MEDICAL LAKE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2046

Medical Lake Comprehensive Plan 2046

Acknowledgements

Mayor

Terri Cooper

City Council

Heath Wilbur
Ted Olson
Don Kennedy
Tony Harbolt
Lance Speirs
Lorin Ray-Abbott
Chad Pritchard

Planning Commission

Andie Mark
Kevin Twohig
JoeDavid Veliz
Cindy Altheide
Jim Rowe

Steering Committee

Mayor Terri Cooper
Lance Speirs, City Councilman
JoeDavid Veliz, Planning Commissioner
Diane Nichols, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Kim Headrick, MLSD
Tawni Barlow, MLSD
Ryan Stemkoski, Re*Imagine Medical Lake
Brendan Arkoosh, DSHS

City Staff

Sonny Weathers, City Administrator
Elisa Rodriguez, Senior Planner
Scott Duncan, Public Works Director
Glen Horton, Parks and Recreation Director
Koss Ronholt, Finance Director
Steve Cooper, Wastewater Treatment Plant Director

Adopted September 15, 2026, by Ordinance No. 1150

Table of Contents

Message from the Mayor 4

Community Participation 5

Community Vision 6

The Comprehensive Plan 6

Contributing Documents 7

State and Regional Planning 7

Part One: The People

Chapter 1: Context 11

Chapter 2: Housing 15

Chapter 3: Public Services 20

Chapter 4: Education 24

Part Two: The Place

Chapter 5: Land Use 27

Chapter 6: Transportation and Mobility 33

Chapter 7: Capital Facilities 45

Chapter 8: Parks 52

Chapter 9: Natural Environment 57

Chapter 10: Climate Resiliency 60

Part Three: The Future

Chapter 11: Placemaking 63

Chapter 12: Zoning and Development Standards 67

Chapter 13: Urban Growth Area 71

Chapter 14: Next Steps 75

Chapter 15: Action Items 78

Conclusion 84

Message from the Mayor

The Comprehensive Plan is the City's official statement regarding its vision for future growth and development over the next 20 years. Over the past several years, Medical Lake has faced extraordinary change. We have endured hardship, demonstrated resilience, and rediscovered the strength that comes from being a small town with a big sense of community. As Mayor, I am proud to present the 2046 Comprehensive Plan, our roadmap for stewarding that strength into a future defined by opportunity, stability, and shared purpose.

A meaningful update to our Comprehensive Plan is more than a statutory requirement. It is our chance to reflect on who we are, what we value, and what we want for the next generation. Our previous plan served the community for many years, but Medical Lake has grown, our needs have evolved, and state law now asks us to plan more intentionally for housing, transportation, climate resiliency, and public services. This new plan rises to that challenge.

Most importantly, this plan was shaped by the voices of our residents. Through workshops, surveys, conversations, and partnerships, the community made it clear that Medical Lake's future must protect what we cherish—our small-town character, our natural beauty, our history of healing—while preparing responsibly for the growth that will sustain our economy, our schools, and our quality of life.

The 2046 Comprehensive Plan sets forth a clear vision: safe and walkable neighborhoods, accessible parks and recreation, diverse housing options, a vibrant local economy, and strong public services supported by thoughtful infrastructure investment. It aligns with our Healing Waters Strategic Plan and gives City Council, staff, and community partners the tools needed to make consistent, transparent, and long-term decisions.

This plan represents both a commitment and a promise. A commitment to good governance, collaboration, and transparency and a promise that every decision we make will help build a Medical Lake where people feel welcome, connected, and hopeful about the future.

Thank you to everyone who contributed your time, ideas, and energy. Together, we are shaping a Medical Lake that honors its past, meets the needs of today, and looks forward with confidence to 2046 and beyond.

Terri Cooper

Mayor, City of Medical Lake

Community Participation

Public participation has been a central and guiding element of the City of Medical Lake's Comprehensive Plan update. The process was guided by a formal Public Participation Plan, which emphasizes inclusive, proactive, and ongoing engagement to ensure that community voices inform the development of the plan's vision, goals, and policies.

The City's approach focused on reaching a broad and diverse cross-section of the community, including individuals who may not typically participate in formal planning processes. Engagement efforts were designed to meet people where they are through both formal meetings and informal, community-based interactions, and to provide multiple ways for residents to learn about the process and share input.

Consistent with this approach, the City has made a strong commitment to transparent communication and continuous outreach through its "Conversations About Community" newsletters, which serve as a key tool for informing residents and inviting feedback. These newsletters describe the planning process, explain key topics, and consistently encourage residents to attend meetings, review materials, and provide input.

A variety of tools and strategies were used to support public participation. Two community-wide surveys provided foundational input. The Pulse of the Community Survey gathered feedback on community values and vision. These survey results highlighted strong support for maintaining Medical Lake's small-town character, natural environment, and sense of community while encouraging thoughtful economic development. The Communication Preferences Survey evaluated how residents receive and engage with City communications. The results showed that Facebook, newsletters, and word-of-mouth are primary information channels, while also identifying opportunities to improve communication strategies and emergency information access.

In addition to surveys, the City implemented ongoing digital and print engagement efforts. These included newsletters, utility bill inserts, the Comprehensive Plan webpage, social media updates, and a Facebook Live event to expand accessibility and real-time participation. A "Question of the Week" series on Facebook further encouraged regular public input, with responses emphasizing the importance of the community's natural setting, small-town feel, strong social connections, and local events, while also identifying concerns such as property maintenance and downtown appearance.

Targeted, in-person outreach was a key component of the engagement strategy. City representatives conducted pop-up and event-based outreach at locations such as the farmers market, Founders Day, Lake's Harvest Foods grocery store, and senior lunch gatherings at the Silver Café. These efforts allowed staff to engage directly with residents, visitors, and underrepresented groups in informal settings. Across these conversations, participants frequently expressed appreciation for the community's small-town character, natural resources, and sense of safety, while also raising concerns related to property maintenance, infrastructure, economic development, and community amenities.

Outreach findings consistently highlighted several key themes. Residents value Medical Lake's friendly, connected community, walkability, parks, wildlife, and scenic environment. At the same time, participants expressed interest in expanding recreational amenities (such as trails, parks, and family-oriented activities), enhancing downtown vitality, improving infrastructure and public safety, and supporting local businesses and economic opportunities. Conversations also showed general

support for small-scale recreational tourism as a way to support the local economy while preserving the community's character.

A Steering Committee composed of elected officials, appointed representatives, and community stakeholders provided ongoing oversight and guidance throughout the process, meeting regularly to review progress and support outreach efforts. Planning Commission and City Council workshops, along with required public hearings, offered additional opportunities for in-depth discussion, transparency, and formal public input.

Overall, the public participation process combined surveys, digital outreach, social media engagement, community conversations, and formal public meetings to create a comprehensive and inclusive approach. This multi-faceted engagement strategy ensured that a wide range of community perspectives were captured and integrated into the Comprehensive Plan update.

Community Vision

The Medical Lake Comprehensive Plan 2046 endeavors to:

- Nurture Medical Lake's small-town charm and community spirit while honoring its history.
- Integrate the natural and built environment in a thoughtful, sustainable manner.
- Create safe, walkable neighborhoods with accessible parks and housing for all.
- Establish a community where all members thrive, empowered by equitable access to resources, strong social connections, and a healthy environment.
- Encourage community partnerships and recreational tourism to help the economy thrive, with special attention to downtown.

The Comprehensive Plan

Welcome to the new and improved 2046 Medical Lake Comprehensive Plan. This City's first comprehensive plan was adopted in 1979. In 1997, after the adoption of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), the City adopted a new comprehensive plan. The plan was revised in 2003, 2007, 2010, and 2019, but remained similar to the 1997 version.

Considered a fully-planning city under the GMA, it is mandated that our comprehensive plan is updated every ten years to plan for the next twenty years. This ten-year update cycle is referred to as the "Periodic Update." The City of Medical Lake chose to use this opportunity to not just update, but to replace the comprehensive plan with a document that better represents the City and provides more guidance for future decision making. The Plan communicates the City Council's intent, priorities, objectives, and expectations to residents, businesses, agencies, developers and others with an interest in the city.

This Plan was developed amid a statewide housing crisis and an evolving legislative landscape intended to increase housing availability. These efforts also emphasize environmental justice, reduced displacement risk, and equitable housing outcomes, which are grounded in the same principles that shaped the Medical Lake Comprehensive Plan.

This Comprehensive Plan provides a vision for growth and development over the next twenty years and works in conjunction with the City's Healing Waters Strategic Plan. While growth is important to the City's vitality, the policies also address preserving and improving those aspects and features of

the City and the natural environment that contribute to quality of life in the community. This document will guide City policy and ensure consistency amongst City departments and staff.

The Plan reflects input from community members, stakeholders, and public officials. This wealth of information will continue to educate all members of the community and spur future conversations.

The Plan provides implementation strategies and is the foundation for development regulations found in the municipal code. It provides guidance in maintaining the Capital Improvement Program. The plan provides priorities to ensure continuity and consistency in land use decisions, and a systematic approach to preparing for projected growth.

Contributing Documents

The Comprehensive Plan is informed and supported by various detailed analyses that are contained in separate documents. Supporting plans and studies, referred to or adopted by reference within the Comprehensive Plan, are listed below.

- Healing Waters Strategic Plan
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Land Capacity Analysis
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Transportation Master Plan
- Parks Master Plan
- Shoreline Master Program

These plans and studies are anticipated to be updated over the life of the Comprehensive Plan as environmental, fiscal, social, economic, and technological circumstances evolve. Such new information should direct future amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, as appropriate, to maintain its usefulness to the community.

State and Regional Planning

Planning under the Growth Management Act requires a balance of local policy objectives with mandates within the Act and with regional and countywide policy priorities.

Growth Management Act (GMA)

In Washington State, comprehensive plans are directed by the Growth Management Act, Chapter 36.70A RCW. GMA provides a context and specific requirements for jurisdictions planning under the Act. This context is outlined in the framework planning goals contained in RCW 36.70A.020, as follows:

1. **Urban growth.** Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
2. **Reduce sprawl.** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
3. **Transportation.** Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled, and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
4. **Housing.** Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities

and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.

5. **Economic development.** Encourage economic development across the state in ways that align with adopted comprehensive plans. Support economic opportunities for all residents, especially those who are unemployed or disadvantaged, while helping existing businesses grow and attracting new ones. Recognize that economic conditions vary by region and promote growth in areas that are struggling, ensuring that all development stays within the limits of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

6. **Property rights.** Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.

7. **Permits.** Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.

8. **Natural resource industries.** Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands

9. **Open space and recreation.** Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.

10. **Environment.** Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

11. **Citizen participation and coordination.** Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

12. **Public facilities and services.** Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

13. **Historic preservation.** Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.

14. **Climate change and resiliency.** Ensure that comprehensive plans, development regulations, and regional policies, plans, and strategies under RCW 36.70A.210 and chapter 47.80 RCW adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.

15. **Shorelines of the state.** For shorelines of the state, the goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020 shall be considered an element of the county's or city's comprehensive plan and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

Spokane Countywide Planning Policies

The Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs) establish a countywide framework for developing and adopting comprehensive plans and Urban Growth Areas. The CWPPs are intended to ensure that comprehensive plans are consistent between jurisdictions and to provide direction necessary for the coordinated implementation of GMA goals. Medical Lake planning staff participates in the Spokane County Planning Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) that provides advice to the Spokane County Steering Committee of Elected Officials (SCEO). The Mayor of Medical Lake is a member of SCEO and this body provides recommendations to the Spokane County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), who ultimately adopt the CWPPs.

The basis of comprehensive planning in Washington State starts with a population forecast provided by the Office of Financial Management. Each county receives a population forecast that they allocate to each jurisdiction, including the unincorporated portions of the county. This allocation process is developed through PTAC, is reviewed by SCEO, and approved by the Spokane County BOCC. With this information, each jurisdiction performs a land capacity analysis using the methodology prescribed in the CWPPs. The purpose of this exercise is to determine if the jurisdiction has enough available land within the UGA to accommodate 20 years of growth. In other words, is there enough undeveloped land to provide housing and employment for the forecasted population. If the 20 years of growth cannot be accommodated, the first step is for the jurisdiction to look at opportunities to change zoning designations and regulations to provide that opportunity. New to this Periodic Update is the requirement to examine housing needs by income level. This means that jurisdictions must provide for a variety of housing types and densities. When this has been reasonably done and there is still a need, the county examines the UGA as a whole for the possibility of expansion.

The West Plains

Medical Lake is part of the West Plains of Spokane County, an area west of the City of Spokane and home to the neighboring cities of Cheney and Airway Heights, Fairchild Air Force Base, and housing and employment centers in unincorporated Spokane County. The combination of these communities has created a dynamic regional ecosystem where housing, transportation, employment, and public services are increasingly interconnected.

Airway Heights serves as the commercial and industrial core of the West Plains, with significant job growth driven by aerospace, manufacturing, logistics, and service-sector employers. Cheney contributes a strong educational and cultural presence through Eastern Washington University and provides well established residential neighborhoods and supporting services. Fairchild Air Force Base is the region's largest single-site employer and a critical part of the West Plains economy and identity, shaping workforce demand, housing needs, and regional infrastructure investments. Surrounding unincorporated areas host large industrial parks, distribution centers, and the Spokane International Airport which serves as another major driver of regional growth supporting thousands of jobs in aviation, warehousing, logistics, and advanced manufacturing.

Through ongoing collaboration, Medical Lake and its West Plains partners can work to address growing public safety, transportation, housing, and workforce demands by maintaining strong public services and enhancing quality of life for residents, businesses, and the region as a whole.

Part One: The People

Founders Day 2024

Chapter 1: Context

History and Culture

For centuries, the Spokane people and other Indigenous tribes believed in the healing properties of Medical Lake's waters, mud, and salts, calling it "strong medicine water" and using it for steam baths and powdered salts.

In 1872, Andrew Lefevre, followed by his nephew Peter, discovered the lake while settling sheep, and experienced relief from rheumatism. This sparked an interest in the lake's alleged curative powers. Stanley Hallett arrived in 1877 and began to commercialize lake salts and soaps which helped launch the town's identity based on healing waters.

By the late 1870s, spas, bathhouses, hotels, and resorts lined the lake. The Town of Medical Lake was officially incorporated in 1890 and within a few years had multiple hotels, stores, and saloons. With the addition of the electric interurban rail in 1905, connecting Spokane to Medical Lake, weekend crowds increased. Peak summer draw brought thousands of visitors. The resort era declined in the 1920s due to overuse of its mineral deposits, automobile travel, lake degradation, and waning belief in mineral therapies. The interurban rail ceased operations by 1922.

Hallett was the first mayor of Medical Lake, and he and Lefevre were instrumental in encouraging the State to locate an insane asylum in Medical Lake. Among others, they donated land and granite to encourage the siting. In 1891, Eastern State Hospital was constructed to serve Eastern Washington. Later, the site grew further with institutions including Eastern State Custodial School for developmental disabilities (now Lakeland Village), Pine Lodge women's prison (now closed), and Westlake.

The arrival of Spokane Army Air Corps depot early in WWII (renamed Fairchild AFB in 1950) significantly boosted population. With many residents tied to military service, the population of Medical Lake doubled from 1940 to 1950.

By the 1960s, lake health had declined due to polluted runoff, leading to algae blooms and fish population loss. To revitalize the lake, a sewer system was installed in 1964 allowing cleaner water to flow to the lake. In 1977 alum was added to the lake to help clear the water and reduce the nutrients that help feed the algae. During the 1980s-90s, aerators were placed in the lake to add oxygen to the deeper waters. Today, the lake is in good health and even though it does not provide healing properties of the past, it now provides free recreational opportunities for locals and the region.

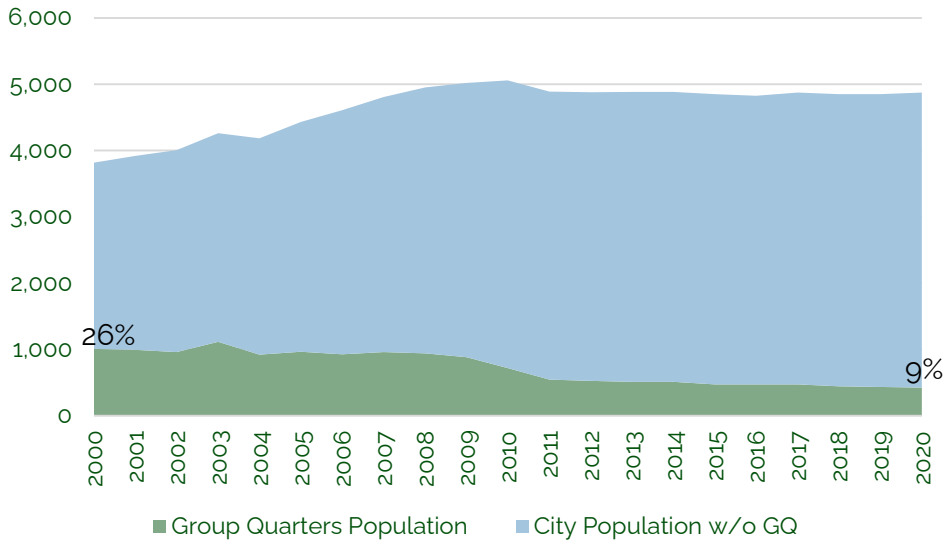
On August 18, 2023, a fire started near Gray Road just west of Medical Lake city limits, and quickly spread by strong winds from the west. Ultimately, the fire grew to 10,085 acres in and around Medical Lake, destroying 240 homes, 56 within the City. Recovery efforts galvanized local nonprofits, businesses, churches, and residents, rewriting Medical Lake's identity around resilience, mutual aid, and shared recovery.

