenic beauty and proximity to recreational opportunities that White Salmon offers.

Policy EC-2.1: Inventory existing recreational tourism assets, such as proximity to the Columbia River, and identify gaps or opportunities that may be considered for promoting or enhancing the asset .

Policy EC-2.2: In partnership with local businesses and tourism organizations, formulate a tourism promotion strategy that highlights recreational assets to attract travelers and encourage them to spend money at local businesses.

Policy EC-2.3: Promote more tourist-related businesses, such as breweries, restaurants, bed and breakfast establishments, hotels/motels, and recreational sports equipment suppliers.

Policy EC-2.4: Periodically analyze existing transient facilities, including short-term rentals, hotels, and recreational vehicle parks and their financial impacts and benefits to the community.

GOAL EC-3: Create an environment that is supportive of existing businesses and does not create unnecessary barriers for their growth.

Policy EC-3.1: Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of existing businesses operating in White Salmon.

Policy EC-3.2: Periodically survey local businesses to understand how the City can support their growth and success. Host business roundtables and discussions to give local businesses the opportunity to meet City staff and stimulate discussions.

Policy EC-3.3: Provide assistance to local businesses operating in White Salmon by helping them understand local zoning and land use requirements, Washington’s property tax system, local and state permits, licensing procedures, and inspections.

Policy EC-3.4: Review development regulations, ordinances, and approval processes to identify regulatory and process barriers to expanding existing businesses and to ensure that the City is responsive to the business community.

Policy EC-3.5: Establish streamlined permitting processes that allow for business expansions and modifications without undergoing the same level of review as new development.

GOAL EC-4: Attract, plan for, and support new businesses and industries in White Salmon.

Policy EC-4.1: Ensure the availability of an adequate supply of developable commercial land through appropriate zoning.

Policy EC-4.2: Ensure adequate infrastructure is in place or planned for to support and stimulate new businesses.

Policy EC-4.3: Facilitate and support business incubators and other methods to assist start-up businesses.

Policy EC-4.4: Facilitate and support remote workers in White Salmon.

Policy EC-4.5: Establish a marketing campaign with the Mount Adams Chamber of Commerce to promote White Salmon as a great place to operate a business, targeting specific industries that would benefit from the city's locational advantages.

Policy EC-4.6: Leverage resources and infrastructure investments to attract new businesses that complement existing businesses and industry clusters operating in the city and region.

Policy EC-4.7: Seek catalyst opportunities in technology, hospitality, health care, fruit growing and packing, and forestry products, leveraging these existing industries in the region. Ensure that incentives and other tools are in place to enhance and attract these industries.

Policy EC-4.8: Identify sites and clusters of sites in the city that are serviceable for employment development. Identify potential public/private partnerships to promote employment, and address any zoning or regulatory barriers to ensure that jobs can be developed in these areas.

Policy EC-4.9: Continue to participate in local and regional economic development organizations, including the Klickitat County Public EDA, the Port of Klickitat County, and the MCEDD to develop existing and potential commercial and industrial properties.

Policy EC-4.10: Develop subarea plans for the area around Skyline Hospital and the Main Avenue/Loop Road intersection. The Main Avenue/Loop Road intersection subarea plan should be developed in partnership with Klickitat County.

GOAL EC-5: Work with regional economic development partners to foster workforce development programs that support local businesses and provide residents with the training they need to work in family-wage industries.

Policy EC-5.1: Encourage apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and internships in all industry sectors. Incentivize and promote businesses that provide these programs.

Policy EC-5.2: Survey local businesses to understand employment gaps.

Policy EC-5.3: Partner with local businesses and regional community colleges to create training programs for employers in high-growth industries.

Transportation

“Create small-scale streets and walkable neighborhoods.”

“Improve road maintenance, and add pedestrian and bicycle paths.”

Transportation

Background

Focus Area Statement

Through the 2040 Vision Survey, the community identified White Salmon’s walkability, compactness, and access to nature and recreational opportunities as some of the key traits that made the city special, and which should be protected. Regarding the actions the City should take to achieve their vision for White Salmon, managed growth through right-size infrastructure, specifically pedestrian paths and small streets, received the most responses from the community. When asked what the community would like to see improved in White Salmon, road maintenance and increased/improved walking and biking connections were some of the most frequent responses.

The Transportation Element is one of four key focus areas established at the outset of White Salmon’s Comprehensive Plan update. The following focus area statement, created during the community visioning process, guides the goals and policies included in the Transportation Comprehensive Plan element.

“The transportation system reflects our desire to develop at a human scale. Sidewalks, pedestrian trails and bike paths conveniently connect residents to downtown, nature trails and neighborhood destinations. An integrated balanced system of wider, centrally located roads and narrow shared residential roadways, provide connection within and among neighborhoods and safely accommodates all users. Public and private transportation options connect residents to regional destinations on both sides of the river.”

Existing Conditions

The following information provides the reader with general background information on the transportation opportunities and constraints in the White Salmon area. This element will have a significant effect on future development within the city and its Urban Exempt Area.

Public Transportation

Public transportation opportunities within the city and its Urban Exempt Area are limited but have been expanded over the years. Mount Adams Transportation (a service of Klickitat County) provides fixed and scheduled (dial-a-ride) services within Klickitat County and also connects to the Columbia Area Transit system on the Oregon side of the Columbia River. The nearest Greyhound Bus Terminal is located in Hood River.

The Community’s Vision

- Small streets and pedestrian paths
- Right-sized infrastructure
- Zoning amendments to manage growth
- Affordable housing and long-term rentals
- Small-scale, local businesses
- Connected parks and trails
- Access to nature and recreation
- Access to nature and recreation

Air Transportation

The nearest commercial airport is Portland International Airport; an approximately 60-minute drive from White Salmon. The Portland International Airport can also be reached via Mount Adams Transportation; connecting to Columbia Area Transit, which then connects with the Portland Metro transportation system in the Portland area.

River Transportation

The Columbia River serves as a vast conduit for commodities via river barge traffic, with at least three navigation companies currently operating on the river. The companies commonly transport logs, chips, fertilizers, gravel, wheat, fuel, garbage, containerized freight, and juvenile salmon. Bingen has a long history of log import/export. Tourist boats make Portland and Lewiston trips during the warmer half of the year, with the nearest day trip scheduled from Cascade Locks. Several of these trips stop in Hood River.

Rail Transportation

Burlington Northern Santa Fe is the freight rail carrier on the Washington side of the Columbia River. Amtrak passenger service is also available on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe line with a depot facility in Bingen. Union Pacific on the Oregon side of the river is also available for transporting commodities both east and west along the Columbia River.

Automobile Transportation

The primary means of transportation in the White Salmon and Urban Exempt Area is by private automobile. The city is served by State Route 14 (SR 14), a major east-west arterial along the Columbia River, by State Route 141 (SR 141) through White Salmon proper, and by a variety of City and County streets throughout the city and its Urban Exempt Area. SR 141 provides an alternate route for traffic traveling north from SR 14 along the White Salmon River toward Trout Lake without having to travel through the core downtown area of the city. As vehicle travel increases in the area, this alternate route will become more important in reducing the traffic load on the main arterials through White Salmon.

The Hood River Bridge provides a critical connection to Interstate 84 in Oregon and between White Salmon and Hood River. White Salmon, Bingen, and Klickitat County are working with the Port of Hood River and state agencies in Washington and Oregon to address the need for replacing the Hood River Bridge.

Transportation Issues

There are a number of transportation issues in the city and Urban Exempt Area.

City Core Area

The downtown commercial area during periods of heavy traffic is a source of traffic congestion complicated by on-street parking, unregulated intersections, and the three-way intersection at Estes Avenue and Jewett Boulevard on the eastern edge of the commercial area. The congestion may continue to grow as the city and the Urban Exempt Area continue to develop. The City has reduced the speed limit in White Salmon to 20 miles per hour (except for specific designated areas) to address congestion and concerns with the speed of vehicles and pedestrian safety .

Dock Grade Road

The city of White Salmon enjoys a unique and beautiful location. In the early days of White Salmon, the primary access was through the city of Bingen and north Jewett Boulevard (SR 141) to the top of the bluff and the main part of the city. As mentioned in the Historical Element of this Plan, it became urgent to develop an additional access from the river area. The residents built what is now called Dock Grade Road from the bluff down to the Columbia River and what was the ferry dock across to Hood River. The road is approximately three-quarters of a mile long with grades up to 15 percent. It is extremely narrow, approximately 22 feet wide, with a difficult intersection with State Route 14. The road is closed during inclement weather because of the steepness of the grade, narrow roadbed, and lack of guardrails. Dock Grade is now a one-way road up to White Salmon traveling from State Route 14. This was done to address safety concerns with the intersection at State Route 14 and the narrowness of the road.

Residential Collectors

The city has a fairly accommodating transportation pattern in most residential sections of the area, with some narrow streets through residential neighborhoods.

The roads of the Urban Exempt Area have evolved over time from primitive roads through the countryside to a road and street system to accommodate today's automobiles. Consequently, these roads and streets for the most part do not meet City standards and are currently owned, maintained and under the control of Klickitat County. The cost to upgrade these nonconforming roads and streets in many instances involve not only design and construction costs, but also the cost to acquire rights-of-way to conform to City standards. Therefore, as these areas are annexed and made a part of the city, it will be necessary for the City to accept roads and streets as they currently exist and upgrade them over an extended period of time as funds and opportunities become available. New roads and street development in the city would need to meet City design standards.

Private Streets

In the past, the City has allowed the development of private streets to serve limited residential areas. This practice has resulted in extremely narrow roadways that are not maintained for several residential homes. The situation makes it very difficult to provide police and fire protection, as there is no place for large vehicles and trucks to turn around once on a private road. The City has determined to eliminate the practice of private roads under all but the most specific sets of conditions. With the exception of Planned Unit Developments, all new residential developments will have access to a dedicated and improved public road which meets City Design Standards. Planned Unit Developments using cluster type development or other innovative design may use private streets, provided the streets meet City standards for roadway width, access, and turnaround capability. Private gates with electronic devices, which allow for immediate opening of the gate by emergency vehicles, may also be used. Private streets will be allowed only when there can be no possibility of further extension of the street.

