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STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

File: Periodic Update: Comprehensive Plan

Date of Staff Report: July 16, 2026

Date of Hearing: July 23, 2026

Staff Planner: Elisa Rodriguez 509-565-5019 or erodriguez@medical-lake.org

SEPA: Determination of Non-Significance was made on July 7, 2026

Procedure: This request requires a legislative review, therefore, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council will hold a public hearing to consider an ordinance to adopt the amendments to the Medical Lake Municipal Code. The complete process can be found in the Medical Lake Municipal Code (MLMC), Section 19.270.050 – Type IV Reviews.

Proposal: Adopt the Medical Lake Comprehensive Plan 2046.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Notice of a Public Hearing Published in Cheney Free Press – June 25, 2026

SEPA DNS Issued – July 7, 2026

Public Comment Period Closes – July 23, 2026

PROPOSED LANGUAGE

See attached draft plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Department of Natural Resources. The reviewer evaluated the Plan with a focus on Washington Geological Survey (WGS) interests, including geologically hazardous areas, mineral resource lands, mining, climate change, natural hazards, and hazard mitigation planning. The reviewer noted that Chapter 5 (Land Use) discusses parks, natural resources, and natural landscapes but does not mention critical areas or climate resiliency. Other comments will be addressed in the upcoming updates to the Critical Areas Ordinance.

Spokane Regional Transportation Council. The transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan must be reviewed and certified by SRTC. Medical Lake received this certification on July 9, 2026.

ZONING CODE APPROVAL CRITERIA

Amendments to development regulations are subject to MLMC Section 19.137.060 – Approval Criteria.

- A. The proposed amendment shall be consistent with the provisions of the Growth Management Act, Chapter 36.70A RCW, or any amendment thereto.

Findings:

The Draft Medical Lake Comprehensive Plan 2046 was prepared as the City's periodic update required under the Growth Management Act and expressly acknowledges Medical Lake's status as a fully planning city under Chapter 36.70A RCW. The Plan is intended to guide growth, development, and public investment for the next twenty years.

The Plan contains all mandatory GMA comprehensive plan elements, including land use, housing, transportation, capital facilities, parks and recreation, utilities, natural environment, climate resiliency, and urban growth planning.

The Housing Element addresses the expanded housing requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(2) by incorporating a Housing Needs Assessment, Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) projections, housing inventory, land capacity analysis, and policies promoting a variety of housing types and housing affordability for all economic segments of the population.

The Plan identifies sufficient land capacity within the city limits and Urban Growth Area to accommodate the county population allocation and additional regional housing demand, consistent with GMA requirements to accommodate projected growth within urban areas.

The Land Use Element directs growth to urban areas, encourages infill and redevelopment, supports efficient use of public facilities, and protects environmentally sensitive lands and critical areas, consistent with GMA goals related to urban growth, reduction of sprawl, and environmental protection.

The Transportation and Mobility Element establishes level of service standards, concurrency provisions, multimodal transportation planning, and coordinated transportation investments, consistent with GMA transportation planning requirements.

The Capital Facilities Element inventories public facilities, establishes level of service standards for utilities and infrastructure, identifies funding strategies, and demonstrates a process for ensuring adequate public facilities concurrent with development, consistent with RCW 36.70A.070(3).

The Natural Environment Element provides policy direction for protecting critical areas, shorelines, wetlands, wildlife habitat, groundwater resources, and environmental quality, consistent with GMA environmental protection requirements.

The Climate Resiliency Element addresses the 2023 amendments to the GMA by incorporating climate adaptation, hazard mitigation, greenhouse-gas-reducing transportation strategies, wildfire preparedness, and community resilience planning.

The Plan was developed through an extensive public participation program incorporating surveys, newsletters, workshops, outreach events, Planning Commission review, and public hearings, consistent with the GMA goal of citizen participation and coordination.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the Growth Management Act because it addresses all required comprehensive plan elements, accommodates projected growth, promotes housing choice, provides for concurrency and capital facilities planning, protects environmental resources, incorporates climate resiliency planning, and was developed through an extensive public participation process. **For these reasons, the criterion is met.**

- B. The proposed amendment shall be consistent with the provisions of the Spokane Countywide Planning Policies.

Findings:

The Plan recognizes the Spokane Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs) as the regional framework for coordinated growth management and describes Medical Lake's participation in countywide planning through the Planning Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) and Steering Committee of Elected Officials (SCEO).

The Plan utilizes population allocations established through Spokane County's countywide planning process and evaluates future growth through a Land Capacity Analysis conducted using Spokane County methodology.

The Plan demonstrates that sufficient land capacity exists to accommodate allocated population, housing, and employment growth within the Urban Growth Area, consistent with CWPP growth management and land capacity requirements.