Medical Lake remains a place of relaxation and enjoyment, being ideally located as a haven for outdoor recreation with multiple lakes, ample trails, and a small-town spirit captured in year-round festivals and events.

Population

At a glance, the population growth numbers for Medical Lake would suggest that the City is in a state of decline. Looking closer at the numbers, there is a more nuanced history. Medical Lake had a population of 3,815 in the year 2000. With several new residential subdivisions, the population increased by nearly a third by 2010, reaching 5,060 residents. However, at the same time the state institutions within the city boundaries were beginning to decline in population. In 2000 the three institutions (Lakeland Village, Eastern State Hospital, and Westlake) housed 1,006 residents. By 2010, this population was already down by nearly 30% to 715 people. State institutions have continued to reduce their population and Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) has stopped including the residents of Westlake campus of Eastern State Hospital in the population calculations. Now only Lakeland Village and Eastern State Hospital residents are counted in Medical Lake's total population. Hence the state institution residents that count towards the City's population is less than half of what it was 24 years ago. Meanwhile, Medical Lake leadership in the 2010's adopted a no-growth policy and new development slowed down. Leadership and attitudes about growth have recently changed, but the City is still struggling to overcome that legacy.

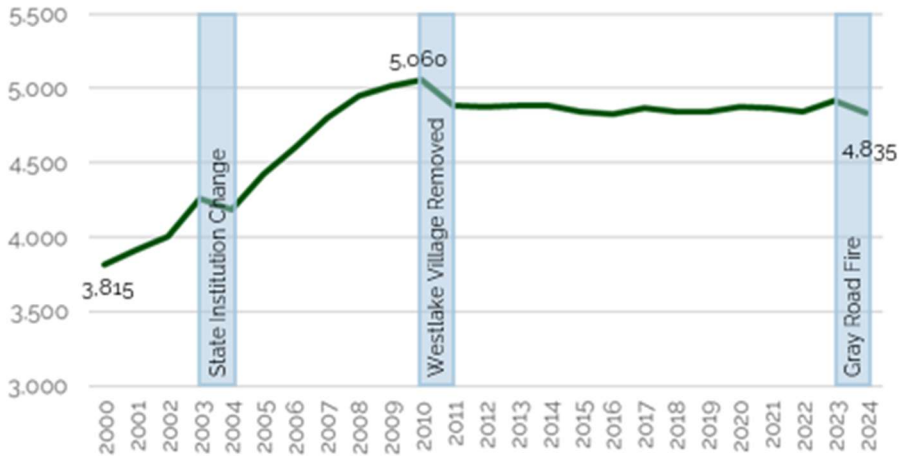
Figure 1. Medical Lake Institutional Population 2000-2020



Source: OFM

These historical population growth numbers are important to Medical Lake because they play a role in allotting future population to the city. Spokane County is given a forecasted population from OFM for the entire county for the year 2046. Growth trends were used to allocate this population to all the jurisdictions and the unincorporated areas of the County. Population growth from only 2010 to 2022 was considered. In this small window, Medical Lake's population decreased from 5,060 to 4,840 due to a change in who OFM includes in population.

Figure 2. Medical Lake Population 2000-2024



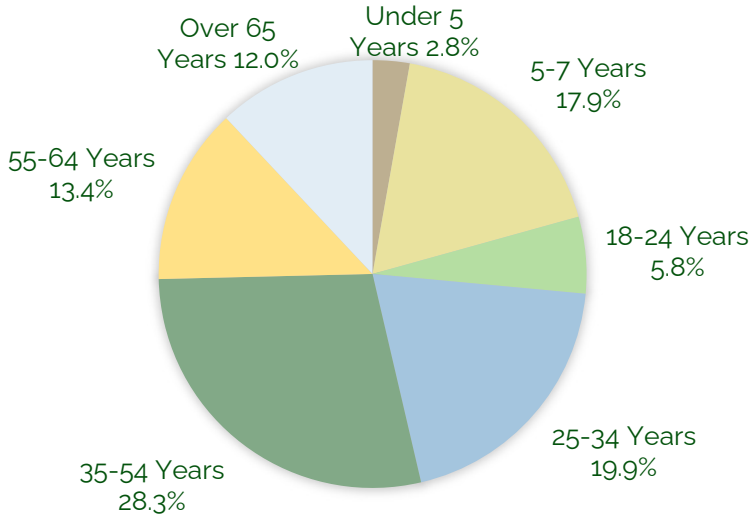
Source: OFM

Even though Medical Lake experienced housing growth, the elimination of Westlake's residents in the calculation made the total population decrease. With this low growth rate, the County is allocating only 244 new residents between 2023 and 2046. Medical Lake is not limited to 244 additional residents, but rather this is the minimum number of residents the City is expected to accommodate. The City of Medical Lake performed a land capacity analysis in early 2025. This analysis looked at underdeveloped and vacant land for potential development over the next 20 years. Using the zoning development standards of the time, it concluded that the City has the potential for accommodating an additional 744 people in 293 dwelling units. This is well above the small population of 244 allocated by Spokane County. Although this may suggest a lack of need for change, there is a regional need for housing that Medical Lake can help.

Demographics

Demographically, Medical Lake is a small, predominantly White community with balanced age distribution. The existence of young families and older adults indicates a variety of needs in the community, ranging from early learning facilities to aging-in-place housing options.

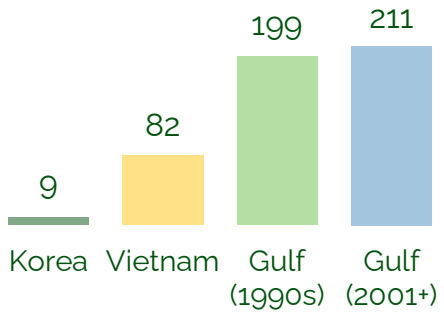
Figure 3. Population Distribution



Source: Neighborhoodscout.com

Located close to the Fairchild Air Force Base, it is not surprising that 13.8 % of Medical Lake's population are veterans. Of these 536 veterans, 447 are male and 89 are female. This percentage is significantly higher than the county average, which will influence housing, services, and economic opportunities.

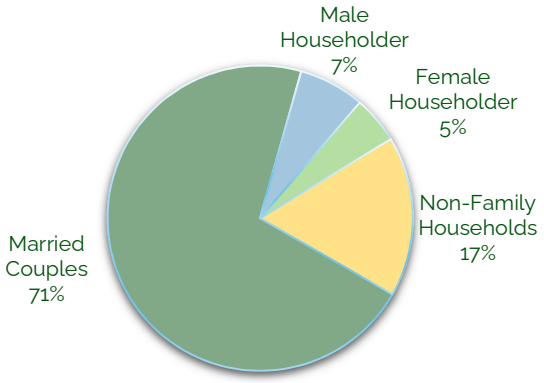
Figure 4. Veteran Status



Source: Censusreporter.org

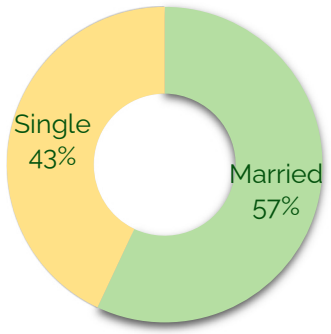
According to the US Census Bureau, there are 1,877 households in Medical Lake. The median income of these households was $74,426 in 2024. This was slightly below the Spokane County median household income of $78,582. With an average of 2.3 persons per household, the majority of households consist of married couples.

Figure 5. Household Types



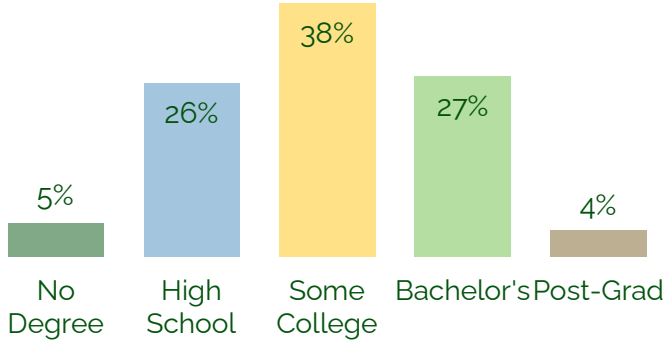
Source: Censusreporter.org

Figure 6. Marital Status



Source: Censusreporter.org

Figure 7. Education Attainment



The population of Medical Lake has a strong education attainment with 95.5% of adults having a high school degree or higher.

Source: Censusreporter.org

Chapter 2: Housing

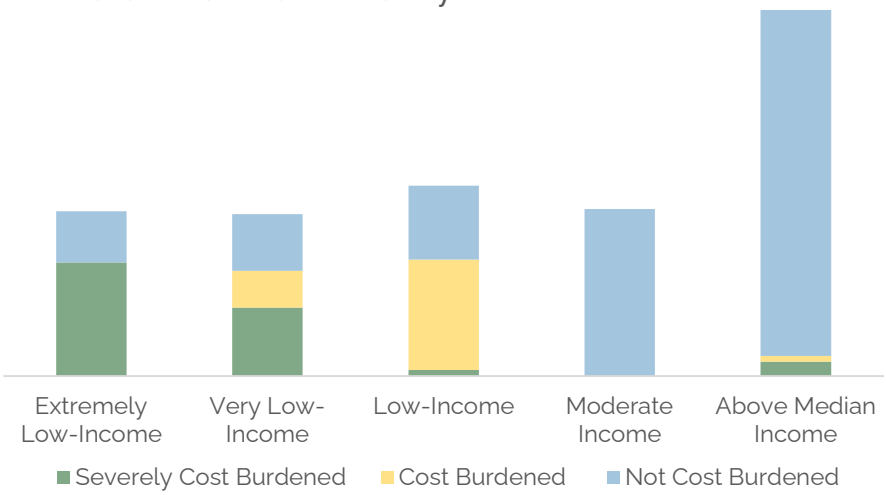
Having a variety of housing types creates a more inclusive, stable community. As our citizens move through life stages, incomes, and household sizes, a mix of housing options, such as single-family homes, apartments, townhouses, and accessory dwelling units, ensures that everyone can find a suitable place to live. Different housing types often come at different price points. Offering a range helps accommodate low-, middle-, and high-income households, reducing housing cost burdens and promoting economic diversity.

As people age or experience changes in mobility, they may need smaller, more accessible homes. By continuing to have diverse housing options this will allow Medical Lake residents to stay in the City rather than being forced to relocate.

A mix of housing types fosters social diversity and creates neighborhoods with varied demographics, which can strengthen community ties and support local businesses. Higher-density housing types like apartments and townhomes make better use of limited land, especially in urban areas, and can reduce sprawl, traffic, and environmental impacts. With varied housing Medical Lake will be better equipped to adapt to economic shifts, population changes, and evolving lifestyle preferences.

In 2020, Berk Consulting, hired by the Department of Commerce, compiled U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) data to provide a snapshot of cost-burdened households across the State. The preamble to the data states, "One of the best indicators of affordable housing needs is the number of households that are "cost-burdened" or spending too much of their income on housing. These households have limited resources left over to pay for other life necessities such as food, clothing, medical care, transportation, and education. They are also at higher risk of displacement when housing costs rise or life circumstances change. HUD considers housing to be affordable if it costs no more than 30% of a household's income. Households paying more than 30% of their income for housing are considered to be cost-burdened, while households paying more than 50% are severely cost-burdened."

Figure 8. Cost-Burdened Households by Income Level



Source: housing.berk-maps.com/

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires local governments to "plan for and accommodate" housing that is affordable to all economic segments, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock. This chapter addresses 36.70A.070(2) and the expanded housing element requirements adopted in 2023.

This requirement is in line with the Medical Lake Healing Waters Strategic Plan. Objective 2.1.2 states, we shall "Provide a variety of densities and housing types to promote greater choices and opportunities." In addition, objective 2.1.3 states, the City should endeavor to "Meet a variety of needs including a broad range of health, social, and affordable housing issues paying particular attention to senior citizens, low-income families, persons with disabilities, and other special need populations."

The Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) is an Excel-based resource developed by the Department of Commerce to support jurisdictions in meeting the state's expanded (GMA) housing requirements. This tool includes countywide housing needs projections based on Office of Financial Management (OFM) population projections. Projected housing needs are based on population projections and current household incomes. HAPT provides the method for determining housing needs for moderate, low, very low, and extremely low-income households, as well as emergency housing and permanent supportive housing (PSH). These income levels are based on the Area Median Income (AMI) determined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). For 2025, the AMI for Spokane County is $100,800.

The following table represents the existing and projected housing needs for Medical Lake as determined by HAPT.

Figure 9. Projected Housing Needs

	Extremely Low Income		Very Low Income	Low Income	Moderate Income				
	<30% AMI Non-PSH	<30% AMI PSH	30-50% AMI	50-80% AMI	80-100% AMI	100-120% AMI	>120% AMI	Total	Emergency Housing
Existing Housing Units	184	0	159	839	329	96	221	1828	0
	10%	0%	9%	46%	18%	5%	12%	100%	
Needed Housing Units	95	27	65	39	21	17	65	329	15
	29%	8%	20%	12%	6%	5%	20%	100%	
Total Housing Units	279	27	224	878	350	113	286	2157	15
	13%	1%	10%	41%	16%	5%	13%	100%	

AMI = Area Median Income
PSH =Permanent Supportive Housing

Source: Spokane County HAPT

Guidance provided by the Department of Commerce gives a housing type associated with each income level.

Detached, single-family houses are typically affordable to those households earning greater than 120% of the area median income (AMI). Smaller homes and older housing stock may be affordable to households earning less than 120% AMI. Townhouses are single-family houses that are on their own property but share a wall with another unit. Plexes are multi-unit buildings containing two to

six units. These are typically referred to as duplexes, triplexes, etc. Cottage housing is individual houses that are located on a single property. They are typically smaller and can be owned or rented, but always have some type of management company or homeowners association to manage the commonly owned elements. Townhouses, plexes, and cottage houses are examples of housing that is usually affordable for households earning 80%-120% of the AMI. Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are small residences on the same property as a single-family house. They can be attached to the main house, over a garage, or in the back yard. ADUs, along with apartments, are generally affordable to households with an income of 50%-80% of AMI. Most typically, any housing that is affordable to those households earning less than 50% of AMI require subsidies.

Figure 10. Income Levels and Housing Types

Housing Type	Detached Single-Family Houses	Townhouses, Cottage Housing and Plexes	Apartments	Accessory Dwelling Units	Apartments with Subsidies
Income Needed	>120% AMI	80-120% AMI	50-80% AMI	50-80% AMI	<50% AMI

Source: Department of Commerce

The City of Medical Lake took a housing inventory in 2024. The process combined Spokane County tax assessor data with City building permit data. Any discrepancies were verified with a site visit or confirmation with a property owner/manager. The existing housing in Figure 11, states the results of the inventory.

The City conducted a Land Capacity Analysis (LCA) in 2025. Using methodology developed by Spokane County, potential residential development was determined. Per the LCA, based on available land within the current city limits and the zoning standards effective at the time, it is possible that in the next 20 years, the City can grow by 293 units.

Figure 11. Potential Future Housing Units

	Single-Family	Plexes	Apartments	Total Units
Existing Housing Units	1291	331	204	1828
	71%	18%	11%	100%
Additional Potential Units per LCA	204	48	41	293
	70%	16%	14%	100%
Total Housing Units	1495	379	245	2119
	71%	18%	12%	100%

Source: ML Land Capacity Analysis

Feedback from the Pulse of the Community survey found that the Medical Lake community is content with this split of housing types. and will attempt to retain this as growth happens.

The City of Medical Lake's 2025 Housing Needs Assessment evaluated local housing conditions and identified strategies to meet GMA requirements to address Washington's housing affordability challenges. The assessment looked at the City's current housing composition and the LCA estimate of 293 additional housing units over the next 20 years to make recommendations for expanding housing choice to serve a broader range of household incomes and needs. Five options were presented: 1) Rezone industrial land to allow residential, 2) Allow cottage housing in environmentally sensitive areas to reduce infrastructure costs, 3) Change commercial zoning to make residential

development more attainable, 4) Reduce minimum lot sizes in medium-density residential zones, and 5) Allow more flexibility and housing types. The City Council chose to adopt all of these options. The new zoning districts and standards provide for more housing types (those in Figure 10), increased density, smaller lot sizes, more building coverage, and reduced parking minimums. These changes not only accommodate the State's requirement to provide housing at all income levels but creates the opportunity for residents to stay in Medical Lake as their needs for housing change over their lifetime.

With these new zoning districts adopted, the city's capacity for accommodating housing has increased, as shown in Figure 12. Medical Lake is now able to reach the housing goals set by HAPT.