Pedestrian Walkways and Bicycle Routes

The City has not had an active requirement for providing new sidewalks in residential subdivisions—whether in the city or in the Urban Exempt Area. The City has worked with the White Salmon Valley School District to implement “Safe Routes to School” measures, including installation and/or improvement of sidewalks. Citizens using road shoulders or roadways for pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes along some narrow roads have requested improvements for safety reasons. Citizens have also requested improvements along State Route 141 from Bingen to White Salmon to address safety concerns for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies outline the long-term outcomes and direction for the City of White Salmon pertaining to the transportation network and transportation access for all modes of travel.

GOAL T-1: To provide a safe, efficient, and economic transportation network.

Policy T-1.1: Proposed routes shall be laid out in accordance with the existing transportation network and be consistent with the goals, policies, street classification standards, and land use designations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy T-1.2: Proposed development within or along existing or proposed transportation corridors identified in subsequent City transportation and/or street plans shall be encouraged to incorporate provisions for the location and construction of such routes.

Policy T-1.3: Access on major arterials shall be controlled and minimized where the primary function is through traffic movement.

Policy T-1.4: Proposed transportation corridor general locations are shown on the transportation map (see Appendix C). The routes shown are not intended to be precise but rather a general guideline for future development.

Policy T-1.5: The City shall approve development only in those instances where proposed roads and streets meet minimum City specifications.

Policy T-1.6: The City shall pursue the acquisition of rights-of-way wherever the need for routing or improvements is identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy T-1.7: The City shall provide adequate directional signage to assist visitors and residents in their travels.

Policy T-1.8: The City shall work with the Washington Department of Transportation to develop appropriate arterial street standards and local review procedures where Highways 14 and 141 cross through the city and the Urban Exempt Area.

Policy T-1.9: The City shall develop and maintain communication with the Port and City of Hood River regarding the significance of the Hood River Bridge in the City's transportation system. The importance of the Park and Ride immediately adjacent to the bridge and the recently improved Washington entrance onto the bridge will continue to be considered as transportation demands evolve.

Policy T-1.10: Allow narrow minor collectors with lower speed limits with residential collectors feeding traffic to local neighborhood streets.

Policy T-1.11: Promote electric vehicle infrastructure.

Policy T-1.12: Incorporate, whenever feasible, low impact development strategies in planning streets, pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes.

GOAL T-2: To provide safe pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes while maintaining arterial commercial and residential access via public streets.

Policy T-2.1: Plan provisions shall be made for an integrated network of safe pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes.

Policy T-2.2: Before establishing pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes, the following factors shall be considered:

- a) The inclusion of the proposed walkway or route on the Comprehensive Plan Map.
- b) Public safety.
- c) The cost of such facilities as compared to the need for probable use.

Policy T-2.3 Construction of pedestrian walkways and bicycle routes shall be in conformance with the uniform design standards for trails and paths.

Policy T-2.4: The City shall establish parking standards to ensure that parking does not interfere with commerce, pedestrian traffic, or the aesthetics of the community.

Policy T-2.5: The City shall include adequate pedestrian walkways in the design and construction of:

- a) New bridges and replacement of existing bridges.
- b) New railroad crossings and reconstruction of existing crossings wherever feasible and appropriate.

Policy T-2.6: The City will continue to coordinate with County Health Department and other interested agencies in planning for Safe Routes to Schools. The School Walk and Route Guide map will be reviewed and will help inform decisions on prioritization of pedestrian improvements such as sidewalks and special street crossings.

Policy T-2.7: The City recognizes the additional benefits of “safe routes to schools” planning in that the provision of safe, well-improved, highly visible, and pleasant routes to schools also improves bicycle and pedestrian connectivity for city residents of all ages. Schools are located on the Loop Road Trail, so improving access to schools also improves access to this valuable bicycle and pedestrian connection, linking the core of the city beyond the schools to Snowden Road and Route 141 extending to Husum.

"I would love to see more parks, public transportation, and housing options."

"Amenities for youth and seniors - like a new pool / community center."


IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Saturday 9 / 21

11 am - 3 pm



A Fun, Family-Friendly Event

Rotary 

Parks and Recreation

Background

Focus Area Statement

The Parks and Recreation Element is one of four key focus areas established at the outset of White Salmon’s Comprehensive Plan update. The focus area statement, created during the community visioning process, guides the goals and policies included in the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan element.

Through the 2040 Vision Survey, the community identified a connected parks and trail system and increased access to recreational opportunities as important components to a successful parks and recreation system. When asked what citizens love about White Salmon, some of the most frequent responses were the natural beauty of the area, scenic views, available parks and greenspace, the local trail system, and Jewett Creek. When asked what makes White Salmon special and what the community wants to protect and enhance, the natural beauty and access to nature and recreation were the top responses, along with the city’s small-town character.

“Surrounded by natural and scenic beauty, White Salmon is at the center of a recreational wonderland. A city-protected trail system offers opportunities for hiking, mountain biking and kayaking. Residents enjoy a variety of parks, green spaces, trails and facilities. A network of neighborhood parks and playgrounds provide daily access for residents to enjoy. Sports fields, specialty parks, a community pool and recreation center promote community gathering and outdoor exercise. Natural areas provide wildlife habitat and enhance local ecosystems. Health and aesthetic benefits are derived from the ample tree canopy. Access to the Columbia Riverfront is maintained so that all can appreciate this precious and defining recreational asset.”

Existing Conditions

The benefits of a vibrant parks and recreation system include positive effects on human health, welfare and well-being, habitat conservation, and cultural resource protection. Providing a variety of active and passive parks and recreation opportunities is important to the community. White Salmon offers various park and recreational facilities, meeting the diverse needs of the community while attracting visitors from outside of the area.

The Community’s Vision

- Small streets and pedestrian paths
- Right-sized infrastructure
- Zoning amendments to manage growth
- Affordable housing and long-term rentals
- Small-scale, local businesses
- Connected parks and trails
- Access to nature and recreation

The City's main park, Rheingarten Park, includes a variety of sports courts and fields, a playground, and picnic tables. Rheingarten Park is also the focal point for several events and festivals, including the farmers market, music concerts, July 4th festivities, and the Spring Festival, which draws attendees from all over the Columbia River Gorge. On the east side of White Salmon, the Jewett Sports Complex provides the community baseball and softball fields, as well as soccer fields. Just north of these fields across Tohomish Street is Spoke Bike Park, which hosts a skills park for riders of varying abilities and ages, as well as a recreational mountain bike trail through the woods. For a more natural and peaceful recreational experience, Mamie and Francis Gaddis Memorial Park offers a trail system along Jewett Creek within a heavily wooded portion of town, and Pioneer Park in central White Salmon includes an historic burial ground. All of these facilities provide opportunities that the city can capitalize on.

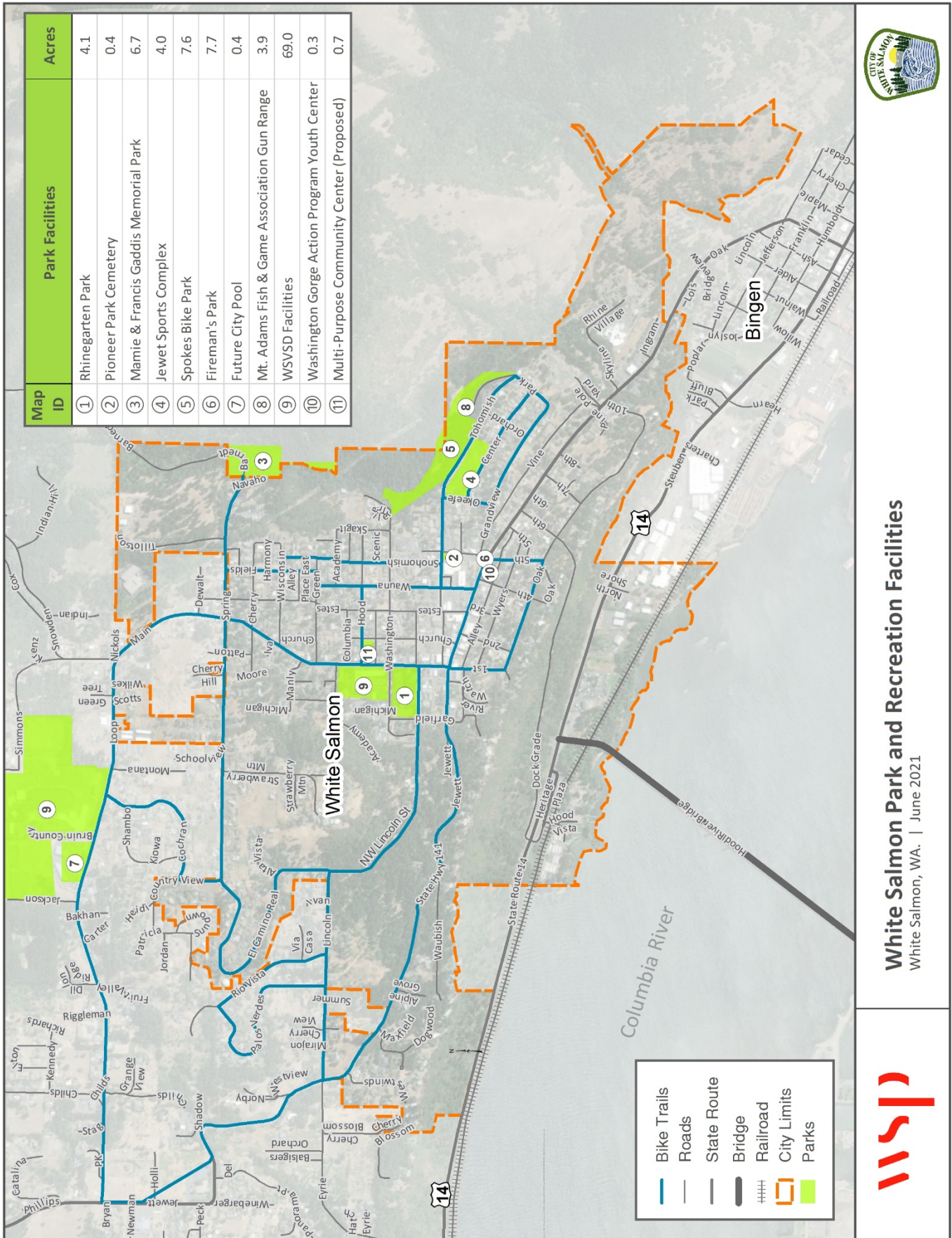
As new park and recreational facilities are planned, it is equally important to protect and preserve natural, scenic, and cultural areas. The diverse habitat and landscape of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) provides the overall setting of White Salmon's recreational environment.