The Housing Element recognizes both local and regional housing needs and proposes additional housing opportunities, housing diversity, and zoning flexibility to help address housing demand throughout the West Plains region.

The Transportation Element coordinates with regional transportation plans, including the Spokane Regional Transportation Council Horizon 2050 Plan, Spokane Transit Authority planning efforts, WSDOT facilities, and regional multimodal transportation systems.

The Plan emphasizes regional coordination with West Plains jurisdictions, Fairchild Air Force Base, Spokane County, Spokane County Fire District No. 3, Spokane Transit Authority, and other agencies regarding housing, transportation, economic development, public safety, infrastructure, and emergency management.

The Urban Growth Area Element promotes coordinated infrastructure planning, efficient service delivery, fiscal responsibility, and regional collaboration, which are key objectives of the Countywide Planning Policies.

The Plan supports the CWPP goals of concentrating growth within urban areas, promoting efficient infrastructure investments, protecting critical areas and natural resources, and fostering coordinated regional planning.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is consistent with the Spokane Countywide Planning Policies because it relies upon countywide growth allocations and methodologies, provides sufficient growth capacity within the Urban Growth Area, supports regional housing and transportation objectives, and promotes coordinated planning and service delivery throughout the West Plains region. **For these reasons, the criterion is met.**

- C. The proposed amendment shall be consistent with other sections of the Comprehensive Plan, the Strategic Plan and the Capital Facility Plan.

Findings:

The Draft Comprehensive Plan was intentionally developed to function in conjunction with the City's Healing Waters Strategic Plan and repeatedly identifies consistency between the long-range planning vision and the Strategic Plan's Targets of Excellence.

The Community Vision, goals, policies, and action items throughout the Plan consistently reinforce the Strategic Plan objectives related to economic vitality, healthy and sustainable environments, public safety, multimodal transportation, recreation, and community engagement.

The Plan contains integrated goals across all elements that support one another. Housing policies are coordinated with land use designations, transportation investments, utility planning, parks planning, and capital facilities planning.

The Land Use Element specifically requires coordination of growth with transportation, utilities, parks, capital facilities, and climate resilience planning, ensuring internal consistency among Plan elements.

The Transportation Element supports land use and housing goals by promoting connected, multimodal development patterns and coordinating with the Transportation Improvement Program and capital planning processes.

The Capital Facilities Element inventories existing facilities, establishes level of service standards, identifies financing strategies, and provides a framework for maintaining adequate public infrastructure to support planned growth and development.

The Urban Growth Area Element requires infrastructure and service coordination and explicitly links future growth to utility capacity, transportation improvements, parks, public services, and Capital Improvement Program investments.

Chapter 14, Next Steps, establishes that the Comprehensive Plan, Healing Waters Strategic Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, and utility plans are intended to operate as complementary and mutually reinforcing documents.

The Plan directs future budgeting, departmental work plans, capital investments, and performance measures to align with Comprehensive Plan goals and Strategic Plan objectives, ensuring ongoing consistency in implementation.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan is consistent with other sections of the Comprehensive Plan, the Healing Waters Strategic Plan, and the Capital Facilities Plan because the document was developed as an integrated planning framework that aligns land use, housing, transportation, parks, public services, utilities, capital investments, and strategic objectives into a coordinated and mutually supportive policy structure. **For these reasons, the criterion is met.**

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of fact presented above, the Draft Medical Lake Comprehensive Plan 2046 satisfies all applicable approval criteria. The Plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act, incorporates all required planning elements, addresses current statutory updates related to housing and climate resiliency, and provides a coordinated framework for managing growth, development, infrastructure, and environmental stewardship over the next twenty years.

The Plan is also consistent with the Spokane Countywide Planning Policies through its use of countywide population allocations, land capacity analysis, urban growth planning, regional housing strategies, transportation coordination, and collaboration with West Plains jurisdictions and regional service providers.

Finally, the Plan demonstrates internal consistency with all Comprehensive Plan elements and aligns with the City's Healing Waters Strategic Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, and other supporting documents. The goals, policies, and implementation strategies work together to ensure that future growth is supported by adequate public facilities, infrastructure investments, environmental protection measures, and community services.

For these reasons, the proposed Medical Lake Comprehensive Plan 2046 is in the best interest of the community, promotes the public health, safety, and welfare, and provides a clear, coordinated, and legally compliant vision for the City's future. Accordingly, the proposed Comprehensive Plan should be approved and adopted.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

1. Recommend approval of the proposed Comprehensive Plan to the City Council.
2. Recommend approval of a modified Comprehensive Plan to the City Council.
3. Request City Staff to address concerns and return with modified language.