Figure 12. Revised Potential for Future Housing Units

Income	Extremely Low		Very Low	Low	Moderate			
Area Median Income (AMI)	0-30% Non-PSH	0-30% PSH	>30-50%	>50-80%	>80-100%	>100-120%	>120%	Total
Existing Housing Units	184	0	159	839	329	96	221	1828
Needed Housing Units	95	27	65	39	21	17	65	329
Future Housing Units within city limits	95	27	65	267	227	104	105	890
Future Housing Units in UGA expansion areas	0	0	0	0	254	254	254	762

Source: HAPT & ML Revised Land Capacity Analysis

The HAPT, shows that the State would like Medical Lake to provide another 187 housing units to those households between 0% and 50% of the average median income (AMI). Most typically, this housing must be subsidized to make it affordable to these household incomes. The City of Medical Lake does not have the resources to provide incentives for subsidized housing. However, the City is willing to work with other agencies to provide such housing as long as supportive services are also available to these households. At this time, medical care, mental health care, substance use care, employment training, and life skill training are services not readily available within the City. If a resident depends on public transit, the public bus is available hourly, making out of town trips difficult. In the meantime, zoning standards have been amended to allow transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and other group housing throughout the city.

The HAPT also shows that the State would like Medical Lake to accommodate emergency housing for 15 people. As stated above, without services and transportation, people needing emergency housing will not be properly served. However, in preparation, the City Council has adopted provisions for allowing emergency housing and shelters.

Based on the 2025 LCA, the City has adequate vacant and undeveloped land within the City to meet the small population allocation. However, there is a significant need for additional housing on the West Plains. Medical Lake is well positioned to help meet this need. As part of the Periodic Update, new zoning districts have been adopted to provide clearer, more concise, and flexible development standards to encourage housing that is in line with retaining the City's small-town charm. In addition, the City is working with Spokane County to explore the possibility of retaining and swapping those urban growth areas adjacent to Medical Lake, a further opportunity to provide housing for the region.

Our Path (Goals and Strategies)

Goal A – Expand Housing Choice

- Provide a variety of housing types and densities that meet the needs of residents at all life stages, income levels, and household sizes while preserving Medical Lake's small-town character.

Goal B – Improve Housing Affordability

- Increase housing opportunities for all economic segments of the community by supporting attainable, affordable, and workforce housing throughout the city.

Goal C – Create Complete Neighborhoods

- Encourage housing development that is connected to services, parks, schools, employment, transportation, and other community amenities.

Goal D – Preserve Existing Housing and Neighborhood Character

- Maintain and improve existing housing stock while supporting reinvestment, infill development, and neighborhood stability.

Goal E – Support Housing for Populations with Unique Needs

- Facilitate housing opportunities for seniors, veterans, persons with disabilities, low-income households, and others with special housing needs through partnerships and supportive services.

Goal F – Plan for Future Housing Needs

- Maintain sufficient land capacity, regulatory flexibility, and regional coordination to meet existing and future housing needs over the planning period.

Chapter 3: Public Services

Critical to the Comprehensive Plan, understanding the quality and contribution of current services ensures that the right services are in the right place to support the growth that is planned. The following includes a summary of existing services.

Public Safety

Law Enforcement

The City of Medical Lake has contracted with the Spokane County Sheriff's Office since 2009 The current contract provides for two dedicated Sheriff's Deputies, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., seven days a week, based on crime data and community needs. Additional Deputies continue to serve in the West Plains outside of these hours and respond to calls within the City. With office space in the Medical Lake City Hall, deputies are often present, using the space to handle administrative duties. Comprehensive law enforcement services provided include patrol, response, investigations, and enforcement of City ordinances and state law. Beyond the dedicated positions, Medical Lake receives the full benefit of shared service units, including supervisory support, investigations, specialized teams, dispatch services, and countywide resources. The City's relationship with the Sheriff's Office will continue to prioritize community-oriented policing, visibility, and relationship-building.

The Sherrif's Community Oriented Policing Effort (S.C.O.P.E,), also has an office located in City Hall. S.C.O.P.E. is a volunteer-driven public-safety and crime-prevention organization that supports law enforcement and local communities. Its mission centers on teamwork between citizens and the Sheriff's Office to enhance neighborhood safety and prevent crime.

The Medical Lake School District Resource Officer (SRO) serves as a law-enforcement presence, a prevention specialist, and a student/community resource. The SRO monitors traffic and parking to ensure safe student arrival and departure, maintains a visible presence at school events to enhance safety, investigates reports of cyberbullying, harassment, drug- or alcohol-related incidents, and other school-based concerns, and provides law-enforcement backup for emergency situations within the school community.

Fire Protection

To ensure 24/7 emergency coverage for the community, the City of Medical Lake has contracted with Spokane County Fire District #3 for fire protection, emergency medical response, and life safety services since 2019. Fire Station 311 is located in City Hall and staffed to ensure rapid response times and consistent coverage by a combination of full-time career firefighters, EMTs, paramedics, and trained volunteer personnel. This blended staffing model delivers high-quality service while maintaining cost efficiency for the community.

District #3's extensive service area and regional resources benefit Medical Lake by providing access to specialized equipment, advanced medical care, wildfire response capacity, and a scalable system capable of managing major incidents. The District's training programs, community outreach, and emphasis on prevention enhance local readiness, while coordinated planning and joint exercises improve response during large-scale emergencies such as wildfires. Through these services, Spokane County Fire District #3 plays a critical role in protecting Medical Lake's residents, businesses, and public facilities.

Animal Control

The City of Medical Lake has contracted with Spokane County Regional Animal Protection Service (SCRAPS) since 2014. Spokane County established an Animal Control Department managed by an Animal Protection Director and maintains an animal Care and Control facility through SCRAPS, that provides animal control and enforcement, including licensing services.

Municipal Court

After several years of services through Cheney Municipal Court, the City of Medical Lake now contracts with the Airway Heights Municipal Court. The Interlocal Agreement between the Cities of Airway Heights and Medical Lake for Municipal Court Services and Facilities provides for the use of the facilities, materials, and personnel for the filing and processing of civil, traffic, or other infractions and criminal citations. Detention and corrections services are contracted with Spokane County. The City will explore the desire for a regional West Plains Municipal Court as needs evolve.

Emergency Management

The City of Medical Lake partners with Spokane County through a long-standing series of interlocal agreements, most recently adopted in 2020, to provide coordinated and cost-effective emergency management services. This partnership ensures alignment between countywide and local preparedness efforts while supporting the protection of public health, safety, and property during emergencies.

Under the agreement, Spokane County Emergency Management provides regional coordination, technical assistance, training resources, and access to countywide emergency planning and response infrastructure. The City retains direct responsibility for local emergency planning, staff training, continuity of operations, emergency declarations, activation of local response efforts, volunteer coordination, and tracking recovery costs. Medical Lake also participates in the regional Emergency Management Policy Board, ensuring the City has a voice in West Plains and countywide emergency management policies, priorities, and resource allocation.

Recent efforts include the City's active participation in the update of the Spokane County Hazard Mitigation Plan and the adoption of a Medical Lake Hazard Mitigation Plan, including documenting risks, vulnerabilities, and mitigation strategies following the 2023 Gray Fire. This work strengthens preparedness, informs future capital planning, and positions the City to qualify for state and federal mitigation funding.

Through these coordinated systems, Medical Lake benefits from a modern, resilient, and regionally integrated emergency management framework capable of supporting the community before, during, and after disasters.

Utilities

Drinking Water

The City of Medical Lake owns and operates a municipal water system that serves all properties within the city limits and extends east to Craig Road. Through interlocal agreements, the City also provides water to Strathview Water District #16 on the east shore of Silver Lake and to Four Lakes Water District #10, supporting broader West Plains utility needs. The system is supplied by two City-owned wells that currently provide sufficient capacity for existing customers and some future

growth. To ensure long-term reliability, the City has initiated planning for a third well, with production anticipated within five to seven years.

Medical Lake also maintains an intertie with the City of Spokane for emergency water supply, drawing small amounts at regular intervals to maintain water quality. The City's well water requires only minimal disinfection and is routinely tested to meet all State Department of Health drinking water standards. As part of regional water quality monitoring, the system is periodically tested for PFAS compounds; while levels are not currently a concern, the City has contingency plans to adjust sources if necessary.

The City continues to explore opportunities to expand reclaimed water use for irrigation, promote water conservation, and evaluate potential district consolidation to improve long-term system efficiency. Public Works and Administrative Services collaborate to deliver clean and affordable water to the community. After recent accounting and billing system improvements, the water utility is now known to be financially sustainable. A utility rate study is underway to ensure that future rates adequately support operations, maintenance, and needed capital investments.

Wastewater

The City of Medical Lake operates a 100% beneficial use, Class A reclaimed wastewater treatment facility with a capacity to process 1 million gallons per day. The system serves more than 1,800 properties and provides reclaimed water to West Medical Lake for lake-level stabilization, as well as to Eastern State Hospital and the Washington State Veterans Cemetery for irrigation. The City acts as the lead agency for a regional treatment facility that serves both the community and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) campus, ensuring coordinated management of wastewater flows and reclaimed water distribution.

A significant portion of the City's wastewater collection system currently flows downhill toward Medical Lake before being pumped back uphill to the treatment plant. This aging configuration is nearing capacity, lacks redundancy, and does not support long-term growth. To address these limitations, the City is designing a new main line that will relieve the existing system, improve reliability, and support future development.

The wastewater utility is funded solely through user fees and an excise tax. A utility rate study is underway to evaluate whether current revenues are sufficient to maintain operations, support ongoing maintenance needs, and fund necessary capital improvements. This work will help ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the wastewater system and its ability to meet the City's future service needs.

Stormwater

The City of Medical Lake manages stormwater through five drainage zones that direct runoff to Medical Lake, Deep Creek, Silver Lake, or Tule Pond, reflecting the natural topography and historic flow patterns of the area. As development adds roofs, parking lots, and paved surfaces, stormwater runoff increases in volume and carries pollutants such as oils, automotive fluids, and trace metals that require treatment before entering natural water bodies.

Where possible, the City relies on natural filtration, such as vegetated swales, to remove contaminants prior to discharge. Some older outfalls to Medical Lake include oil-water separators installed under best practices at the time, but these systems are limited in effectiveness. The City is now designing improved natural filtration systems for all stormwater outfalls to better treat runoff before it reaches local lakes and streams.

Historically, stormwater has not been operated as a utility, and no fees have been collected to maintain or upgrade existing infrastructure. As the system ages and regulatory expectations increase, the City is exploring the creation of a dedicated stormwater utility to provide sustainable funding for maintenance, water-quality improvements, and necessary capital upgrades. This work is also driven by the need to reduce infiltration and inflow into the wastewater collection system, which increases treatment demands and reduces system capacity.

Solid Waste Collection

The City of Medical Lake contracts with Sunshine Disposal and Recycling for curbside collection and disposal of solid waste and recycling. The service is competitively bid at regular intervals to ensure fair rates for customers. Because collection requires no City-owned capital infrastructure, customer rates reflect only the cost of providing the service.

The City also contracts with the City of Cheney for yard-waste disposal. Residents deposit yard waste at the City Maintenance facility, where it is collected and transported by Cheney for proper disposal. This partnership allows Medical Lake to provide an additional waste-reduction service without the cost of operating its own green-waste program.

Energy

Avista Utilities provides electricity and natural gas service to the City of Medical Lake and surrounding area. Avista is a private utility that adjusts rates to reflect changes in the cost of producing and delivering electricity or natural gas to the consumer. Fees are charged to cover the cost of extending service to new development or new customers. Avista indicates that it does not anticipate any difficulty providing service to meet the demand generated by expected growth in the Medical Lake area.

Avista has a franchise agreement with the City to locate their lines in the public right-of-way.

Medical Lake values opportunities to utilize renewable sources of energy. The City owns and operates a solar array at the Wastewater Treatment Plant to offset energy costs.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications services in Medical Lake are provided by several private carriers offering a mix of telephone, internet, cable, and fiber-optic services. Major providers include Comcast, Ziply Fiber, CenturyLink/Lumen, and Davis Communications, each operating under franchise or lease agreements with the City that allow the placement of lines, conduit, and equipment within public rights-of-way. Additional wireless and radio communication infrastructure is supported through equipment located on the City's water tower and other utility structures.

These providers deliver a range of broadband speeds and service options, and recent private-sector investments have expanded fiber availability across the West Plains. While the City does not own or operate telecommunications utilities, it plays an important role in permitting, right-of-way management, and facilitating infrastructure improvements that support economic development, remote work, public safety communications, and community connectivity. As demand for reliable broadband continues to grow, the City will work with providers to encourage system upgrades, improve service reliability, and ensure telecommunications infrastructure keeps pace with residential and commercial development.

Chapter 4: Education

Schools

Medical Lake School District serves approximately 1,720 K-12 students. The district is broader than the Medical Lake city limits and includes Fairchild Air Force Base. In addition to elementary, middle, and high schools, the District office is located in the City as well as an early learning program and the Wellness Center.

Over the past several years, the School District has faced significant challenges from wildfire-related community trauma to funding uncertainties and aging facilities. Today, the district is stabilizing through new grants, curriculum updates, and continued levy support. Looking forward, its most urgent needs include facility modernization, sustained mental health services, stable funding, and ongoing wildfire recovery support for students and families.

The Wellness Center is a community-focused mental health and wellness hub designed to support students, families, and the broader Medical Lake community. It operates as part of the district's integrated approach to student and family well-being.

Hallett, the elementary school within the City of Medical Lake is at capacity. The District has faced challenges to address this issue because Michael Anderson, the elementary school on Fairchild Air Force Base, is under capacity. The current funding structure does not allow money to be used for additional classroom space in Medical Lake, despite the fact that non-military families cannot utilize the school on base. However, this issue is being addressed in the State legislature.

Early Learning

The YWCA operates an Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) in Medical Lake that provides full-day early education, nutritious meals, health screenings, and family support services to prepare children for kindergarten.

Library

Medical Lake Library is part of the Spokane County Library District that provides access to more than 1.5 million titles in many formats. Open four days a week, The Library's knowledgeable employees help customers of all ages navigate the information they are looking for. The 4,000 square foot building, owned by the City of Medical Lake is located on the northwest corner of East Herb Street and South Brower Street. The Library is a strong supporter of and contributes to economic growth with resources providing guidance for those starting businesses or exploring grant funding.

Recognizing that a child's first teacher is their parents, the Medical Lake Library focuses on regular family programs that introduce important literacy, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math), and social skills that prepare children for kindergarten and future academic success. Family Storytimes demonstrate early learning techniques that parents can use at home to continue building on these skills in everyday interactions and help their children be kindergarten ready. Storytime is also an opportunity for parents to connect with one another in creating a supportive community.

The Library works with Medical Lake schools and actively participates in literacy and STEM nights by sharing information about the resources and services available to families and students of all ages. Field trips and tours are also offered by the Library.

Located southeast of the city's central business district, the building lacks visibility from a well-traveled street. Increasing public awareness of the physical building and the multitude of resources available is an ongoing challenge.

Recreation

For many years the Parks and Recreation Department provided youth sports. Over the last two years, with additional staff, the department has been able to expand youth programs along with adding teen programs and adult sports. After school programs, summer camps, and community events have been added, including Linger at the Lake, a four-concert summer series.

Apart from the School District, which provides after school sports and clubs, and West Plains Little League, Medical Lake Parks and Recreation is the main provider of activities for youth in the immediate vicinity. Medical Lake plays an important role in creating an early experience for children in recreational sports that leads to their participation in school sports.

Youth programs for local residents also create a ripple effect that makes our community more attractive to visitors. A strong recreation pipeline helps the City host more tournaments, races, camps, and festivals. For instance, Medical Lake participates in 4 Rec Youth Sports, a multi-jurisdiction collaboration that provides competitive volleyball, basketball, flag football, and soccer. Games and playoffs that are held in Medical Lake bring in families from the surrounding area, which brings revenue to local businesses.

The City acknowledges that community health and wellness are inextricably linked to access to parks and open space, engaged citizens, and the opportunity for all people have access to recreation programs. Knowing how vital these programs are, the City will continue to expand programs for all ages and abilities. However, indoor programs are currently limited by the facilities available. The City depends on School District facilities for indoor sports, after school programs, and any event that exceeds the size of the small auditorium on the upper floor of City Hall.

The City will look for opportunities to develop a community center or recreation center to help address the shortage of facilities that limits available programs. Partnering with the School District would be beneficial for both organizations and could make such a project more achievable.

Part Two: The Place

Waterfront Park 2025

Chapter 5: Land Use

Land Use establishes how Medical Lake will guide growth, development, and reinvestment over the 20-year planning horizon. It sets policy direction for the location, type, and intensity of land uses while ensuring consistency with the City's adopted zoning regulations, infrastructure capacity, and environmental protections.

This chapter fulfills the Growth Management Act (GMA) requirement for a land use element by identifying land use designations, establishing expectations for density and intensity, and coordinating land use with housing, transportation, capital facilities, parks, and climate resilience planning. The policies in this chapter are implemented through the City's zoning and development regulations adopted in Title 19 of the Medical Lake Municipal Code.