The primary source of funding for parks and recreation development and maintenance has been the City's general fund, as no dedicated source of funding exists for this purpose. The City also occasionally receives grant funding from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office. New residents and an increased demand for these facilities will place additional demand on City resources, requiring new funding mechanisms to adequately meet the population's current and future park and recreation facility needs. The City may require park land to be set aside in new subdivisions, paid by the developer and maintained by a homeowners association, to capture the impact of new residential growth on the demand for facilities.

Inventory of Existing Facilities

White Salmon has a diverse mix of City-owned and -operated park and recreation facilities and facilities owned and operated by other agencies and organizations. Figure 3 identifies the existing facilities in White Salmon, followed by Table 10 summarizing each facility. Additional information about these facilities can be found in the 2016 Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Comprehensive Plan Addendum (or as amended).

Figure 3. White Salmon Park and Recreation Facilities



White Salmon Park and Recreation Facilities

White Salmon, WA. | June 2021



Table 10. White Salmon Parks and Recreation Facilities

Existing Facility	Description
City-Owned Facility	
Rheingarten Park	This 4.11-acre community park is located at the intersection of North Main Avenue and Northwest Lincoln Street. The park is used for community activities, such as Springfest. The location has expansive views of Mount Hood and the Columbia River Gorge. Popular features of this park include tennis courts, a play structure, open space, and picnic areas.
Pioneer Cemetery Park	Pioneer Cemetery Park is a small (0.39 acre) park located off Northeast Tohomish Street. It provides a grassy expanse with views of Mount Hood. Central to the park is a memorial in tribute to White Salmon’s first burial ground. Pioneer Park was originally a cemetery for early pioneers. While no one is currently buried at the park, the grave markers still exist. The land was operated as a cemetery until 1962, when the City designated it as a memorial park.
Mamie and Francis Gaddis Memorial Park	Mamie and Francis Gaddis Memorial Park (6.70 acres) is located in a natural setting along the eastern edge of White Salmon and adjacent to Jewett Creek. This park, dedicated in 2003, was originally named in memory of Mamie Gaddis; the name was changed to Mamie and Francis Gaddis Memorial Park in July 2004, and the park was rededicated in 2007 with the completion of a kiosk. Notable features of this park include interpretive signs that provide information on native plant species, creekside picnic tables, and a trail system.
Washington Gorge Action Program Youth Center	The Washington Gorge Action Program (WGAP) Youth Center is located in downtown White Salmon, on property owned by the City. WGAP initiated youth programs in 1994 and, over the past 25 years, has provided opportunities for youth to build positive relationships through healthy activities. Activities offered at the youth center include billiards, foosball, ping pong, computers, video and board games, music, books, and places to relax.
Spoke Bike Park	Spoke Bike Park is a 7.60-acre park located adjacent to Jewett Creek and across from the Jewett Sports Complex. The park is located on City land and is maintained by volunteers. The bike park hosts a series of jumps, berms, and other challenges for riders of all skills and ages.
Fireman’s Park	Fireman’s Park is a small gateway park located on the corner of Jewett Boulevard and Grandview Avenue. This site welcomes visitors to White Salmon and provides views of the Columbia River Gorge and Mount Hood.

Existing Facility	Description
Non-City-Owned Facility	
Jewett Sports Complex	The Jewett Sports Complex is a 3.99-acre active recreation park. The White Salmon Community Youth organization constructed and maintains the complex, but the property is owned by the White Salmon Valley School District. The complex is used for community baseball, softball, and soccer. The Jewett family donated the property to the White Salmon Valley School in 1925.
Whitson Elementary School	Whitson Elementary School is located across from Rheingarten Park. The school offers amenities such as play structures, open space, and basketball courts. The Columbia High School, Henkle Middle School, Wallace and Priscilla Stevenson Intermediate School complex is located just outside the city limits, within the county. The high school provides recreational fields for football, soccer, baseball, and track. Basketball courts, open space, and various play structures are available as well.
Mount Adams Fish and Game Association Gun Range	The Mount Adams Fish and Game Association, which was established in 1939, owns and operates a gun range next to Jewett Creek, off Park Avenue. The Association is private, and the gun range is membership only. The range features an indoor pistol range and an outdoor 100-yard rifle range with a trap house. The gun range provides a safe place to shoot pistols, rifles, or traps for members drawn from the Columbia River Gorge area.

Outdoor Recreational Opportunities

Outdoor recreational activities abound in the White Salmon area. The Columbia River and the wild and scenic White Salmon River west of the community provide a host of water-related activities. These include fishing, boating, whitewater rafting, windsurfing, kiteboarding, stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, and other sports. Gifford-Pinchot National Forest, the second largest national forest in the United States, lies approximately 25 miles north of White Salmon and is used by residents and visitors to the area for camping, hiking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and snowmobiling. Downhill skiing is available at several ski resorts in the Mount Hood National Forest of Oregon, located 40 miles south of White Salmon.

Future Facilities and Plans

City Pool

For much of the twentieth century, the City owned and operated a public pool located on 0.43 acre next to Whitson Elementary School, at the intersection of Washington Street and Main Avenue. The City built the pool in the early 1930s to serve residents and the surrounding community and completed renovations in the early 1950s to add a bathhouse. The City developed a pool feasibility study in 2015 to determine the demand for, and location of, a new pool to replace the existing facility. Because of ongoing maintenance needs and costly repairs, the City decided to decommission the pool in 2019. The White Salmon Valley Pool Metropolitan Park District is now in charge of the pool relocation and is moving forward with the construction of a new pool near Henkle Middle School along Loop Road.

Community Center

The City is considering the construction of a new community center located across the street from Whitson Elementary School. The facility may also house the WGAP Youth Center, which would be relocated from its current location in a City-owned building built in 1950. In addition, the City Council would use the space for meetings and space would be able available for public use.

RiverAccess

Access to and recreational opportunity along the riverfront are currently limited. Providing public access to the riverfront is a current challenge due to private property ownership along the shoreline and the BNSF railroad right-of-way, which runs east-west adjacent to the river. During the public outreach of the 2016 Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Comprehensive Plan Addendum, there was strong community support for increased river access and passive recreational opportunities. Klickitat County currently owns a roughly 13-acre riverfront parcel below the Hood River Bridge and the City is working to obtain ownership of this land. Future access to the riverfront is challenging, but may range from passive trail access easement(s) to a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the railroad tracks that connects the riverfront to an upland area.

Loop Trail Plan

Regional multimodal transportation will be improved by developing the Loop Trail, an 11.5-mile pathway located in existing Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), City of Bingen, White Salmon, and Klickitat County rights-of-way. Possible elements of the Loop Trail may include directional signage, visual separation between vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians, and scenic vistas. The plan will provide visitors and residents with a trail connecting publicly owned parks. The exact alignment of the trail is still being decided on by all interested parties.

Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies highlight the long-term outcomes and direction for the City of White Salmon's desired parks and recreation facilities, based on the 2019 community visioning process and the 2016 Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Comprehensive Plan Addendum (or as amended)⁶.

GOAL P&R-1: Maintain and improve access and multimodal circulation between park and recreation facilities

Policy P&R-1.1: Improve wayfinding in parks, trails, and along roads by developing a uniform directional signage system.

⁶ All goals and policies are of equal value and are numbered for reference purposes only.

Policy P&R-1.2: Continue to work with Klickitat County and WSDOT to improve safety along routes connecting to parks and recreation facilities with increased striping and enhanced pedestrian crossings.

Policy P&R-1.3: Develop trails and pathways between park sites and points of interest, including developing a trail system that connects Spokes Bike Park and Mamie and Francis Gaddis Memorial Park.

Policy P&R-1.4: Access to recreational opportunities along the Columbia River shoreline shall be required while preserving the ecological environment of the shoreline, in accordance with the City's Shoreline Master Program.

Policy P&R-1.5: Continue to work with the City of Bingen and Klickitat County in developing the Loop Trail to improve the regional multimodal transportation system.

Policy P&R-1.6: Partner with WSDOT, Klickitat County, City of Bingen, and the Port of Klickitat to develop a trail system connecting White Salmon with the Columbia River and the Port's park and recreation facilities near Bingen Harbor.

Policy P&R-1.7: Partner with Klickitat County, Washington State Parks, the Columbia River Gorge NSA, White Salmon Valley Pool Metropolitan Park District, and the White Salmon Valley School District in planning and funding efforts to link the Urban Exempt Area parks, trails, recreation, and open space system with the City of White Salmon.

GOAL P&R-2: Maintain existing park and recreation facilities and improve existing park and recreation facilities with new or improved facilities, amenities, and uses.

Policy P&R-2.1: Parks and recreational facilities shall be maintained to be clean, attractive, accessible, and safe.

Policy P&R-2.2: Encourage low-maintenance and durable park facilities to reduce the City's long-term costs.

Policy P&R-2.3: Maintain and improve existing sports fields and courts.

Policy P&R-2.4: Improve Pioneer Cemetery Park with new recreational facilities, such as benches, picnic tables, tree plantings, and/or a wood chip walking path, while maintaining and respecting the historic nature of the site.

Policy P&R-2.5: Provide modern bicycle racks in all park facilities to which a bicycle's frame and wheels can be locked.

Policy P&R-2.6: Support the White Salmon Valley Pool Metropolitan Park District in the construction of a new pool that accommodates current and future demand.

Policy P&R-2.7: Work with the White Salmon Valley School District in converting the Jewett Sports Complex into multiuse fields serving both baseball and soccer equally. Consider alternative uses for the complex in the winter, such as an outdoor modular ice rink.

GOAL P&R-3: Ensure adequate funding opportunities, coordination, and partnerships to meet current and future park and recreation facility demands and maintenance needs.

Policy P&R-3.1: Park and recreation planning and improvements shall be coordinated within the City and the County, and with the City of Bingen, especially to provide an integrated network of parks, open space, and pedestrian connections to and through the Urban Exempt Area.

Policy P&R-3.2: Recreational uses that capitalize on the City's assets shall be encouraged.

Policy P&R-3.3: All planned parks and recreation facilities shall be consistent with the City's capital facilities planning.

Policy P&R-3.4: Continue to work closely with volunteers and service organizations for park maintenance.

Policy P&R-3.5: Consider maintenance early in project planning and design to ensure that projects can be maintained cost-effectively.