A Brief History of Land Use in Medical Lake

Medical Lake's land use pattern reflects its evolution from a compact lakeside community into a diverse small city serving residential, institutional, and regional functions. Early development clustered around the downtown core and the lake, with closely spaced homes, civic buildings, and local businesses connected by a walkable grid.

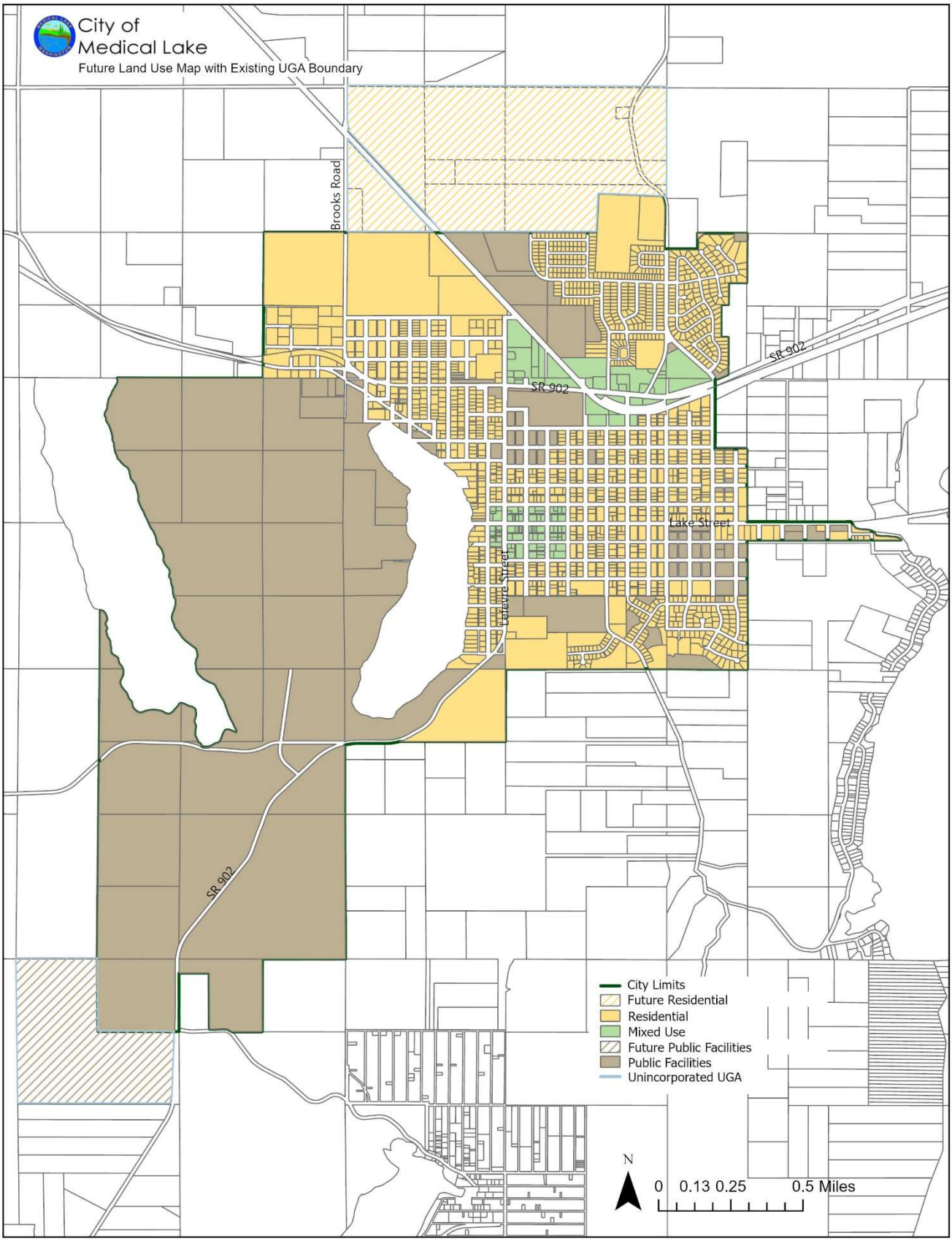
As the community expanded, residential neighborhoods developed outward, incorporating schools, parks, and public facilities. Over time, changes in housing demand and development practices introduced larger residential lots, separated land uses, and automobile-oriented commercial areas, particularly along SR 902.

The city's physical geography and environmental features have also played a significant role in shaping development patterns. Wetlands, shorelines, flood-prone areas, wildlife habitat areas, and geologically hazardous areas have influenced where growth could occur and where development was constrained. In several parts of the community, extensive granite outcroppings, shallow bedrock conditions, and associated wetlands have limited the feasibility of urban development, resulting in the preservation of open space and natural landscapes. These critical areas have helped define neighborhood boundaries, transportation corridors, and the overall form of the city while protecting valuable ecological functions and natural resources.

State institutions have also played an important role in shaping Medical Lake's land use and regional identity. Eastern State Hospital, Lakeland Village, and Westlake were established on large campuses at the community's edge, reflecting historic patterns of institutional siting that prioritized separation, access to open land, and self-contained facilities. These campuses introduced significant public employment, specialized services, and long-term land holdings into the city, influencing infrastructure investments, surrounding development patterns, and regional connections. While distinct from surrounding residential neighborhoods, these institutions remain integral to Medical Lake's character and continue to shape land use considerations related to transportation, utilities, public services, and long-term planning.

Today, Medical Lake's land use pattern presents both challenges and opportunities: preserving established neighborhoods and natural amenities while allowing for housing diversity, economic vitality, and reinvestment in downtown and mixed-use areas. Increasingly, land use decisions must also respond to climate-related risks and resilience needs. Planning for wildfire risk, drought, stormwater management, urban tree canopy, water conservation, and protection of natural systems

Map 1. Future Land Use Map



is becoming a more important factor in determining the location, design, and intensity of future development. Resilient land use patterns that protect critical areas, reduce hazard exposure, and support long-term environmental sustainability will play an increasingly important role in shaping Medical Lake's future growth.

Where We Are Today

Urban Growth Area and Growth Capacity

Medical Lake is a fully-planning city under the GMA, with an established Urban Growth Area (UGA) that defines where urban-level development and services are expected. The City's UGA provides sufficient land capacity to accommodate forecasted population, housing, and employment growth over the planning period through a combination of vacant land, redevelopment opportunities, and incremental infill.

Concentrating growth within the UGA supports efficient use of infrastructure, reduces pressure on environmentally sensitive lands, and aligns with countywide planning policies. Concentrating growth within the UGA supports efficient use of infrastructure, reduces pressure on environmentally sensitive lands and critical areas, minimizes the extension of services into hazard-prone locations, and aligns with countywide planning policies and climate resilience objectives.

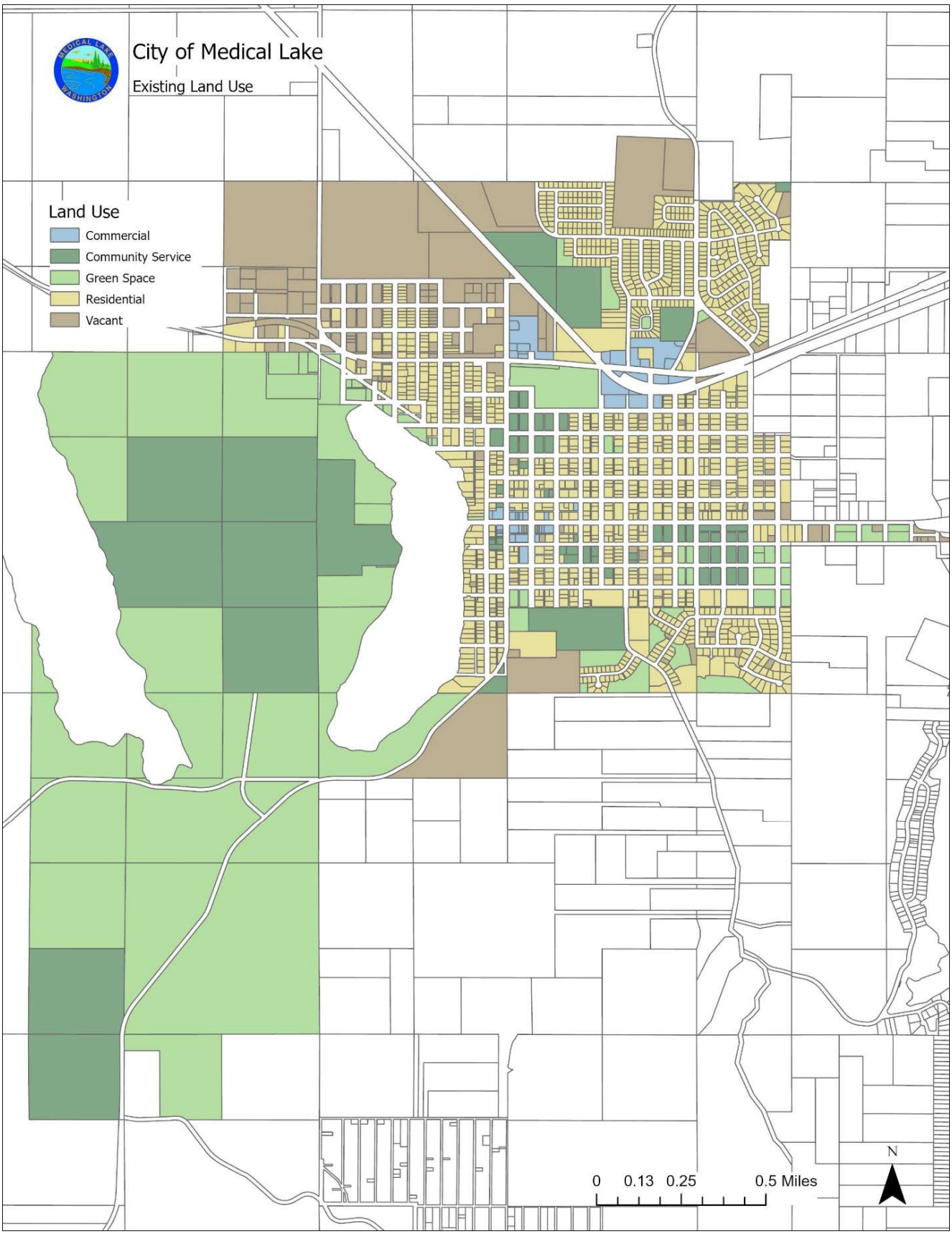
The areas within the UGA that are outside of the city limits and available for city expansion are located to the southwest and north (See Map 1). These expansion areas consist of approximately 406 acres. As shown in Map 16, located in Chapter 13: Urban Growth Area, the City has requested Spokane County to change to these expansion areas.

Existing Land Use Pattern

The city's existing land use pattern includes established low-density residential neighborhoods, medium-density residential areas located near downtown and commercial services, and a walkable downtown core that integrates commercial, civic, and residential uses. Mixed-use corridors accommodate a blend of residential and commercial development, while public facilities, such as schools, utilities, parks, civic buildings, and state institutional campuses including Eastern State Hospital, Lakeland Village, and Westlake, serve as important community anchors and regional employment centers. Open spaces, shoreline areas, and trail systems further define Medical Lake's character and contribute to its quality of life. While Medical Lake remains predominantly residential, demand for greater housing choice, expanded services, and more flexible development patterns continues to grow.

Critical areas continue to influence development opportunities throughout the city. Wetlands constrain urban development in some locations while preserving important environmental functions and scenic resources. Areas characterized by extensive shallow bedrock often remain undeveloped or developed at lower intensities due to environmental limitations, infrastructure challenges, and regulatory protections. As a result, these features have helped shape the community's growth pattern and the distribution of residential, commercial, and public land uses.

Map 2. Existing Land Use



Land Use Framework and Zoning Alignment

The City's Comprehensive Plan land use framework is implemented through the zoning districts and development standards adopted in Title 19 of the Medical Lake Municipal Code. These regulations establish clear expectations for allowed uses, housing types, density, and development form. These new zoning districts are depicted on Map 15 in Chapter 12: Zoning and Development Standards.

Low-Density Residential (LDR). Intended to preserve and expand neighborhoods characterized by detached single-family housing. This designation also supports middle-income housing through accessory dwelling units, group living, and cottage housing, consistent with adopted zoning standards.

Medium-Density Residential (MDR). Intended to preserve and enhance older residential areas near commercial centers and services. This designation allows townhouses, plexes, cottage housing, and multi-dwelling developments to support housing diversity and efficient land use.

Central Business District (CBD). The CBD is intended to preserve and enhance downtown as a compact, walkable, mixed-use center. Commercial uses, housing, offices, services, and civic spaces are integrated vertically and horizontally, with pedestrian-oriented design standards.

Mixed-Use (MU). Mixed-Use areas accommodate larger-scale residential and commercial development, supporting housing, employment, services, and regional access. These areas provide flexibility for evolving land use needs while emphasizing connectivity and design quality.

Public Facilities (PF). This designation recognizes the distinct nature of public services and institutional uses, including utilities, schools, parks, civic buildings, and essential public facilities, including the State institutions.

A Vision for Medical Lake's Land Use Future

Medical Lake envisions a future where land use decisions reinforce the city's small-town identity while adapting to change, including climate resiliency. Neighborhoods remain livable and connected. Housing options serve residents at all stages of life. Downtown thrives as the heart of community life. Natural features, critical areas, and public spaces are protected and integrated into development. Growth is intentional, equitable, and supported by public investment.

Our Path (Goals and Strategies)

Goal A – Direct Growth to the Urban Area

- Guide growth to designated urban areas to efficiently use infrastructure and protect natural resources.

Goal B – Support Housing Choice and Neighborhood Stability

- Encourage a full range of housing types while ensuring compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

Goal C – Strengthen Downtown and Mixed-Use Areas

- Promote walkable, mixed-use development that supports local businesses, housing, and community life.

Goal D – Preserve Community Character and Environmental Assets

- Ensure development reflects Medical Lake's small-town form, lake setting, and natural landscape.

Goal E – Align Land Use with Public Investment

- Coordinate land use decisions with transportation, utilities, parks, capital facilities, and climate resilience planning.

Chapter 6: Transportation and Mobility

This Transportation and Mobility chapter supports housing and land use strategies for compact, connected growth by planning for a multi-modal system. Together, these strategies will help to reduce vehicle miles traveled and consequently greenhouse gas emissions. It complements the parks and recreation system by creating connections to trails and other facilities. Along with the Transportation Master Plan, it informs the City's Capital Improvement Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. This chapter aligns with Spokane County Countywide Planning Policies, the Spokane Regional Transportation Council's Horizon 2050 Plan, Spokane Transit Authority's Connect Spokane Plan, and advances West Plains collaboration to deliver safe, reliable, people-centered mobility for Medical Lake.

A Brief History of Mobility in Medical Lake

Medical Lake's transportation story began with a walkable street grid centered on the historic core and lakefront, shaped initially by rail access and later by the establishment of Fairchild Air Force Base to the north. The presence of the Base created strong and lasting regional travel demands, driving the development and improvement of north-south transportation connections between Medical Lake, Fairchild, and the broader Spokane area. As the community expanded, newer subdivisions introduced cul-de-sacs and longer blocks that reduced connectivity compared to the original grid. Today, SR 902 functions as the city's primary regional corridor, linking residents to employment, schools, services, and recreation across the West Plains, while downtown remains the everyday hub for local trips and community events.

Where We Are Today

Medical Lake's transportation needs are shaped by its small-town layout, proximity to Fairchild Air Force Base, and regional job centers. Most residents commute by car with an average one-way trip of about 20 minutes; roughly a third of trips are local and the rest connect to greater Spokane, underscoring the importance of both safe local streets and reliable regional links.

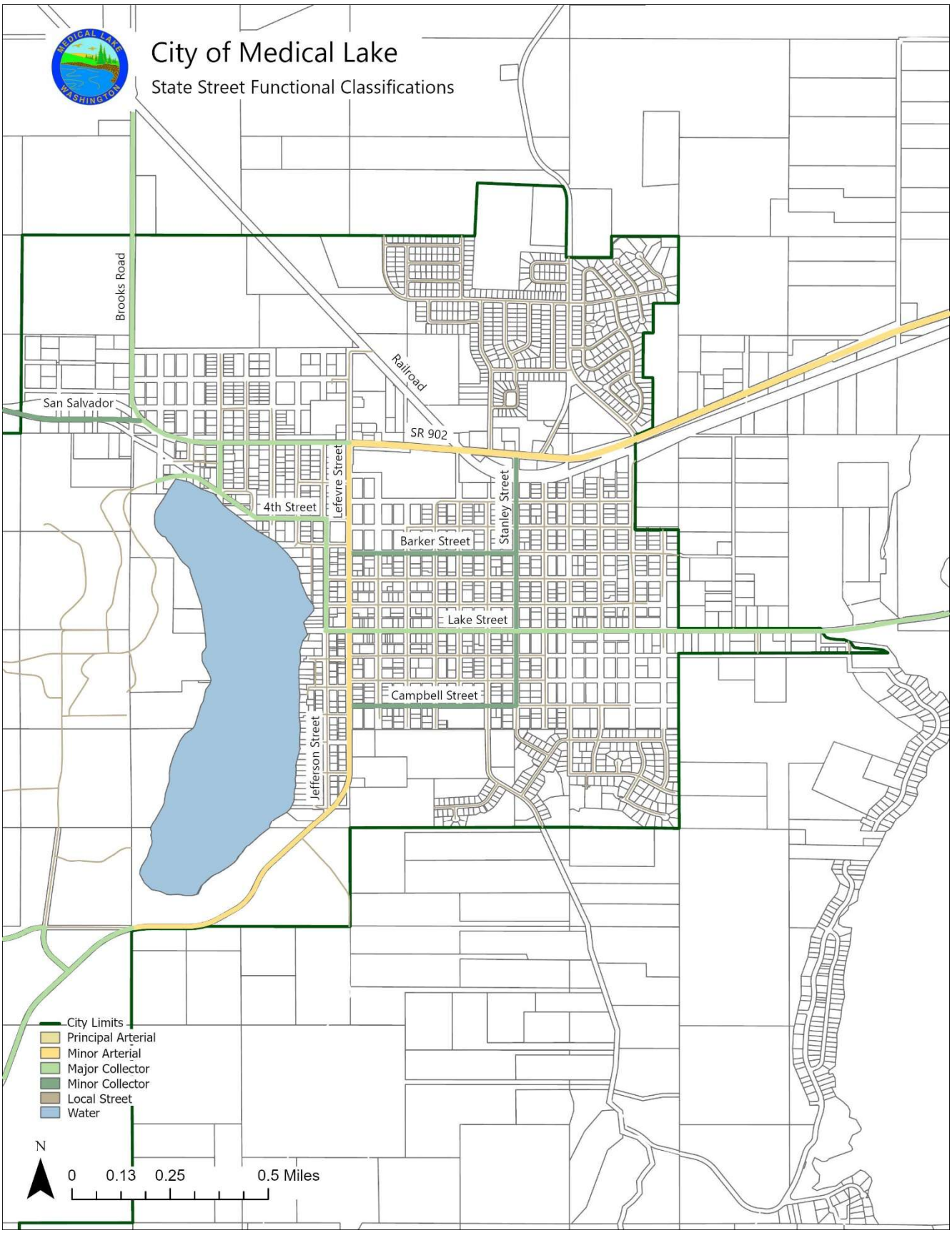
What Our Transportation Network Looks Like

The existing roadway system consists of State Route 902 (arterial), several collectors (Brooks, W 4th, Barker, Jefferson, Campbell, Stanley, and Lake), and local streets. (See Map 3, State Street Functional Classifications) Older neighborhoods have a complete grid of streets while newer subdivisions include cul-de-sacs and a limited number of access points, which has created connectivity issues that the City is now needing to correct. SR 902 is the primary regional connection, yet the lack of safe crossings has created a divide between old and new neighborhoods. Lefevre Street is the City's main north-south spine and leads residents and visitors to Waterfront Park.

Traffic Operations and Capacity

The City of Medical Lake establishes Transportation Level of Service (LOS) standards to guide transportation planning, capital investment, and project prioritization in a way that supports public safety, accessibility, system preservation, and consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Rather than focusing solely on congestion or roadway expansion, the City applies a multimodal, performance-based LOS framework that emphasizes maintaining the transportation system in a

Map 3. State Street Functional Classifications



state of good repair and providing safe, reliable access for all users. For streets and roadways, LOS is defined primarily through pavement condition and functional performance, with a goal of maintaining an average Pavement Condition Rating of approximately 65 or higher. Preventive maintenance, resurfacing, and targeted rehabilitation are considered LOS-supportive, while capacity expansion is deprioritized unless necessary for safety or access. Multimodal LOS standards focus on continuous, safe, and ADA-compliant pedestrian access; connected and visible bicycle networks; and the preservation, accessibility, and connectivity of shared-use paths and trails. The City does not apply fixed vehicular LOS A–F standards systemwide, instead conducting operational analysis on a case-by-case basis to address safety, emergency access, or site-specific impacts using low-cost, context-sensitive solutions. Freight routes and rail crossings are evaluated based on safety, access, pavement durability, and land use compatibility rather than throughput alone. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) serves as the primary implementation tool for LOS standards, prioritizing maintenance, accessibility, safety, multimodal connectivity, and system preservation. LOS performance is monitored through pavement data, field assessments, and safety indicators. Standards may be refined over time to respond to changing conditions, funding availability, and updated guidance while remaining aligned with Comprehensive Plan goals.

Key Safety and System Issues

Between 2020 and 2024, 83 reported collisions occurred citywide. 57% of the collisions were at the intersections of Lake & Stanley, SR 902 & North Stanley, and SR 902 & Lefevre. (Map 4, Traffic Collisions) The TMP recommends low-cost visibility and control enhancements now and roundabouts long-term at select locations.

Community members report the greatest comfort using shared-use paths or protected/buffered facilities. Medical Lake's trails and pathways are well-loved and could be expanded. Meanwhile, sidewalks are incomplete in older areas and sometimes bicycle lanes exist on only one side of the street. Incrementally completing the pedestrian and bicycle network will provide more opportunities for safe travel throughout the City. Safe Routes to School are especially important for making student walking and bicycling safer and more direct. The City has prioritized sidewalks and bike lanes near schools. The most recent project was street improvements to Barker Street.

SR 902 is the most heavily vehicle traveled street in the City. There are public bus stops on both sides of the street, yet it has no sidewalks on the south side, no bicycle lanes, and lacks safe crossings for pedestrians. The community will benefit greatly from complete street improvements along this corridor. (See Map 7, Current Street and Intersection Level of Service)

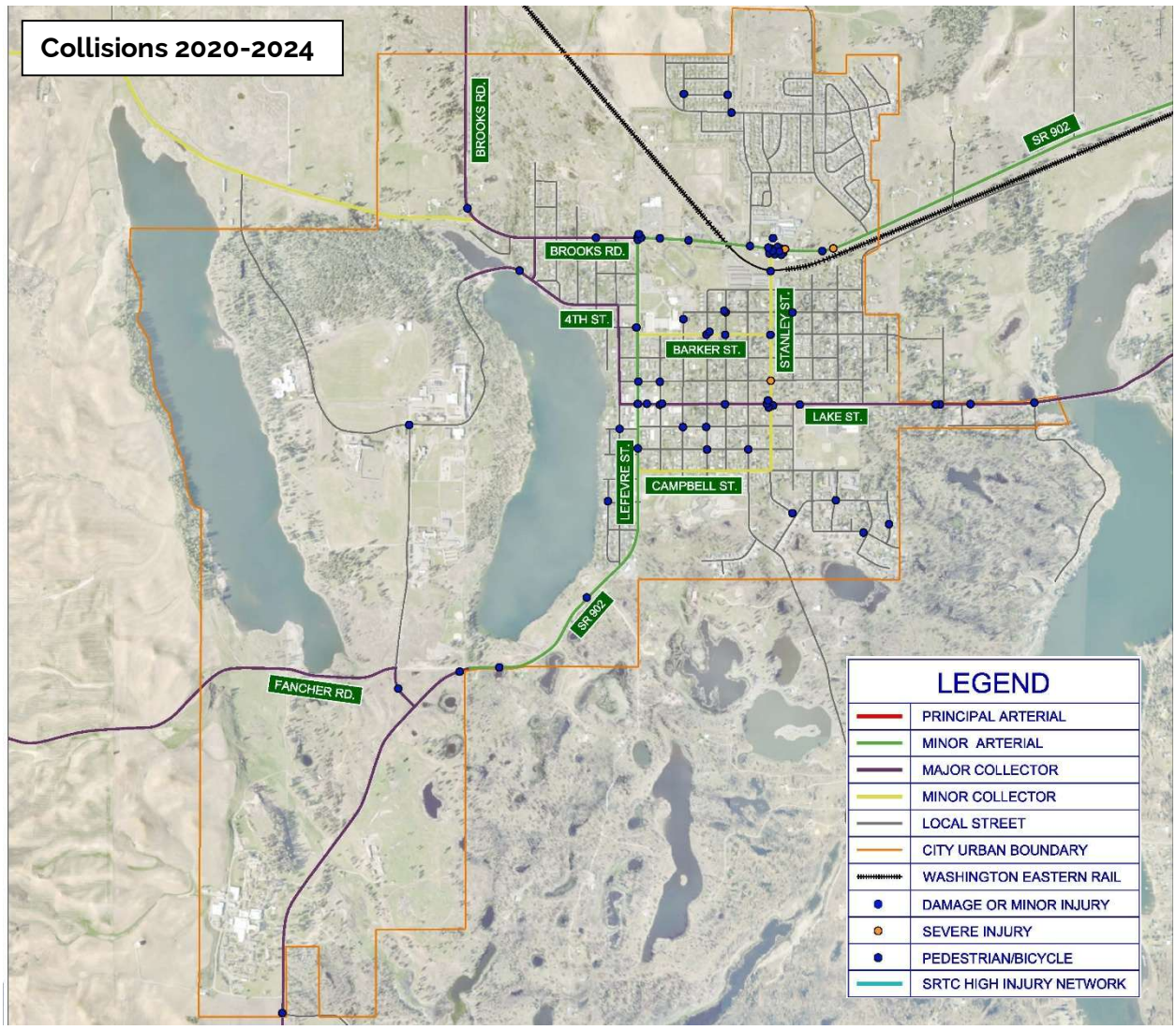
Freight and Rail

SR 902, Brooks Road, and Espanola Street support regional and local truck movements at T-3 freight levels, representing moderate freight activity that primarily supports local and regional access, rather than serving as high-volume freight corridors. The Washington Eastern Gateway rail line crosses SR 902 at grade, introducing design and safety considerations that influence roadway operations and emergency access.

Transit Overview

Spokane Transit Authority (STA) Route 62 provides hourly service, connecting Medical Lake to the West Plains Transit Center. Opportunities exist to enhance stops, lighting, shelters, and ADA access. The TMP identifies Transit-Oriented Development opportunities near Downtown and Harvest Foods.

Map 4. Traffic Collisions



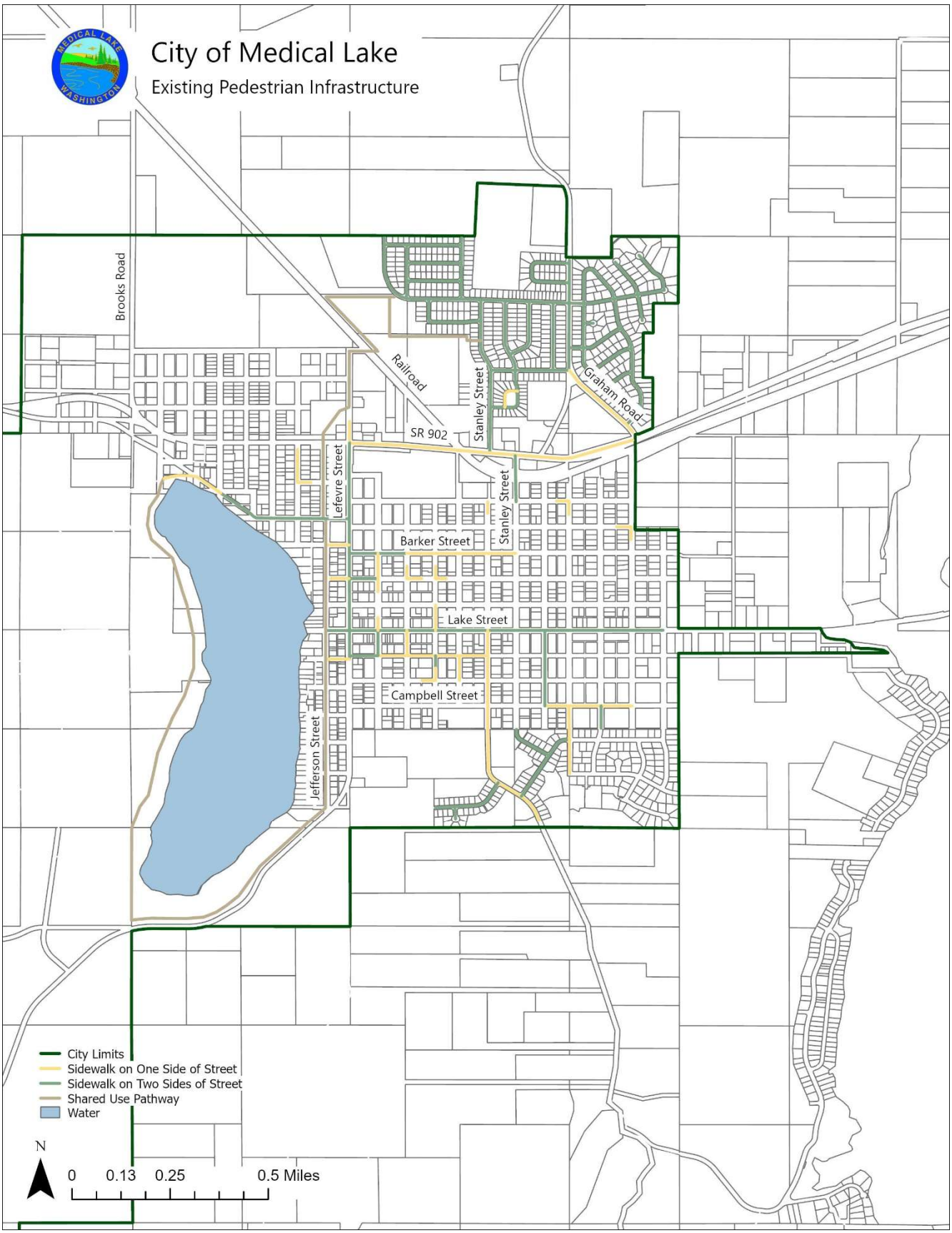
Active Transportation Network

Current conditions reveal limited sidewalk continuity on older streets. (See Map 5, Existing Pedestrian Infrastructure) The existing pathway network is highly used and valued. Cycling comfort analysis shows strong public preference for shared-use paths and protected facilities. Existing cycling infrastructure is incomplete. (See Map 6, Existing Bicycle Infrastructure) School routes lack safe sidewalk or bike network continuity.

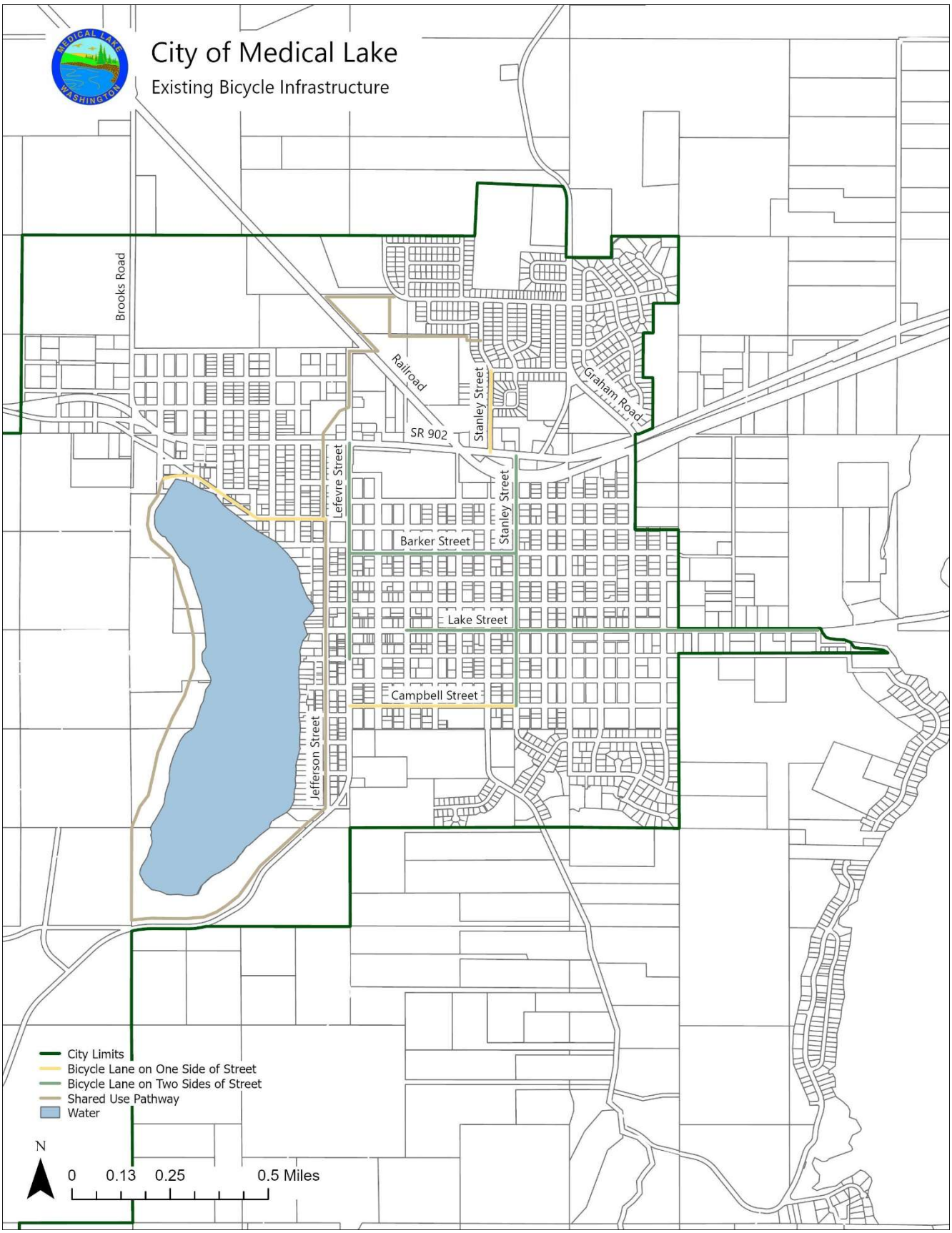
A Vision for Medical Lake's Mobility Future

An ideal mobility future in Medical Lake is people-first: simple routes, fewer conflicts, and designs that reflect a small town where people move safely and comfortably every day. This ideal future allows kids to walk or bike to school on connected, well-lit sidewalks and paths with safe crossings at visible, predictable intersections. It allows Seniors and people with disabilities to reach parks, clinics, and shops without needing to drive. Downtown and the lakefront are easy to reach on foot and by bike, and streets feel calm, welcoming, and distinctly "Medical Lake." Transit is convenient,

Map 5. Existing Pedestrian Infrastructure



Map 6. Existing Bicycle Infrastructure



with upgraded stops and comfortable first/last mile access. Regional connections remain strong along SR 902, with safer intersections and crossings.