Policy P&R-3.6: Address repair issues early before issues become significant and costs escalate.

Policy P&R-3.7: Maintain and update inventories of park and recreation facilities, their physical conditions, and the anticipated need for repair and replacement in the future.

Policy P&R-3.8: Reach out to local businesses, schools, and additional service organizations for maintenance workdays and sponsorship.

Policy P&R-3.9: Coordinate with private landowners regarding trail and conservation easements.

Policy P&R-3.10: Continue to support the White Salmon Valley Pool Metropolitan Park District.

Policy P&R-3.11: Explore grant opportunities from the State of Washington and other funding agencies or organizations for the development of park, recreation, and trail facilities; pursuing funding for projects with the greatest community support; and partnership opportunities.

Policy P&R-3.12: Encourage the creation of green space or park land in new subdivisions or mixed-use development.

Policy P&R-3.13: Consider financing tools, such as tax levies or a bond, to fund specific capital projects and defer project costs over time.

LIBRARY

*“Community arts
and culture
are important to
citizens.”*

*“Take a shared
City/County
approach to
infrastructure/
service growth.”*

Public Facilities and Services

Background

The Public Facilities and Services Element is one of four key focus areas established at the outset of White Salmon’s Comprehensive Plan update. The focus area statement, created during the community visioning process, guides the goals and policies included in the Public Facilities and Services Comprehensive Plan element.

Through the 2040 Vision Survey, the community identified managing growth through right-sized infrastructure as one of the key actions for achieving their vision for White Salmon.

Focus Area Statement

“Quality public facilities, services and utilities contribute to a high quality of life. White Salmon residents value planning for public facilities to ensure they are scaled to manage growth responsibly. Vital community centers and activities connect residents – young and old – and encourage civic engagement. The library and schools are planned and maintained to accommodate current and future residents.”

Existing Conditions

The City of White Salmon provides a number of public facilities and services to the residents of the City and the Urban Exempt Area. The City’s services are typical of a small community and include fire protection, police protection, domestic water supply and distribution, sanitary sewer and, to a certain extent, stormwater runoff systems. The following discussion details the various components of the public facilities and services available in the White Salmon area.

Fire Protection

The City of White Salmon Fire Department is an all-volunteer organization with a paid part-time chief. Fire departments in the Mid-Columbia Gorge Region and the City of Bingen Fire Department maintain mutual aid agreements. The White Salmon Fire Department works closely with Klickitat County Fire District #3 and the Bingen Fire Department in training and responding to calls for service. The White Salmon Fire Department maintains a fire rating of six by the Washington Survey and Rating Bureau. This is an extremely good rating for an all-volunteer department. A new, six-bay fire station was built during the 1990s.

Medical Facilities

Skyline Hospital is a facility of a special rural health district chartered under Washington State requirements and is publicly supported in part by property tax levies. The hospital serves White Salmon and surrounding communities. The hospital has made improvements to its facility to meet the needs of its patients, including the most recent upgrade to the hospital’s emergency room in 2020. The hospital provides an important service to residents in the White Salmon area.

The Community’s Vision

- Small streets and pedestrian paths
- Right-sized infrastructure
- Zoning amendments to manage growth
- Affordable housing and long-term rentals
- Small-scale, local businesses
- Connected parks and trails
- Access to nature and recreation

Citizens of Klickitat County voted to create the Klickitat County Emergency Service District in 2013. Klickitat County EMS District No. 1 provides 24-hour Advance Life Support (ALS) 9-1-1 response throughout the county. In addition to emergency calls for service, the District also provide hospital-to-hospital specialty-care transfers. The District maintains three locations: Goldendale, White Salmon, and Dallesport. Life Flight service for the Gorge area is located at Dallesport.

Police Protection

Since 2000, the City of White Salmon has provided police services to the City of Bingen. There is an Interlocal Agreement between the Bingen-White Salmon councils to cover the operation of the police department. The department, through an agreement with the Klickitat County Sheriff's Department, uses the Klickitat County Jail in Goldendale when the need arises.

Water System

The White Salmon area has been provided with domestic water since the early 1900s. The water system was privately owned until the 1930s when the City of White Salmon purchased all water rights and appurtenances and took over the operation and maintenance of the system. The system has grown over the years. Wells were drilled in the late 1990s to serve as the primary source and replace the Buck Creek water supply. However, with the growth in the area, the City has determined that the wells did not meet the water demand and returned to using Buck Creek with a slow sand filtration system to augment the wells. In addition, the City purchased additional water rights to provide adequate water to its citizens well into the future.

The City continues to make improvements to its water system, including the replacement of the Jewett Boulevard water main in 2020 and developing an aquifer recharge system where Buck Creek water is pumped into the City's well system for storage in the wintertime and for use in the summer. Planning is currently underway for determining the feasibility of using water from the White Salmon River and for replacing the 14-inch main line transporting water from the Buck Creek water system.

Wastewater System

The City of White Salmon’s wastewater is transported to and treated at the City of Bingen wastewater treatment plant. Expansion and improvements of the treatment plant were made in 1995. The two cities pay equally into the operation and maintenance of the plant; however, White Salmon pays more because they have more ERUs (Equivalent Residential Units). An inter-local agreement will be required to address the future expansion issues, maintenance, and main transmission lines. It is expected that the City of White Salmon will continue to pay the City of Bingen for treatment of its wastewater into the future.

Stormwater System

The City’s main source of stormwater is the city streets. The City has small, individualized storm sewer systems running primarily east and west across the slopes of the city’s topography. Each street has its own system, starting in the core area and moving two or three blocks north as well as one or two blocks south. Residential developments are required to have on-site water containment. The City may need to develop a comprehensive stormwater system in the future to meet state requirements. The City should begin planning how to address its stormwater needs, including considering the use of low-impact development measures to address stormwater.

Solid Waste

Solid waste collection in the city of White Salmon and surrounding Urban Exempt Area is provided by Republic Services. Regulation of Republic Services is done by the Washington State Transportation and Utility Commission. Curbside recycling is also provided by Republic Services through a contract with Klickitat County.

Public Streets

The City of White Salmon maintains the public streets within the city limits, which are primarily local streets and residential collectors which promote the village-like feel of the city. The major arterials, including Jewett Boulevard, are State or Klickitat County rights-of-way and are maintained by the State or the County. The speed limit in the city of White Salmon has been lowered to 20 miles per hour unless posted differently. Estes Street and portions of Jewett Boulevard are set at 25 miles per hour.

Public Schools and Colleges

The White Salmon Valley School District manages the public schools in the White Salmon area. The School District serves Bingen, White Salmon, the Urban Exempt Area and outlying areas of Husum, Underwood, and Snowden. The School District consists of Whitson Elementary (grades K to 3), Wallace & Priscilla Stevenson Intermediate School (grade 4 to 6), Henkle Middle (grades 7 to 8), and Columbia High (grades 9 to 12), and the alternative school, White Salmon Academy. The district benefits from the Head Start and pre-school programs that are provided by Southwest Washington’s ESD #112.

The nearest regional community college is Columbia Gorge Community College with campuses located in The Dalles and Hood River. There are two- and four-year colleges and trade schools in the Portland/Vancouver Metropolitan area.

Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies highlight the long-term outcomes and direction for the City of White Salmon related to public facilities and services.

GOAL PF-1: To maintain a balance between growth and services.

Policy PF-1: The type and installation/establishment of public facilities shall be accomplished in an orderly and cost-effective manner and utilized to direct urban expansion.

Policy PF-2: The development of public facilities and utilities shall be planned and coordinated with Klickitat County and other suppliers in advance of need.

Policy PF-3: The provision of public facilities and services shall be based upon financial cost and adequacy of desired levels of services.

Policy PF-4: The City shall prepare and adopt a capital improvement program as a planning tool to assure timely development of public facilities in advance of need. Funding sources should be identified and align needed projects with replacement/expansion funding sources or tools.

Policy PF-5: The City shall maintain close coordination and joint ventures with the City of Bingen in the planning and development of public facilities and services to maximize economies of scale.

Policy PF-6: The City shall maintain, utilize, and periodically update City water and sewer plans to assure adequate levels of existing and future essential services are met.

Policy PF-7: The City shall actively participate in the planning process of other public service and utility agencies and coordinate installation of utilities to maximize land-use potential.

Policy PF-8: The City shall maintain and update the White Salmon Municipal Code as necessary to ensure that adequate and proper consideration of public services are addressed to allow new development to proceed.

Policy PF-9: The City shall maintain the right to require off-site improvements, including street, sewer, and water system improvements, pedestrian walkways, and school improvements, if deemed necessary, at the expense of the developer.

Policy PF-10: The City shall coordinate installation of utilities to maximize land-use potential and ensure adequate inspection of utility installation and hookups. If specialized systems (e.g., septic tank effluent pumping systems for wastewater) are used, the system's final operating and mechanical specifications should be reviewed by the City and recorded in an appropriate manner to ensure homeowners are aware of special system needs, benefits, and limitations.

Policy PF-11: The City shall encourage low-impact sustainable development practices to reduce impact on the environment when providing services.

*"Maintain
small town
character!"*

*"The community,
its culture, and
people make
White Salmon
unique."*

Wolford
Store

Fruit Growers
Union

White Salmon
Valley Bank

Blacksmith

Everhart
Building

Colburn
Hotel

North Bank
Laundry

nd

1906

HISTORY AND HISTORIC PLACES

Background

Environmental Context

The city of White Salmon lies in a transition zone between the maritime climate west of the Cascade Mountain Range and the dry continental climate of the inter-mountain region to the east. This transition zone is characterized by mild, dry summers and cool, wet winters. White Salmon is sometimes called the "[Land where the sun meets the rain.](#)"

Successive floods, the Bretz or Lake Missoula floods of the late Pleistocene and early Holocene Epoch, scoured the land in some areas and deposited sediment elsewhere. The central city of White Salmon is situated on a bluff approximately 550 feet above the Columbia River. The city also includes approximately three-quarters of a mile of river frontage, including two established fishing sites under tribal jurisdiction. The area's geologic history and climate greatly influenced White Salmon's pre-contact and post-contact culture and history.

Inhabitants

Humans have inhabited the Mid-Columbia Plateau and Columbia River basin for at least 12,000 years. The earliest peoples developed diverse cultural patterns and several subdialects of the Sahaptin and Chinookan language groups. A common bond among Mid-Columbia inhabitants was the Columbia River, an artery of commerce and cultural exchange and its natural resources. The abundance of salmon was central to the life cycles of early inhabitants.

Over time, the population of the Mid-Columbia region shifted from a hunter-gather subsistence pattern to more settled villages beginning around 4,000 years ago. One of the oldest known settlement sites in the area, south of Klickitat County in Oregon, dates to 9,785 years ago.⁷

The four tribes with treaty rights within the area include the Yakima Nation, Warm Springs, Umatilla, and Nez Perce. Locally, tribal people fished for salmon in the rivers, hunted game in the upland forests and meadows, and harvested food and medicine in the prairies. Within the Mid-Columbia region lithic sites, rock cairns, huckleberry trenches, quarries, camps and villages, and pictographs and petroglyphs are physical evidence of the long relationship of the native people to the land.



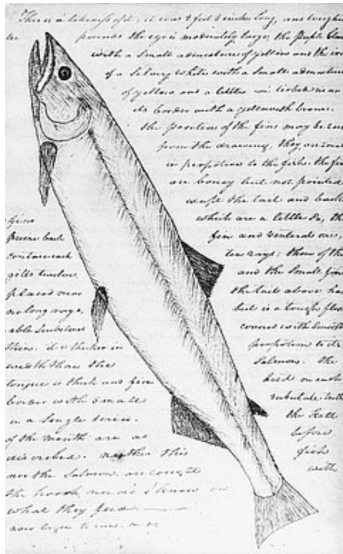
Tsagaglatal, "She who Watches" petroglyph. [The Confluence Project](#). Photo by Steve Terrill.

⁷ https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Field%20Guide%20to%20WA%20Arch_0.pdf

Prior to contact with Euro-Americans, the upper Chinookan people resided in oval or circular pit houses. Constructed with a roof of poles, brush, or mats and partially sunk into the earth, some circular pit houses could be up to 50 feet in diameter and 12 feet in depth. In Klickitat County, a good example of a pit house village is the Rattlesnake Creek Site located on Department of Natural Resources lands north of Husum⁸. More than 2,000 archaeological sites have been recorded in Klickitat County.⁹

The earliest written evidence of contact between Euro-Americans and the indigenous population in the White Salmon area, the journals of Lewis and Clark, indicate a village near the river that Lewis and Clark named the White Salmon River. The Corps of Discovery members observed multiple subterranean structures with conical roofs as they traded with the native population who spoke an Upper Chinookan dialect, (Moulton 1991: 118- 122).

Clark's White Salmon Trout



Oregon Historical Society

Early Settlers

After the Lewis and Clark Expedition's brief 1805 and 1806 visit to the White Salmon River, direct Euro-American presence in the area was limited. In 1843, the first wagon caravan of 900 emigrants reached The Dalles in the Oregon Territory; however, most early Euro-American settlers journeyed to the fertile Willamette Valley. In 1853, Erastus and Mary Joslyn, traveling downriver by steamboat, disembarked at The Dalles. Later, they continued downriver and spotted fertile flat land on the north bank of the Columbia River in the Washington Territory, approximately one mile east of the White Salmon River, and purchased their homesite from the Klickitat Tribe. After the Klickitat Tribe moved onto the Yakima Reservation in 1855, Euro-American settlement accelerated. In 1867, Mary's brother James Warner arrived and established a post office. In 1874, A. H. and Jennie Jewett arrived and settled on the bluff, today's White Salmon. The Suksdorf family arrived the same year and settled on the flatland along the Columbia River, now Bingen.¹⁰

Early Development

Agriculture and natural resource extraction drove the early local economy. Early inhabitants of White Salmon and the surrounding area raised cattle for the eastern mines and harvested timber to fuel the steamboats. (HRA 1995 and McCoy 1987). Wheat farming and salmon harvesting also built the local economy. The Jewett family are often credited with being the catalyst of the renowned White Salmon Valley horticulture industry. The Jewett's nursery and resort became a nationally known showplace for visitors. The Jewett family was instrumental in development of the City's water system, and they made donations of land for Bethel Church.

⁸ A Field Guide to Washington State Archaeology, DAHP (2003)

⁹ DAHP Archaeological Sites Per County, March 2017, <https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/ArchyStatusMap2017.pdf> History of White Salmon, Washington, Gorge Connection.com, <http://www.gorgeconnection.com/white-salmon/history.php#>

¹⁰ Clark White Salmon Trout Image is a copy of a sketch made by William Clark in February 1806, while Expedition members were at Fort Clatsop near the mouth of the Columbia River. [Oregon Historical Society](http://www.oregonhistoricalsociety.org)

A ferry provided transport service between the White Salmon settlements, and Hood River, Oregon. The community constructed the Dock Grade Road to the Palmer Ferry Landing west of the present-day approach to the White Salmon-Hood River Bridge. Horse-drawn wagons transported cargo and passengers to a flight of stairs that led up the embankment to the town of White Salmon (McCoy 1987:71-80).

In the early twentieth century horticulture, particularly raising fruits and berries, was an important economic driver in the area. A combination of horticulture, railroads and roads, and land speculation led to the “Apple Boom” of the 1910s. (Patee 2016) As prosperity increased, so did discord among the upland and lowland families resulting in the construction of what today is known as Dock Grade Road. The questions of the day included where the roads, railroad, post office, and water source should be built – close to the river or on the upland. Theodore Suksdorf platted Bingen in the lowlands in 1892. Bingen opened its post office in 1896. Mr. Jewett platted White Salmon and the town became incorporated in 1907.

20th Century Trends

The Spokane, Portland, and Seattle railroad came through the Columbia River Gorge in 1908 with a stop at Bingen. Was the station to be named after Bingen or White Salmon? The compromise was to name the “Bingen-White Salmon” railroad station after both towns. Thereafter, the two cities, Bingen and White Salmon, grew side by side but at different elevations. That same year electric lights came to White Salmon, along with the first fire hydrant, and in 1910 the first sidewalks were built. The Condit Dam on the White Salmon River was completed in 1913 and provided electricity to the area and as far away as Camas, Washington.¹¹

The Klickitat County government began planning the current road connecting Bingen and White Salmon, now Washington State Route 141 (SR14), in the 1910s and local volunteers, under County supervision, began construction of the road in the 1920s¹². The Hood River Bridge over the Columbia River opened in 1924. SR 141 provided a vital link between the Columbia River and interior locations of Trout Lake and Glendale. SR 141 became to be known as White Salmon’s Main Street. SR 141 Alternative now bypasses downtown White Salmon and serves as a principal corridor to the inland recreation areas near Husum, Trout Lake, Mt Adams wilderness and recreation areas, and the Bird Creek Meadows on the Yakima Reservation¹³. The economic history of White Salmon has been driven by canoes, trails, ferries, steamboats, trains, and roads¹⁴.

¹¹ The Condit Dam was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but environmental and cultural concerns—as well as the cost associated with relicensing the dam—resulted in its removal in 2011. See, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LxMHmw3Z-U> and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HES_-dKUE9I

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_State_Route_141

¹³ WSDOT Corridor Sketch, 4.2.2018. <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2017/09/14/CSS351-SR141-SR14JctBingen-SkamaaniaCountyLine.pdf>

¹⁴ For local newspaper stories: <http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~westklic/wsbshist.html>

In the 1970s White Salmon civic leaders, perhaps because the Suksdorf family had named the settlement Bingen after their ancestral home of Bingen am Rhein¹⁵, were attracted by a minor national trend of revitalizing a community by adopting an architectural theme. The faux Bavarian theme seemed to work well in mountainous Leavenworth, WA so why not in White Salmon, too? While Leavenworth succeeded in drawing tourist to its theme park-like town, White Salmon did not fare as well. Only a few buildings retain any faux Bavarian design

Congress passed the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act (Act) and President Ronald Reagan signed the Act on November 17, 1986. The Act mandates the protection and enhancement of scenic, cultural, natural and recreation resources and the protection and support of the Gorge economy¹⁶. The Act designated a total of 292,500 acres for special protection on both sides of the Columbia River from the outskirts of Portland-Vancouver in the west to the semi-arid regions of Wasco and Klickitat counties in the east. The Act created 13 urban exempts areas including the White Salmon/Bingen Urban Exempt Area. Most residential and commercial development within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is encouraged to take place within one of the 13 designated Urban Exempt Areas.

White Salmon, since the late 1990s, has become a destination for recreationists and tourists. The community offers all city services and provides retail, medical, cultural, educational, and recreational facilities. The community of White Salmon has grown from its birth in 1907 and has established itself as a vital part of the Columbia River Gorge.

Local Resources of Historic Interest

Historic and Cultural Sites and Structures

Community members are proud of White Salmon’s cultural heritage and history. To preserve and share that heritage, citizens of White Salmon and West Klickitat County established the West Klickitat County Historical Society in 1984. The Society’s collection of data, artifacts, and pictorials are housed in the Gorge Heritage Museum, formerly the Bingen Congregational Church (circa 1912).

The West Klickitat Historic Society and knowledgeable community members consider many late nineteenth and early twentieth-century buildings to be of local historical significance. The White Salmon 2012 Comprehensive Plan identified several notable locally significant buildings. See Table 11.

¹⁵ Faux Bavarian style, <http://historichedalles.org/bingen-white-salmon/>

¹⁶ “The purposes of sections 544 to 544p of this title are— (1) to establish a national scenic area to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge; and (2) to protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with paragraph (1).”

Table 11. Notable historic properties (2012 Comprehensive Plan inventory)

Site	Circa	Location/History
Red Springhouse	1870	Jewett Boulevard
Palmer Landing	1875	Vanguard Nursery
Jewett Farm Resort	1888	E Jewett Boulevard & 10th Avenue
Stone House	1889	10th Avenue at Jewett Farm
Sampson Electric	1900	121 Main Avenue <i>formerly Dewey Theater</i>
Coffin House	1900	NW Lincoln & Garfield <i>maternity hospital</i>
Pioneer Building	1904	216 E Jewett Boulevard
Lauterbach House	1904	245 W Jewett Boulevard
St. Joseph Catholic Church	1912	240 NW Washington Street
Hunsaker Building	1905	E Jewett Boulevard & Church Street
United Methodist Church	1910	341 N Main Avenue
Eyrie Resort	1910	464 Eyrie Road
Red & White Grocery Store	1910	E Jewett Boulevard & 1st Avenue
Kloster Building	1930	E Jewett Boulevard.
Pioneer Cemetery Park	1880	Tohomish & NE Pioneer Place

Evolving Inventory of Historic and Cultural Resources

Local Historic Resource Strategies

Many communities have adopted historic preservation programs which include:

- a methodology for conducting a local survey of historic or cultural resources;
- criteria for establishing local historic or cultural significance;
- creating a City-administered preservation commission or committee; and
- adoption of an historic preservation ordinance.