Future Traffic Forecasts

As set forth in the Medical Lake Transportation Master Plan, future traffic growth in the City is forecasted to be steady and manageable through the 2050 planning horizon, with no immediate need for major roadway capacity expansion. Traffic volumes are estimated to increase primarily due to planned residential growth and baseline regional growth. More substantial congestion is projected only at complete development of all existing and expanded urban growth areas, in which traffic volumes could roughly double and selected segments and intersections along SR 902 would exceed capacity thresholds. Medical Lake can prioritize multimodal, safety, and intersection improvements in the near and mid-term, while preserving right-of-way and planning tools for potential long-term capacity needs if future growth warrants them.

Intersection Needs

Intersection needs in Medical Lake are primarily long-term and location-specific, with current operations generally performing well but future growth creating targeted pressure at key junctions. Near-term needs focus on low-cost safety improvements, including improved signage, visibility enhancements, pavement markings, and traffic control consistency at these locations. In the long-term, several SR 902 intersections, particularly Lefevre Street/Brooks Road, Stanley Street South, and Graham Road, are projected to have substantial delay and congestion. To address both safety and capacity over time, single-lane multimodal roundabouts are the recommended long-term solution at key intersections, offering improved safety, more efficient traffic flow, and better accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists.

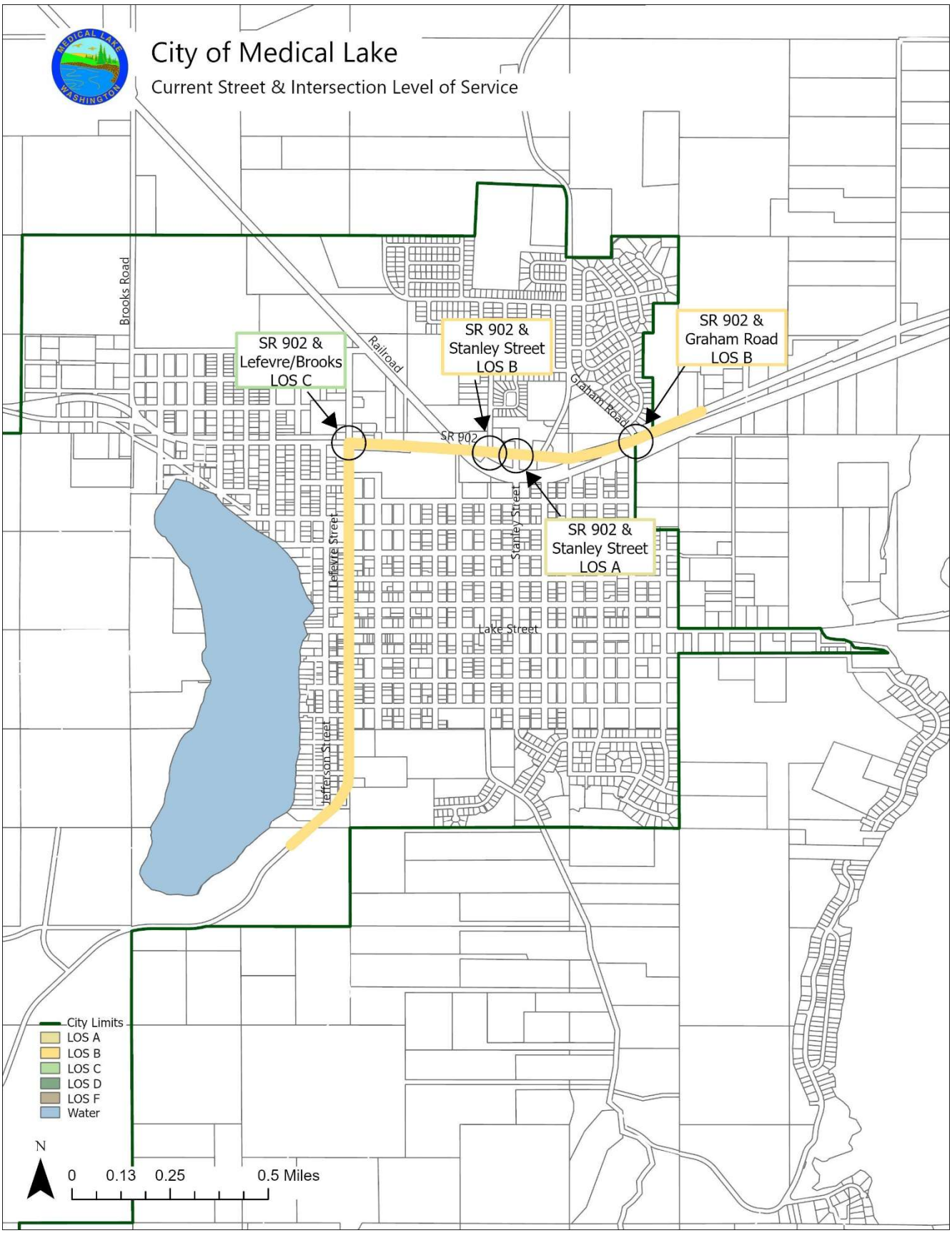
Level of Service

A Level of Service (LOS) for mobility creates a clear, measurable standard for how well Medical Lake's transportation system performs. The ability to evaluate congestion, accessibility, and mobility, ensures that new development does not degrade the system below adopted thresholds. LOS guides consistent, data-driven decisions about infrastructure investments and development review.

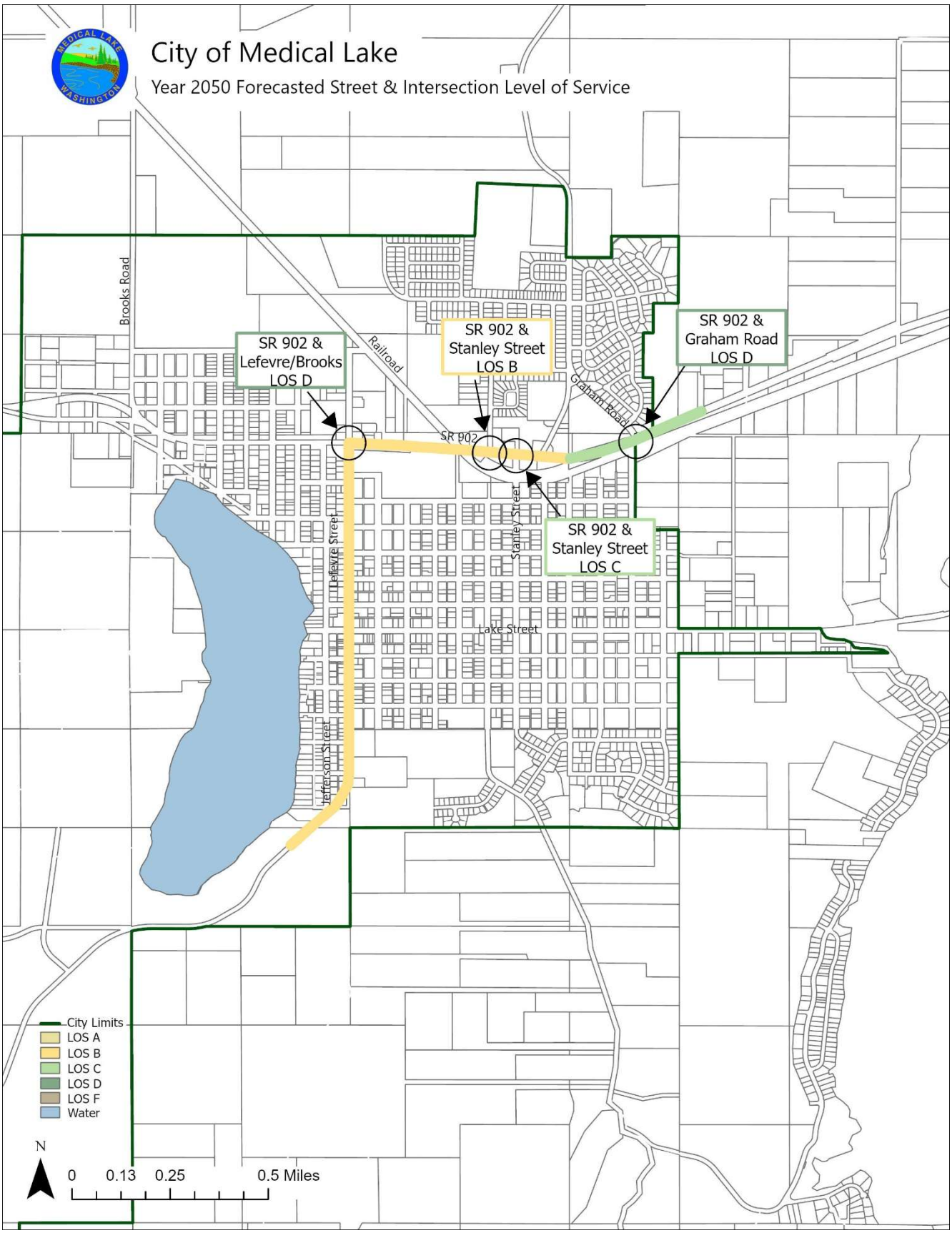
State Route 902 is a State Highway of State Significance per the Washington State Department of Transportation. With this designation comes the performance capacity rating of LOS D for urban areas. LOS D is when speeds begin to decline, the freedom to maneuver is restricted, and there is very little space between vehicles to absorb sudden disruptions. This means WSDOT is comfortable with these characteristics, but wants to prevent the route from dropping to an LOS F which involves severe congestion, stop-and-go conditions, and long delays.

The City recognizes that its older neighborhoods were developed without curbs and sidewalks and that retrofitting these areas can be costly and disruptive. Therefore, the LOS for pedestrian facilities is differentiated based on the age and function of the street network. The City's LOS prioritizes the provision for pedestrians and bicyclists on all arterial and collector streets, both existing and future. This supports safe and connected pedestrian and bicycle travel where traffic volumes and speeds are higher, while allowing flexibility for older local streets where full pedestrian facilities may not be feasible or necessary. In contrast, newer and developing areas are expected to meet modern standards, including the construction of curbs and sidewalks on all local streets, to ensure a complete and accessible network over time. This approach balances long-term community goals

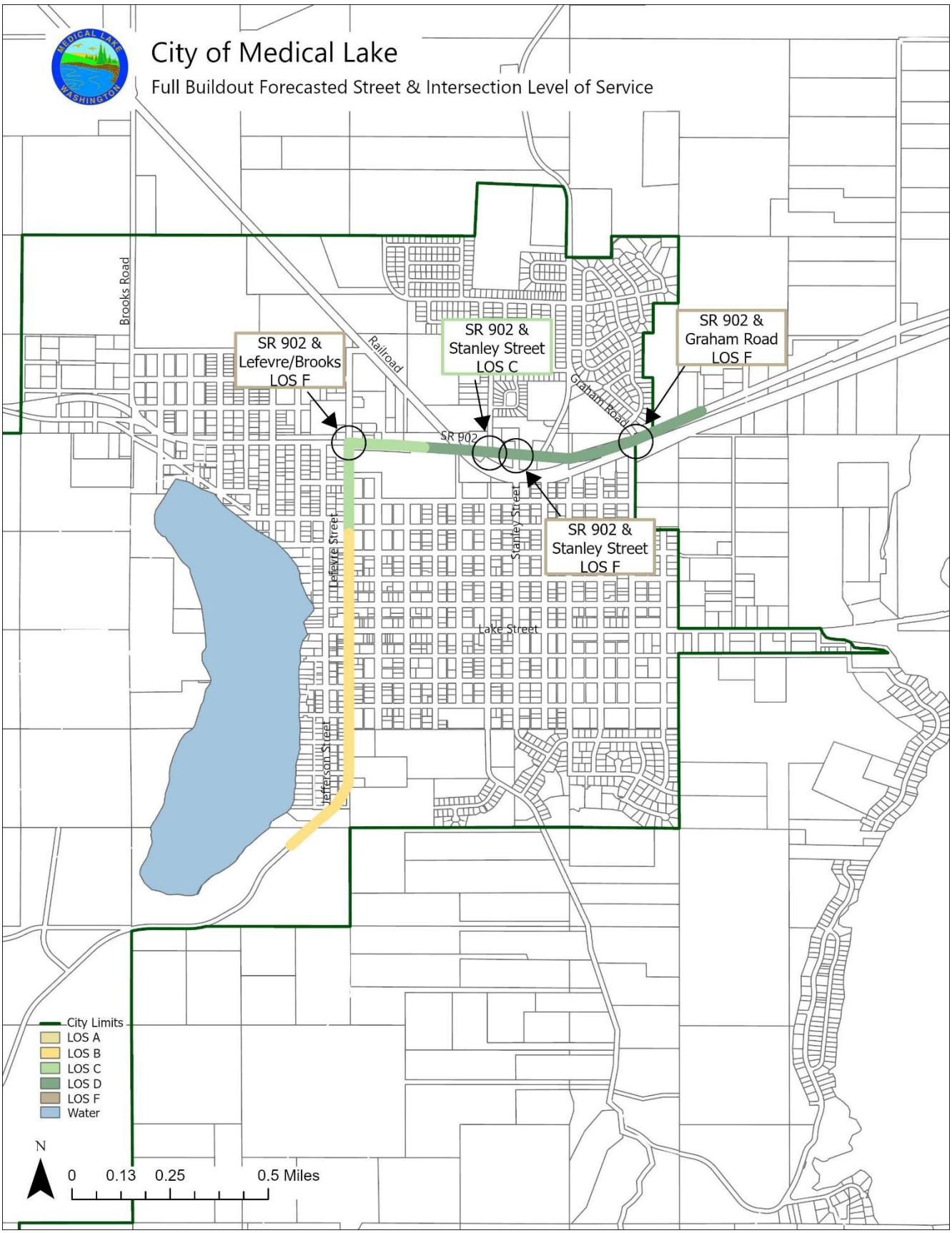
Map 7. Current Street & Intersection Level of Service



Map 8. Year 2050 Forecasted Street & Intersection Level of Service



Map 9. Full Buildout Forecasted Street & Intersection Level of Service



for walkability and safety with practical considerations related to existing development patterns and infrastructure constraints, while gradually improving pedestrian connectivity throughout the community.

Medical Lake will ensure that transportation facilities and services are adequate to serve new development at the time of occupancy, consistent with the concurrency requirements of the GMA. Concurrency is achieved when adopted Levels of Service (LOS) for mobility are maintained. During project review, the City will evaluate whether development impacts would cause LOS standards to be exceeded. If deficiencies are identified, improvements must either be constructed as part of the development, funded through impact fees or mitigation, or programmed and financially committed within the City's six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or Capital Improvement Program (CIP). This approach ensures that growth does not degrade the transportation system, aligns local investment with regional planning priorities, and supports a safe, reliable, and multimodal network for all users.

Arterial Streets	
Category	**Standard**
Vehicle Capacity	LOS D
Average Pavement Condition Rating (PCR)	≥ 70 PCR
Safety Performance	Zero Fatalities and ≤ 3 collisions in 12 months.
Emergency & Transit Reliability	No recurring access failures
Pedestrian Facilities	Continuous, ADA-compliant on ≥ 90% of segment
Bicycle Facilities	Dedicated or buffered facility where feasible
Intersections	Safe for all modes at Arterial and Collector Street intersections

Collector Streets	
Category	**Standard**
Vehicle Capacity	LOS C
Average Pavement Condition Rating	≥ 65 PCR
Safety Performance	Zero Fatalities and ≤ 2 collisions in 12 months
Emergency & Transit Reliability	No recurring access failures
Pedestrian Access	Sidewalks on ≥ 85% of segment
Bicycle Connectivity	Low-stress shared or dedicated network
Intersections	Safe for all modes at Arterial and Collector Street intersections

Local Streets	
Category	**Standard**
Average Pavement Condition Rating	≥ 60 PCR

Safety Performance	No documented systemic hazards
Pedestrian Access	Existing Streets: Context specific
	Future Streets: Safe, continuous route on both sides of the street
Vehicle Speed Environment	Street design reinforces appropriate travel speeds

Financing Strategy

Medical Lake funds transportation improvements through a phased and grant-focused financing strategy that aligns investment with safety priorities, demonstrated need, and long-term affordability. Near-term projects are implemented through the City's six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which emphasizes low-cost safety, multimodal, and Safe Routes to School improvements that can be delivered incrementally. Safe Routes to School investments, such as sidewalks, crossings, lighting, traffic calming, and visibility improvements near schools, are prioritized for state and federal safety funding and coordinated with school district needs. Larger capital projects, including complete street corridors and intersection upgrades, are programmed through future TIP cycles and coordinated with the Capital Improvement Program. The Transportation Master Plan emphasizes leveraging state and federal grants, including Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) and WSDOT programs, to supplement limited local revenues, while preserving right-of-way and development setbacks to avoid premature roadway expansion. This approach allows the City to improve safety for students and families, advance walking and bicycling, and manage long-term transportation needs in a fiscally responsible manner.