White Salmon could employ such proactive strategies. Until such time, however, identification of historic resources in White Salmon will be based on guidance and programs developed by state or national agencies, or what someone locally thinks is old and of historic interest. Creating a more robust historic and cultural resource preservation program requires a commitment from the local government, dedicated local supporters, and the guidance of qualified professionals.

The Washington State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) is the primary state agency supporting historic preservation and cultural resource programming. DAHP is an excellent resource for professional guidance on:

- [Historic building survey and inventory](#);
- [Archaeology survey and inventory](#);
- [Model historic preservation ordinances](#);
- [Historic research and building review](#);
- [Historic Preservation law](#);
- [Certified Local Government](#) (CLG) program; and the
- [Main Street](#) program.

Evolving Historic Resources

History evolves and what was once new or familiar may gather historic or cultural significance over time. Consequently, the inventory of historic resources changes and expands through the years. Best inventory practices are for a community to reevaluate the local inventory each time the community updates its comprehensive plan.

The George and Louisa Aggers House, 464 SW Eyrie Road, known as “Overlook,” is in the Urban Exempt Area. In 2020, the property was listed in the Washington State Historic Register¹⁷. Overlook was once part of a small 46-acre cherry orchard business on the western edge of White Salmon. The 1910 craftsman style farmhouse serves as an excellent example of Arts & Crafts dwellings from the early twentieth century.¹⁸

White Salmon is also home to a notable collection of early to mid-twentieth century commercial and institutional buildings, several of which were designed and constructed by Day Walter Hilborn, one of the most prolific and important architects in the history of southwest Washington State¹⁹. Hilborn is credited with at least seven commissions in White Salmon, including the White Salmon Post Office (1941), B.O.E. Elks # 163, Bethel Congregational Church (1947), a movie theater, rodeo grandstand, and several private residences.

¹⁷ Overlook House. https://www.columbiagorge.com/archive/located-on-eyrie-road/article_f8ac48dd-2aa2-5354-9802-e0054675e54c.html

¹⁸ <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/find-a-historic-place>

¹⁹ See Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), “Day W. Hilborn” <https://dahp.wa.gov/bio-for-day-w-hilborn>. See also, [Project list - compiled by Michael Houser, Sept 2006 \(revised June 2012\)](#) and [Day W. Hilborn: Built to Last \(PowerPoint Presentation\)](#)

The Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) maintains an inventory of historic and cultural resources. Some of the properties are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). See Appendix A, White Salmon Area Inventory of Historic Resources, DAHP - Select. Currently, there are no properties in White Salmon listed in the NRHP; however, investigation by DAHP representatives has determined that several historic resources may be eligible for listing in the NRHP.

The importance of periodic updates to the historic inventory is illustrated in Table 12. A decade ago, the community might not have considered the cluster of residential dwellings to have architectural significance. However, in 2020 a team of qualified historic and architectural professionals prepared Historic Property Report(s) for these residences and concluded that the cluster of houses may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places because of the local architectural character.

Table 12. Cluster of houses identified by State of Washington as historic and significant which may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (2020)

Location	DAHP Property ID #	Location
267 SE Oak Street	722160	Circa 1920 residence English Cottage Style
301 SE Oak Street	722159	1918 residence Tudor style
345 W Jewett Boulevard	722162	1973 Northwest Regional Style
435 W Jewett Boulevard	722187	1965 residence Prairie Ranch style, aka Van Alstine House
447 W. Jewett Boulevard	722163	1940 residence Cottage/Colonial Revival
475 SE Oak Street	722161	1974 residence Northwest Regional style

Existing Plans and Regulations

The White Salmon Comprehensive Plan encourages the public and private identification, documentation, and preservation of historic resources. The White Salmon Municipal Code does not include discreet chapters dedicated to implement such plan polices. The City evaluates potential impacts to historic and cultural resources through Chapter 18.20, Environmental Protection, which implements the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)²⁰.

The White Salmon Shoreline Master Program (SMP) provides for protection and restoration of buildings, sites, and areas having archaeological, historical, cultural, or scientific value or significance within designated shorelands²¹. Shoreline jurisdiction within the White Salmon urban area is limited to lands adjacent to the Columbia River. Those shorelands include “Native American Tribes Fishing Sites.”

²⁰ See RCW 43.21C and WAC 197-11.

²¹ See SMP Section 3.4, Archaeological, Historic, and Cultural Resources.

The Goals and Policies section incorporates many of the SMP policies relating to historic and cultural resources.

There are several Washington State and federal statutes relating to the identification and protection of historic sites and resources, which may affect development activity in White Salmon. See Chapter II, Appendix A, State and Federal Laws, relating to the identification and protection of Historic and Cultural Resources.

Goals and Policies

Identifying and preserving locally significant historic and cultural resources is an important component of sustaining a community's cultural identity. The thought is sometimes expressed as, "How do we know it is us without our past?" Stewardship of existing built resources protects embedded energy, thereby reducing energy consumption and waste products. Protecting local historic districts can raise property values, create new jobs, and generate tourism. In White Salmon, the opportunities to create a sustainable future can be founded on natural and historic resource conservation and promotion. To achieve such a sustainable future, the City of White Salmon adopts the following goals and policies.

Goal H&HP-1. Identify and document historic and cultural resources within the White Salmon urban area.

Policy H&HP-1-1: Develop and maintain a comprehensive survey and inventory of historic and cultural resources within the White Salmon urban area which is updated during each major update of the comprehensive plan.

Goal H&HP-2. Encourage and promote private, public, and tribal parties to support the city's archaeological, historical, and cultural goals and objectives.

Goal H&HP-3. Recognize the importance of educational materials and programming to stimulate awareness of the role that preservation and promotion of historic resources play in the city's future.

Policy H&HP-3.1: Promote the understanding of a diverse set of historical perspectives and embrace White Salmon's rich and diverse cultural history.

Goal H&HP-4. Consider historic and cultural resource sites and values into City plans where appropriate.

Policy H&HP-4.1: Provide encouragement and support for public and private efforts to seek grants and other sources of funds for preservation education, promotion, or development projects.

Goal H&HP-5. Maintain and preserve public locations of historical and cultural significance that are listed on local and state historic registers.

Goal H&HP-6. Encourage private property owners with locations of historical and cultural significance to maintain and preserve historic and cultural resources.

"Protect the environment and resources as White Salmon grows."

"Connect green spaces and the natural beauty of White Salmon."

Environmental Quality and Critical Areas

Background

Focus Area Statement

The City of White Salmon is committed to preserving and enhancing the quality of the environment and protecting critical areas for the important ecological and social functions they provide within the community.

Existing Conditions

The city of White Salmon is located in the spectacular canyon known as the Columbia River Gorge where the Columbia River travels through the Cascade mountain range. The surrounding area includes sheer cliffs that overlooks Washington's north side of the Columbia River and, on the south side, Oregon's mountains and waterfalls. Because of the surrounding area's unique geological, historical, and cultural attributes, the Gorge was designated a federally protected National Scenic Area in 1986. Managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Columbia River Gorge Commission, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area has a number of protections that preserve and enhance the various attributes of the Gorge, including historic, cultural, and natural resources, as well as scenic views.

Development and growth in the National Scenic Area is primarily concentrated in Urban Exempt Areas, including White Salmon. The broader National Scenic Area is regulated to protect and enhance cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational resources within the Gorge. The city of White Salmon is in one of thirteen designated Urban Exempt Areas under the National Scenic Area. As a result, the Urban Exempt Area is a primary focus area for growth and development within the Gorge and is exempt from National Scenic Area regulations. Moreover, while the National Scenic Area maintains land outside of the city much closer to its natural state; urban development is promoted within White Salmon and its adjoining, unincorporated Urban Exempt Areas.

The Community's Vision

- Small streets and pedestrian paths
- Right-sized infrastructure
- Zoning amendments to manage growth
- Affordable housing and long-term rentals
- Small-scale, local businesses
- Connected parks and trails
- Access to nature and recreation

White Salmon and the surrounding areas include a diverse mix of natural environments and systems. The Columbia River serves as the city's southern boundary and offers habitat for a variety of aquatic and riparian species. The city's Columbia River frontage is roughly a mile in length, spanning east and west of the existing Hood River-White Salmon interstate bridge. Jewett Creek runs along the eastern portion of the city, and the White Salmon River is roughly half a mile west, bordering the Urban Exempt Areas. Terrestrial habitats associated with existing vegetation are abundant, and forest and shrub land dominate large portions of the northern, western, and eastern outskirts of White Salmon. Common tree species within the city include Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*), a state-protected species; Black Cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera trichocarpa*); Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*); and Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). In 2017, White Salmon was designated a Tree City USA community by the Arbor Day Foundation. In addition, the City has an active Tree Board that plans for the preservation, planting, and removal of trees and shrubs in parks, streets, and other public areas, as well as implements the City's Tree Ordinance (White Salmon Municipal Code 18.35). The City prioritizes the preservation and planting of native vegetation and works with certified arborists on appropriate vegetation management during development proposals in White Salmon.

The city of White Salmon and its Urban Exempt Areas lie in a transition zone in the Gorge between the maritime climate west of the Cascade mountain range and the dry continental climate of the intermountain region to the east. This transition zone is characterized by mild, dry summers and cool, wet winters. There is a severe reduction of rainfall in White Salmon as weather travels through the Gorge from west to east. The Gorge serves as an airflow conduit, equalizing air pressures between the west and east side of the Cascades. The Gorge normally experiences strong, westerly winds in the summer. White Salmon lies in a uniquely positioned microclimate within the airflow conduit, directly aligned with the Cascade Mountain range. This position creates a microclimate where the rainfall coming from the ocean occurs west of the Cascade Mountain range alignment creating a radical change in rainfall and tree canopy in the White Salmon area. Just west of White Salmon over 40 inches of rain fall each year while on the eastern edge of White Salmon rainfall is only in the low 20 inches, with an average of 31 inches per year. In July, the average daily high temperature is 82 degrees Fahrenheit, with an average daily low temperature of 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Winter temperatures are also mild; in December, the average daily high temperature is 40 degrees Fahrenheit, with an average daily low temperature of 30 degrees Fahrenheit.

Existing Plans and Development Regulations

The City of White Salmon has adopted a number of plans and development regulations to ensure that the environment is protected and enhanced (see Table 13). These various plans and development regulations balance the need for environmental protections with other demands, such as economic development, private property rights, and public infrastructure.

Table 13. Existing Plans and Development Regulations

Plan or Development Regulation
City-Owned Facility
Title 18, Environment, White Salmon Municipal Code Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Area Ordinance (18.10) • Environmental Protection (SEPA Review) (18.20) • Shorelines Master Plan and Program (18.30) • Tree Ordinance (18.35)
Title 15.28, Floodplain Construction Restrictions, White Salmon Municipal Code Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements for new development to identify flood hazard risks • Building and site requirements in flood-prone areas
Title 13.08, Water Department, White Salmon Municipal Code Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution of water supply prohibited
Title 13.01, Construction Permitting, White Salmon Municipal Code Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations for landscaping and irrigation plan • Stormwater runoff control standards • Erosion and sedimentation control standards

Critical Areas

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that all local governments adopt regulations to protect the five “critical areas” in the state; wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas (defined below). Klickitat County and cities within it are not required to fully plan under the GMA but are required to plan for the protection of these critical areas. As a “partially planning” city under GMA, White Salmon must use best available science to justify regulation of critical areas and guide future regulation updates. This includes identifying, designating, and protecting critical areas through a Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) (Revised Code of Washington [RCW] 36.70A). White Salmon’s CAO is included as Chapter 18.10 of the White Salmon Municipal Code and includes development standards and restrictions when building on or near a critical area. Critical areas in White Salmon are shown on the City’s critical areas maps on file at City Hall.

Wetlands

The purpose of the critical areas provisions concerning wetlands is to protect existing wetlands and maintain no net loss of their functions and values. Wetland ratings, which determine protective buffers and other regulatory standards, are based on the Washington State Department of Ecology’s (Ecology) guidance documents.

Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas

Critical aquifer recharge areas, a regulated critical area under RCW 36.70A, are not present within White Salmon and, therefore, are not regulated by its CAO.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

The purpose of regulating the use of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas is to preserve and protect those areas with which anadromous fish, threatened and endangered species, and species of local importance have a primary association. While most of White Salmon's land areas are designated for urban growth, and while new development as well as redevelopment is encouraged by adopted land use policies, it is important that future growth and development occur in a manner that is sensitive to the natural habitat resources of the city and Urban Exempt Areas. The primary fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas within White Salmon include streams and their riparian areas and Oregon white oak woodlands. Development has presented a particular challenge for the preservation of Oregon white oak woodlands, and the City is looking to balance protection of this species with the need to provide flexibility to developers.

Frequently Flooded Areas

Frequently flooded areas can present significant hazards to health, safety, and property under inappropriate land uses. Floodplains and other areas subject to flooding perform important hydrological functions and may present a risk to persons and property. Classification of frequently flooded areas should include, at a minimum, the 100-year floodplain designations of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Flood maps for Klickitat County are currently in the process of being updated by FEMA. Floodplains are protected through White Salmon's floodplain construction restrictions in Chapter 15.28 of its code in compliance with FEMA requirements.

Geologically Hazardous Areas

Geologically hazardous areas can include areas susceptible to landslides, erosion, and seismic hazards from earthquakes. Steep slope areas, which are often indicative of underlying landslide or erosion hazards, are prevalent in White Salmon. Geologically hazardous areas can pose a threat to public safety and property or infrastructure damage when inappropriate development is sited in areas of hazard. Areas susceptible to one or more of the following types of hazards are designated as geologically hazardous areas.

Landslide Hazard Areas

Landslide hazards exist in areas with certain "unstable" soils and in documented areas of previous landslides, usually in unconsolidated or partially consolidated sediments. Human activities, such as diversion of water from rooftops and paved areas, improperly placed and compacted fills, dumping of debris, road and utility cuts into hillsides, excavation for building sites, and failure of retaining walls, can also increase the potential for landslides.

Erosion Hazard Areas

Erosion hazards are associated with slopes with certain surface water and geological characteristics. The most effective means of erosion control is a set of construction management practices that limit clearing, require mitigation, limit soil disturbance to dry seasons of the year, and require revegetation and maintenance of developed sites to prevent erosion after development.

Seismic Hazard Areas

Seismic events can cause damage as result of landslides, soil liquefaction, and/or high-amplitude ground shaking. Areas underlain by soils of low density in association with shallow groundwater are liquefaction hazard areas and may include river drainages, beach areas, ponds, and lakes. The impact of seismic activity can be mitigated through regulatory requirements, including adherence to building codes that require earthquake-resistant design and construction. The International Building Code regulates the design and construction of buildings located in seismic hazard areas.

Heritage Trees

The City's code (White Salmon Municipal Code 18.10.317) protects heritage trees as valuable local habitat and includes special provisions for their protection and preservation. Heritage trees include Oregon white oaks with a trunk diameter larger than 14 inches; all other tree species with a trunk diameter greater than 18 inches; or any tree designated by the City Council in accordance with a nomination process in the City's code.

Shorelines

The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) of 1971 requires most local governments, including all counties and about 250 cities and towns, to develop and implement Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs). The SMA's overarching goal is "to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state's shorelines." The city of White Salmon has approximately 1 mile of frontage on the Columbia River, which is identified as a "shoreline of statewide significance," and as such, is required to develop and implement an SMP. The City's current SMP, effective as of December 26, 2017, serves to

1. Guide future development of the city's shorelines in accordance with local goals and in compliance of the SMA
2. Ensure that development of the shoreline will result in no net loss of ecological function
3. Provide for preservation and enhancement of shoreline ecological resources
4. Provide a fair and equitable process for applicants and the public to review and comment on shoreline development proposals

The City of White Salmon's SMP works in tandem with a variety of other federal, state, and city agencies and regulations to ensure that the shoreline of the Columbia River continues to provide its ecological functions.

Stormwater Quality

Urban areas, such as White Salmon, often have increased stormwater runoff as a result of more impervious surface relative to nonurban areas. Pavement, buildings, parking lots, and other urban development prevent or restrict natural water infiltration during and after rainfall events. Increased water runoff can carry pollutants that are potentially harmful into streams and rivers, putting both human health and wildlife health at risk. In the city of White Salmon, stormwater management is regulated by Title 13.01 of the White Salmon Municipal Code. Generally, the City's stormwater runoff control standards seek to minimize the amount of impervious surface and encourage on-site infiltration. Low-impact development techniques, such as permeable paving, raingardens, bioswales and other bioretention control methods, and preservation of on-site, native vegetation are all encouraged through the City's stormwater control standards.

White Salmon is not a permittee under the State of Washington's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Phase II permit because it does not operate a stormwater system that discharges to a water of the United States and it is not located in a designated Urbanized Area; defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as a land area comprising of one or more places that together have a residential population of at least 50,000. Because White Salmon is not a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permittee, it is not required to regulate runoff using the state's stormwater manual. The City will comply with all state and federal stormwater requirements.

Air Quality

Several geographical and environmental factors affect the air quality in White Salmon. Its unique location in the Gorge, proximity to Interstate 84, and seasonal wildfires in the region all contribute to increased particulate matter and other air pollutants. Due to the city's surrounding topography, emissions from vehicle travel and other particulate matter can get boxed in around White Salmon during periods of low wind. However, east-west winds that travel through the Gorge clear out trapped particulate matter and smog. During seasonal wildfire events, those same winds have the potential to bring smoke and smog into the Gorge leading to unhealthy air quality. Air quality in White Salmon is monitored by Ecology's Central Regional Office, which is responsible for monitoring air quality in White Salmon and advising both the public as well as agencies of air quality standards, health hazards, and regulations. Ecology uses regulations and other controls in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Clean Air Act.

Wildfire Risk

The city of White Salmon and its Urban Exempt Area is a prime example of a wildland-urban interface with strong potential for a catastrophic wildfire event that could destroy properties and threaten human life. The following conditions are found throughout, or in certain portions of the area. Some areas have all, or most, of these conditions.

- Steep slopes, some in excess of 60 percent, especially the bluff area,
- Strong winds in the Columbia River Gorge during much of the fire season,
- Light, “flashy” vegetation fuels consisting of brush and/or uncut grass,
- Heavy fuel loads of mature conifer and hardwood trees with brush underneath,
- Access road and street problems, including single means of ingress and egress, narrow drives, and turning radius limitations,
- Homes with no, or very limited, defensible space, and
- Numerous homes with combustible construction materials; i.e., shake roofs, cedar siding, and wood decks.

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan was prepared for the cities of White Salmon and Bingen and the Urban Exempt Areas in 2004. The plan identifies high wildfire hazard risk areas and lists priority projects designed to reduce the level of risk throughout the planning area. In 2009, the City received a grant from the Forest Service to be used specifically to assist homeowners to create defensible space around their structures.

Climate Change

Climate change can be defined as changes in global or regional weather patterns attributed largely to increased levels of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the atmosphere. GHG emissions are overwhelmingly caused by human actions. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) makes up the vast majority of GHGs, followed by methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O). These gases are emitted into the atmosphere from the combustion of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and natural gas. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the transportation sector was the largest emitter of GHGs in the United States, primarily from burning fossil fuels for cars, trucks, ships, planes, and trains. This was followed by electricity production, industry, and commercial and residential uses. The effects of climate change are apparent at the continental and global scale and are increasingly being felt at the regional and local level. Effects of a changing climate may lead to a greater number – and more intense – heat waves, droughts, wildfires, heavy rains, floods, and landslides, as well as rising surface water temperatures that could affect resident and migratory fish species and their habitats, threatening their long-term survival. Common strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions include deploying renewable energy sources such as hydroelectric, wind and solar; enhanced energy efficiency in buildings; and the preservation of forests.

Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies seek to ensure that the social and ecological functions of environmental systems and critical areas are protected, impacts to these resources are properly mitigated to achieve no net loss of functions, and environmentally conscious development is encouraged within the city of White Salmon in conformance with the City's adopted CAO and other applicable regulations.²²

GOAL E/CA-1: Protect, maintain, and improve the environmental quality of White Salmon.

Policy E/CA-1.1: Review and amend land use and development regulations per state requirements and as needed to protect resources and the public health, safety, and welfare of the White Salmon community.