Our Path (Goals and Strategies)

Goal A – Make it Safe.

- Create a safe, low-risk, and human-centered transportation system.

Goal B – Make it Connected.

- Create a connected, accessible, and seamlessly navigable transportation system.

Goal C – Make it Reliable.

- Provide a transportation system that enables efficient, reliable, and seamless mobility for all users.

Goal D – Support Community and the Local Economy.

- Develop and maintain a transportation system that supports the local economy, strengthens community identity, and enhances access to businesses, jobs, and amenities.

Goal E – Advance Health, Sustainability, and Equity.

- Create a transportation system that supports public health, reduces environmental impacts, and provides equitable and sustainable travel options for all residents.

Chapter 7: Capital Facilities

The City of Medical Lake is committed to responsible stewardship of public resources and long-term investment in the facilities that make the community safe, functional, and vibrant. This Capital Facilities chapter provides a roadmap for maintaining the systems that residents rely on every day, ensuring future generations benefit from infrastructure that is modern, resilient, and aligned with community values. The result will be a strong foundation for public services, safe infrastructure, and long-term community well-being.

A Brief History of Medical Lake's Public Infrastructure

For more than a century, Medical Lake has invested in the essential public facilities that shape daily life, including safe drinking water from local wells, streets that connect neighborhoods, parks along the shoreline and throughout the city, public buildings that serve generations, and schools central to community identity. Early water and wastewater systems laid the groundwork for gradual modernization, including expanded water storage, new lift stations, and construction of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Over time, City Hall, the maintenance buildings, parks, and other public facilities have undergone incremental upgrades as resources allowed.

Medical Lake's more recent debt-free approach has encouraged careful planning, pay-as-you-go investments, and prudent stewardship of limited local revenues. State and federal grants have played a crucial role in extending the city's ability to deliver improvements such as street resurfacing, stormwater mitigation, and park enhancements. Together, these investments form the backbone of community life and ensure the services residents depend on remain safe, reliable, and resilient.

Where We Are Today

The Growth Management Act requires cities to inventory their capital facilities and demonstrate how they will continue to provide adequate public services as communities grow. Medical Lake maintains a wide range of facilities that support public health, mobility, recreation, education, and safety. The City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Facility Condition Reports (FCRs) provide detailed evaluations. The CIP outlines what major buildings, infrastructure, and equipment the City needs, when we will need them, and how they will be paid for. The FCR evaluates the physical state of buildings, utilities, and site infrastructure. It outlines the status of roofs, mechanical systems, electrical systems, ADA compliance, structural components, site access, and safety systems. These documents guide maintenance plans, capital budgets, and long-term investment decisions. The following summarizes current conditions and system needs.

Utility Infrastructure

Stormwater System. Stormwater infrastructure manages runoff from roofs, roadways, and other impervious surfaces, ensuring pollutants are filtered and drainage systems protect property and water quality. State law requires the city to manage and control stormwater, and FCRs identify system-wide needs related to lifecycle maintenance and targeted upgrades to support development and meet Ecology standards.

Wastewater System. Medical Lake's wastewater system collects and treats residential, commercial, and institutional effluent using lift stations, aeration structures, clarifiers, dewatering systems, and SCADA controls at the 2001 treatment facility. Ecology permits define pollutant limits and require continuous monitoring and reporting. FCR findings show roofing, HVAC, and structural components reaching the end of their useful lives.

Drinking Water System. The drinking water system includes the Lehn Road and Craig Road wells, a 1.5-million-gallon reservoir, several interties with surrounding systems, and miles of distribution pipe. Water is filtered, disinfected, and monitored to meet state quality standards. Facility assessments identify routine modernization needs related to pumps, telemetry, and distribution reliability.

Parks, Public Buildings, and Community Facilities

Medical Lake maintains City Hall, the City Hall Annex, the library, the historic Train Depot, multiple parks, and shoreline recreation areas. FCRs highlight the following lifecycle needs:

City Hall (last major renovation in 1978) requires substantial building system and compliance upgrades, including HVAC replacement, new windows and doors, roof improvements, and accessibility upgrades.

City Hall Annex (a repurposed Sears Catalog building) requires exterior building improvements to address aging materials and improve durability and appearance.

Maintenance Buildings require expanded and improved storage capacity to adequately support city operations and equipment needs.

Library requires exterior repainting, ADA access and egress corrections, parking lot replacement, HVAC and domestic hot water heater replacement, lighting and electrical system upgrades, fire alarm system replacement, and targeted sidewalk repairs.

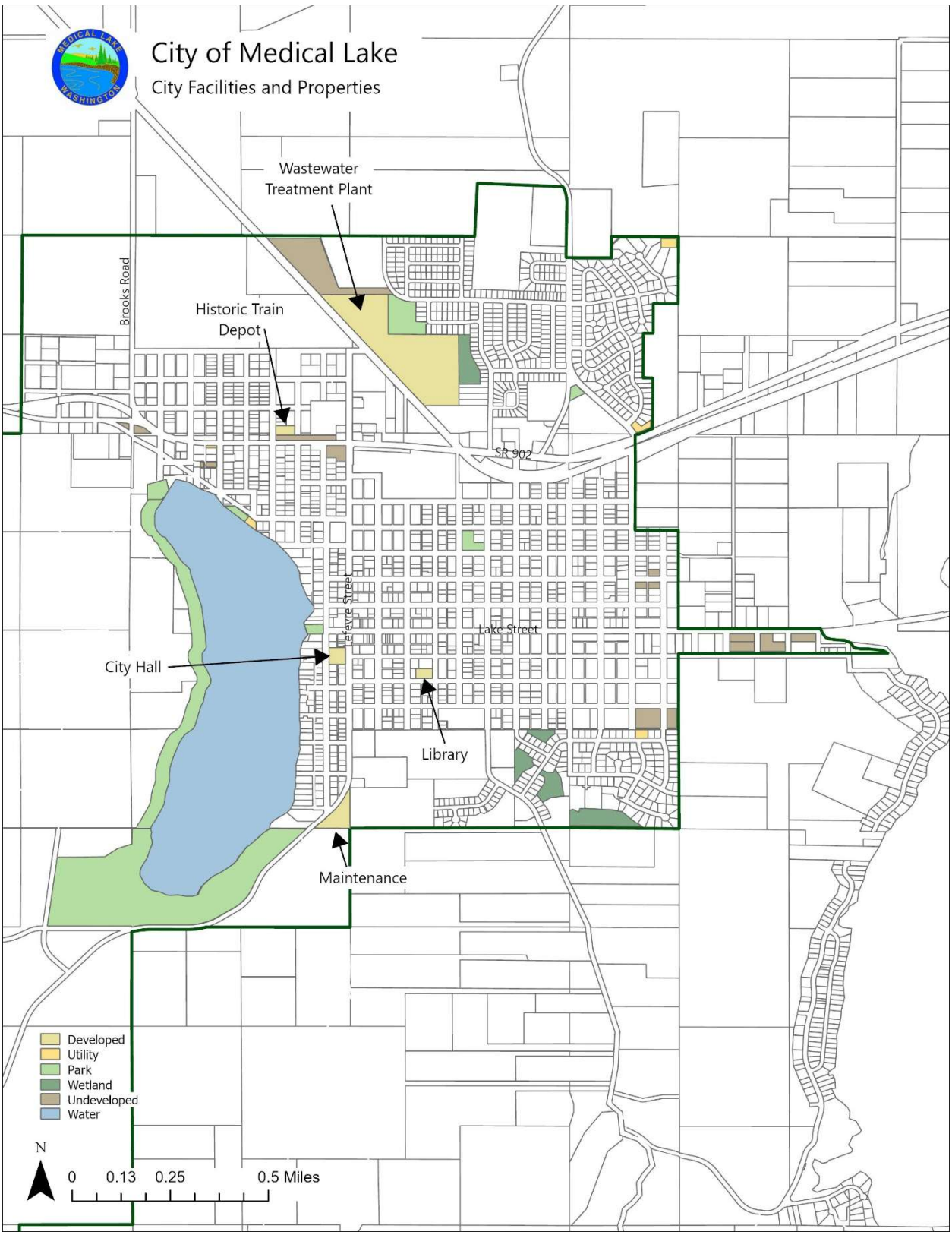
Parks and waterfront areas require ongoing capital investment to maintain amenities, address deferred maintenance, and improve accessibility.

Historic Train Depot requires electrical system corrections, fire and life safety upgrades, deck and exterior repairs, plumbing and water heater replacement, and heating system upgrades.

Transportation System

The transportation network includes SR 902, city arterials and collectors, neighborhood streets, sidewalks, the Medical Lake Trail, Fox Hollow Trail, and bicycle lanes. The annual Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifies planned street improvements and must remain consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. In 2024 the Transportation Improvement Board rated Medical Lake's pavement at PCR 62/100, and resurfacing over 18 miles of Medical Lake's 25 miles of roadway contributed to extending pavement life by 7–10 years. Building on recent preservation efforts, the City continues to address targeted, near-term transportation needs that support safety and long-term pavement performance. Current priorities include the Lefevre Street restriping project, which will restore effective lane delineation, improve multimodal safety, and better align roadway markings with current traffic patterns. The City is also coordinating the FEMA-funded repaving of Southlake Terrace, which will return fire-damaged infrastructure to pre-disaster condition while improving pavement quality in a key residential area. In addition, ongoing preservation and preventive maintenance efforts such as crack sealing, localized repairs, sidewalk improvements, and bicycle facility enhancements are essential to sustaining recent pavement condition gains,

Map 10. City Facilities and Properties



protecting prior investments, and gradually improving overall network performance. These projects support the City's broader goal of maintaining a safe, connected, and multimodal transportation system while efficiently extending the service life of existing infrastructure.

Public Safety Facilities

Law enforcement services are provided through an interlocal agreement with the Spokane County Sheriff's Office using a local police station for deputies and S.C.O.P.E. volunteers. Fire and EMS services are delivered by Spokane County Fire District #3, operating from Station 311 next to City Hall. Emergency management coordination and hazard preparedness rely on regional partnerships.

Fleet, Equipment, and Asset Management

The City maintains heavy equipment, generators, service vehicles, snow removal equipment, and utility machinery. The State Auditor requires asset inventories for all local governments. Routine replacement planning reduces lifecycle costs and ensures service reliability.

State Facilities

Medical Lake is home to three major state-operated facilities that collectively serve as a regional hub for mental health care, developmental disability services, and juvenile detention. The largest and most prominent is Eastern State Hospital, a psychiatric hospital established in 1891 that provides inpatient treatment for adults with severe mental illness. With roughly 370–375 beds, it serves patients from across eastern Washington, many of whom are admitted through court orders or involuntary commitment processes.

Lakeland Village is a long-standing state residential facility founded in 1914 that serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It provides 24-hour care in a structured environment, combining medical support with habilitation programs designed to build life skills and promote independence.

Martin Hall Juvenile Detention Facility is a regional center that houses youth offenders from multiple eastern Washington counties.

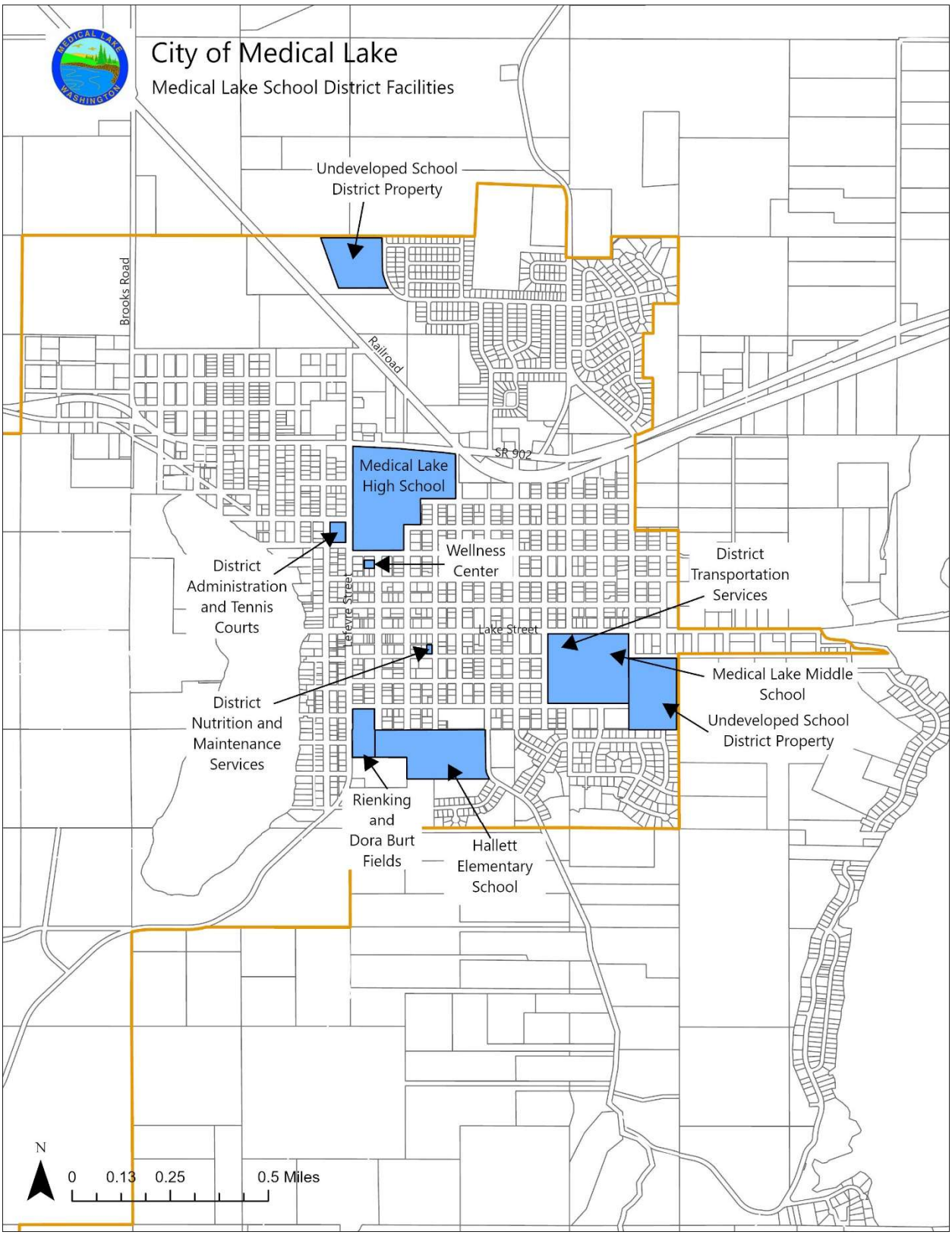
Schools

The Medical Lake School District manages its own capital planning, but the City collaborates on long-range facility planning and maintains interlocal agreements for shared use of facilities. School District facilities include Hallett Elementary School, Michael Anderson Elementary School (on Fairchild AFB), Medical Lake Middle School, Medical Lake High School, the District Administrative Office, the Wellness Center, Rienking and Dora Burt Fields, the transportation building, and maintenance/nutrition services building. (See Map 11, Medical Lake School District Facilities)

A Vision for Capital Facilities

Medical Lake envisions a future with modern, resilient, financially sustainable public facilities that support safe mobility, clean water, reliable utilities, beautiful parks, and high-quality public services. Capital investments will maintain equitable service levels, adapt to emerging needs, and reflect the community's commitment to stewardship and long-term well-being. Public buildings will be accessible and welcoming, utility systems reliable and efficient, streets safe for all users, and parks well-maintained centers of recreation and civic life.

Map 11. Medical Lake School District Facilities



Level of Service

A Level of Service (LOS) for water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater systems is established to define clear, measurable standards for the capacity, reliability, and performance of essential public infrastructure, ensuring that these systems can safely support existing residents and future growth. By setting LOS standards, the City can determine whether utilities are adequate to meet demand, protect public health and the environment, and comply with regulatory requirements, such as maintaining water quality and preventing sewer overflows or flooding. LOS also provides a consistent framework for planning capital improvements, prioritizing investments, and requiring new development to contribute its fair share toward maintaining system capacity.