Policy E/CA-1.2: Coordinate with local and regional conservation groups to promote education on habitat enhancement and protection.

Policy E/CA-1.3: Develop informational materials for the public that provide background information about existing critical areas and environmental systems in the city and that clearly outlines environmental policies, regulations, and permit procedures.

Policy E/CA-1.4: Conserve natural resources and habitats through nonregulatory and regulatory methods that may include development regulations, ecologically sensitive design, low-impact development, restoration programs, and by coordinating with the appropriate regulatory agencies.

Policy E/CA-1.5: Encourage participation in community cleanup and beautification events within public parks and rights-of-way.

Policy E/CA-1.6: Ensure completed restoration of land after vegetation removal and grading.

Policy E/CA-1.7: Pursue programs that reduce the city's volume of solid waste that goes into the landfill.

Policy E/CA-1.8: Balance resource protection and development objectives in the city and Urban Exempt Area. Allow resources to be impacted or modified and properly mitigated when important objectives are achieved, such as economic development, including the provision of housing and businesses, and public facilities and infrastructure. Solutions may include planned unit developments, cluster housing, low-impact development, and density transfers.

²² All goals and policies are of equal value and are numbered for reference purposes only.

GOAL E/CA-2: Identify, protect, restore, and enhance White Salmon’s critical areas to preserve their social and ecological functions, ensure public safety, and prevent loss of private property.

Policy E/CA-2.1: Use Best Available Science when identifying critical areas and best management practices when developing near and within critical areas and associated buffers.

Policy E/CA-2.2: Strengthen interagency coordination and cooperation with agencies who have jurisdiction over critical areas.

Policy E/CA-2.3: Ensure that land subject to natural disasters and hazards be designated for uses that avoid or minimize loss of life and property and are developed in a way that accomplishes the same.

Policy E/CA-2.4: Emphasize protection of contiguous critical areas.

Policy E/CA-2.5: Accommodate deviations in critical area resource protection requirements, provided that alternative methods and designs result in improved functions and values of the critical area and its buffer through study and findings prepared by a qualified professional.

Policy E/CA-2.6: Protect threatened, endangered, sensitive, and candidate species, and their habitats, as required by federal and state agencies.

Policy E/CA-2.7: Avoid clearing of vegetation that reduces erosion, maintains slope stability, provides wildlife and aquatic habitat, and buffers wetlands and stream corridors.

Policy E/CA-2.8: Restrict development on unstable and steep slopes to prevent loss of private property and ensure public safety.

GOAL E/CA-3: Reduce hazard fuels throughout the city and its Urban Exempt Area to a level that supports the fire departments’ ability to prevent injury or death to people and to reduce property damage.

Policy E/CA-3.1: Coordinate with regional fire departments to implement the City’s Wildfire Protection Plan and to update the Wildfire Protection Plan each year to address changing conditions.

Policy E/CA-3.2: Provide education materials and outreach to address wildfire risks.

Policy E/CA-3.3: Seek grant opportunities to help residents pay for hazard fuel reduction on their property.

Policy E/CA-3.4: Periodically review and consider reasonable regulatory fire protection standards for inclusion in the development code.

GOAL E/CA-4: Address climate change by working towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing energy efficiency, and improving infrastructure resiliency in White Salmon.

Policy E/CA-4.1: Reduce the reliance on fossil fuels and incorporate renewable energy sources, when appropriate, in municipal operations.

Policy E/CA-4.2: Implement a resource-conservation approach for managing and developing City-operated facilities that aims to reduce energy and water usage and facility costs.

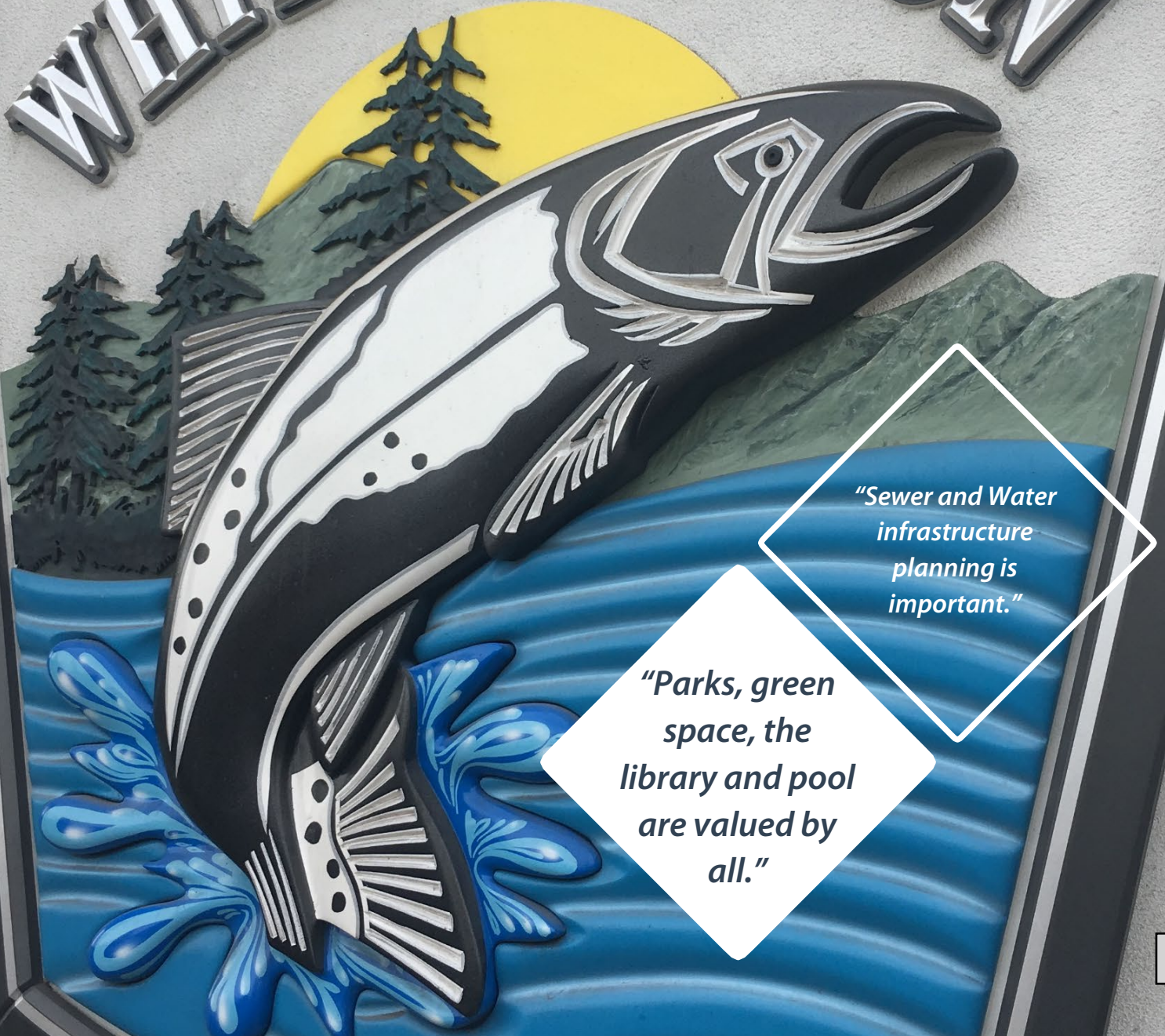
Policy E/CA-4.3: Develop infrastructure for, and promote the use of, transportation modes that reduce the use of fossil fuels, such as biking and walking.

Policy E/CA-4.4: Increase the resiliency of critical infrastructure through monitoring, maintenance, planning, investment, and adaptive technology.

FOUNDED
1907

CITY HALL

WHITE SALMON



"Sewer and Water infrastructure planning is important."

"Parks, green space, the library and pool are valued by all."

Capital Improvements

Background

The purpose of this element is to briefly outline capital improvements for the City. Capital improvement needs are developed on a long-term basis.

Domestic Water System

The 2014 City of White Salmon Water System Plan includes a Capital Improvement Program for the years 2014-2018. Many of these improvements have not been completed. The City is undertaking an update in 2021 to the Water System Plan which will include a new Capital Improvement Program. The City's previous water moratorium was rectified with the purchase of water rights and a return to the Buck Creek water system that includes a slow sand filtration system. The City continues to use its well system in conjunction with the Buck Creek water system. Recent projects include the replacement of the Jewett Boulevard Water Main and working with the Department of Ecology to develop an aquifer recharge system (ASR) to store water from Buck Creek in the winter to be used in the summer. The City is also working with the Department of Ecology and the Yakama Nation, along with other agencies, to determine the feasibility of using water from the White Salmon River. A feasibility study is underway and will continue for several years.

Street System

The City is responsible for the maintenance of City streets and avenues. The City has a Six Year Street System Capital Improvement Plan for 2022 to 2027, which lists the improvements that have been and will be made to streets in White Salmon. The plan is available at City Hall. A major problem for the City was Dock Grade Road. The State tried to improve the intersection of SR 14 with Dock Grade by adding a west bound, right turn lane from SR 14 on to Dock Grade. The blind spot created by vehicles turning right onto Dock Road has caused many accidents; however, the City rectified this problem by making Dock Grade a one-way road going uphill. A traffic signal and extra turn lanes were also added at the intersection of Highway 35, north end of the Port of Hood River Bridge, and SR 14.

Other Capital Improvement Projects

The City has ongoing capital improvement projects for various entities: police department, water department, fire department, City parks and general facilities. These projects are done on a yearly basis as the budget permits. Information on any current projects is available at City Hall.

Goals and Policies

GOAL CIP-1: Coordinate capital improvement planning with land use planning, considering timeframe, funding and improvement demand.

Policy CIP-1.1: The City shall develop a five-year Capital Improvement Plan to schedule and fund capital improvements to meet future urbanization needs.

Policy CIP-1.2: The City shall evaluate funding needs, sources, and utility rates to implement the Capital Improvement Plan.

Policy CIP-1.3: The City shall maintain a “health” scorecard (database) with status of existing facilities and capital assets to assist in planning for repairs, maintenance, and replacement.

Policy CIP-1.4: The City shall develop a capital expenditure ranking and planning process that includes, but is not limited to, information about benefits; one-time, ongoing and replacement costs; staff and City resources needed; and alignment with other goals in the comprehensive plan with input from stakeholders (elected officials, staff and the public).