Water Service	
Category	**Standard**
Capacity	Maximum Daily Demand. As defined by the current Water System Plan
	Firm Source Capacity. 110% of MDD with largest source out
	Peak Hour Pumping. PHD met with pumps and storage
	Storage Volume. Reservoir capacity to meet peak hourly demands + fire events without service loss
	Pressure. ≥50 psi normal / ≥30 psi firefighting
	Fire Flow. Residential 1,000 gallons per minute for 30 minutes
Quality & Compliance	Zero Violations
Performance and Reliability	<10% water loss

Sanitary Sewer	
Category	**Standard**
Capacity	WWTP flows <90% of design
	Zone expansions when flows reach 80% of zone capacity
Quality & Compliance	Permit Compliance. 100% compliance with NPDES permit
Performance and Reliability	Infiltration <1,000 gallons per day per inch-mile
	Preventive Maintenance. Inspect/clean 20% of sewers per year

Stormwater	
Category	**Standard**
Capacity	Conveyance Design. Post-development ≤ pre-development runoff
Quality & Compliance	Regulatory Compliance. 100% permit compliance
Performance and Reliability	Runoff Treatment Volume. Treat 90% of annual runoff volume

Financing Strategy

Medical Lake uses a range of funding tools to support capital investments, including General Fund revenue, enterprise utility fees, real estate excise tax, grants, impact fees, and intergovernmental loans or bonds when warranted. The city's debt-free philosophy promotes careful evaluation of costs, operational impacts, and grant opportunities. The six-year CIP is adopted as part of the annual budget, providing a transparent roadmap for project delivery and financial planning.

Our Path (Goals and Strategies)

Goal A – Maintain and Upgrade Essential Infrastructure

- Use lifecycle costing, regulatory compliance, and proactive asset management to guide long-term investments.

Goal B – Support Growth with Adequate Facilities

- Ensure concurrency with development and coordinate with regional partners, including MLSD, Fire District #3, Spokane County, and WSDOT.

Goal C – Ensure Fiscal Responsibility

- Use transparent prioritization, sustainable financing tools, and multi-year forecasts to maximize public benefit.

Goal D – Enhance Community Quality of Life

- Provide accessible, attractive, and well-maintained parks, public buildings, and transportation facilities.

Goal E – Improve Resilience and Reduce Risk

- Integrate hazard mitigation, redundancy, and climate-adaptive design into capital investments.

Chapter 8: Parks

Parks reinforce Medical Lake's commitment to health, recreation, environmental stewardship, and community connection. It provides a framework for maintaining, enhancing, and expanding the City's parks, trails, waterfronts, and recreation facilities while coordinating with land use, mobility, capital facilities, and climate resilience planning. By investing strategically in public spaces and ensuring equitable access, Medical Lake can preserve its small-town character, protect cherished natural resources, and support a high quality of life for residents of all ages and abilities.

Our Story of Parks, Trails, and Community Life

Outdoor spaces have shaped the identity of Medical Lake. The healing qualities of the lake led to early gatherings along the shoreline, which also created social connections. This has continued to be true over generations. Waterfront Park not only serves Medical Lake, but provides the region with a location for gatherings large and small. Over time, the City has expanded on the natural beauty of the lake by creating a 3-mile shared path loop, a boat launch, North End Park, Peper Park, and Coney Island Park. Additional parks have been created throughout the community, including Pioneer Park, Wilcox Park, and Shepard Field. Most recently, the City purchased a historic train depot in hopes of creating another valuable community asset. All of these public spaces have served as anchors for recreation, social connection, and community pride. The City's trail system that started around the lake has expanded into neighborhoods, creating a walkable network that links people to parks, schools, and the downtown core. As a result, lake recreation, youth sports, community celebrations, and year-round trail use have become part of Medical Lake's cultural fabric.

Generations of residents have relied on these natural amenities and public places to strengthen health, foster belonging, and enjoy the healing qualities of the lake and surrounding landscape. This history of stewardship and shared space continues to guide our approach to parks and recreation today.

Where We Are Today

Medical Lake maintains a diverse system of parks, facilities, and trails that support recreation, health, and community activities. The City's park network reflects both its natural setting and its small-town character.

Park System Overview

The City provides a mix of waterfront parks, neighborhood green spaces, athletic fields, and natural open spaces. These parks offer playgrounds, picnic shelters, multi-use fields, shoreline access, boat launches, and community gathering areas. The Medical Lake Trail and Fox Hollow Trail form the backbone of a citywide system used for walking, running, cycling, and year-round recreation.

Parks and Public Facilities

Medical Lake's crown jewel is Waterfront Park, a major recreation destination offering shoreline access, picnic shelters, softball fields, a swimming area, a boat launch, and large multi-use spaces. Coney Island Park, a lakeside gathering area near the downtown core, is a remnant of the resorts that thrived a century ago. The city also maintains several neighborhood parks, including Pioneer

Park, Wilcox Park, Shepard Field, Peper Park, and North End Park, which provide a mix of play structures, open lawns, and natural views. The Historic Train Depot and the public library serve as important venues for educational, cultural, and civic activities. Many of these facilities are heavily used but aging, with components such as play equipment, restrooms, shelters, roofs, irrigation systems, and pathways nearing the end of their lifecycle. (See Map 12, Public Parks and School Fields)

Trails and Connectivity

The 3-mile Medical Lake Trail encircles the lake and connects parks, neighborhoods, downtown, and schools. Sidewalk networks, bicycle lanes, and trail connections extend recreational access throughout the community, though gaps remain in key areas, particularly in growing neighborhoods and corridors. The existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure can be found in Map 5, Existing Pedestrian Facilities and Map 6, Existing Bicycle Facilities in Chapter 6: Transportation and Mobility.

Recreation Programs and Community Use

The City offers seasonal recreation programs, youth sports partnerships, community events, and outdoor activities centered around the lake. Shared-use agreements with the Medical Lake School District support access to fields, gyms, and courts for youth athletics and community programs.

Levels of Service and Access

Parks and trails in Medical Lake are generally accessible; however, population growth and changing recreation preferences have increased demand for updated play structures, improved waterfront amenities, additional seating, shade, restrooms, expanded year-round recreation opportunities, enhanced ADA accessibility, and more continuous trail connections with safe crossings. These evolving needs present opportunities for targeted reinvestment, system modernization, and thoughtful expansion of the parks and trails network to better serve residents of all ages and abilities.

A Vision for an Ideal Future Parks and Recreation System

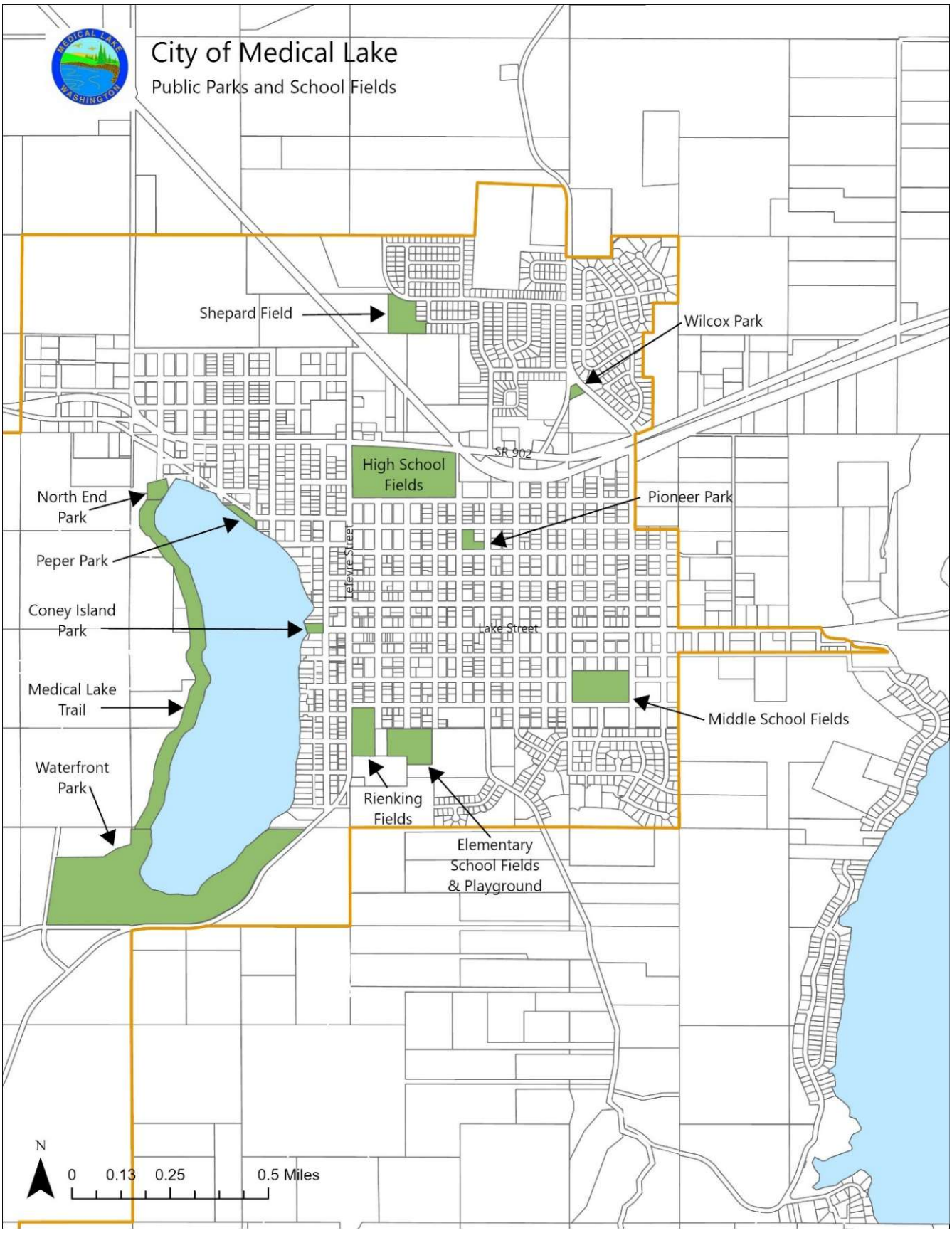
Medical Lake's parks and recreation system will be a connected, inclusive, and welcoming network of parks, trails, waterfront spaces, and public facilities that enrich daily life and reflect the natural beauty of our lakes and forests.

In this ideal future every resident can walk or wheel to a park or trail from their home. The trail system is expanded, linking neighborhoods, the downtown core, schools, and natural areas. Waterfront spaces are safe, accessible, and environmentally resilient, offering balanced recreation and ecological protection. Parks and facilities are modern, well-maintained, and designed for all ages and abilities. Year-round recreation opportunities are available. Nature is protected and celebrated, with shoreline restoration, tree canopy expansion, and stewardship of wetlands and habitats. Community connection is strengthened, making parks the heart of Medical Lake's identity.

Level of Service

The City of Medical Lake shall strive to provide all residents with convenient access to neighborhood park facilities. The City's level of service standard is that every residence should be located within

Map 12. Public Parks and School Fields



one-quarter mile walking distance of a public park, measured along public streets, sidewalks, trails, and other publicly accessible pedestrian routes. This standard reflects the City's commitment to ensuring equitable access to recreational opportunities, outdoor gathering spaces, and neighborhood amenities for residents of all ages and abilities.

The City will periodically evaluate park accessibility using a network-based analysis that considers actual walking routes rather than straight-line distances. Areas identified as being outside the one-quarter mile service area shall be prioritized for future park acquisition, development, partnerships, or other strategies that improve neighborhood access to recreational opportunities.

The City's 2026 park accessibility analysis identified several residential areas that are located beyond a one-quarter mile walking distance from an existing park (See Map 13. Lots Farther than ¼ Mile from a Park). The City shall prioritize park planning, land acquisition, and capital improvements within these underserved areas to progressively achieve the one-quarter mile access standard.

To ensure a consistent level of service throughout the community, neighborhood parks should include, at a minimum, children's play equipment, seating, a covered gathering area, and landscaping, preferably including trees. Not all existing parks and School District facilities have these minimum amenities. The City will prioritize upgrading amenities in existing parks to achieve this level of service.

Our Path (Goals and Strategies)

Goal A – Maintain and Modernize Existing Parks and Facilities

- Develop and maintain safe, and accessible park facilities by modernizing outdated amenities and infrastructure, while prioritizing durable, accessible, sustainable design and lifecycle performance.

Goal B – Expand Access to Parks, Open Space, and Trails

- Create a connected, walkable park system by ensuring equitable neighborhood access, expanding trails and sidewalks, and enhancing safe, intuitive multimodal connections.

Goal C – Protect and Enhance Natural and Waterfront Areas

- Protect and enhance natural resources by stewarding the lake and shoreline, balancing recreation with environmental preservation.

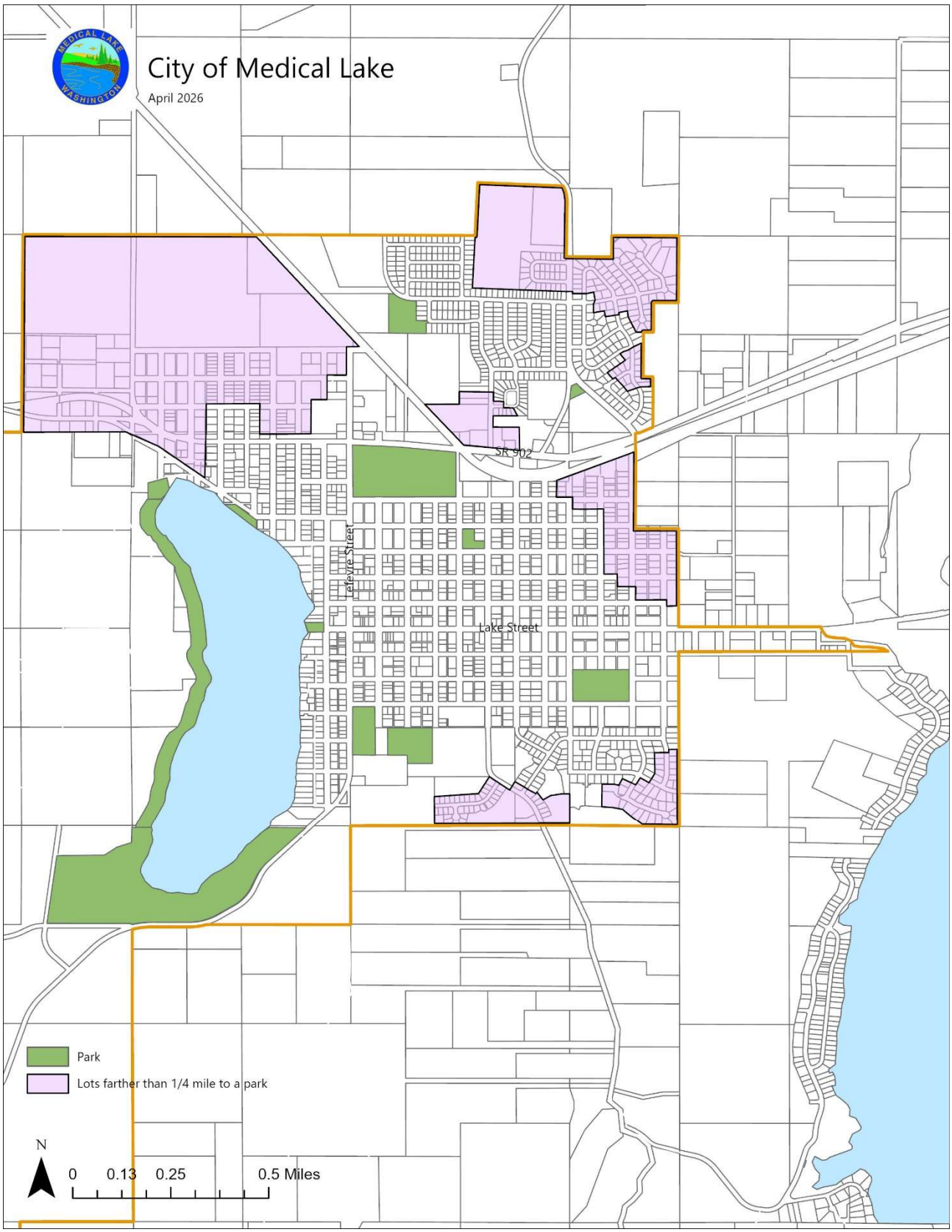
Goal D – Provide Inclusive, High-Quality Recreation Opportunities

- Provide inclusive, accessible, and community-focused recreation opportunities through diverse programs, strong partnerships, and well-designed public spaces.

Goal E – Plan for Long-Term Sustainability and Resilience

- Promote sustainability and resilience through climate-conscious design, long-term planning, and effective partnerships.

Map 13. Lots Farther than ¼ Mile from a Park



Chapter 9: Natural Environment

This chapter affirms Medical Lake's commitment to protecting the natural systems that support public health, environmental quality, and community identity. The City's lakes, wetlands, forests, shorelines, and open spaces are central to its character and quality of life, shaping recreation, neighborhood patterns, and daily experience.

This chapter provides policy guidance for balancing growth with stewardship by protecting environmentally sensitive areas, safeguarding water resources, sustaining wildlife habitat, and integrating natural features into land use and capital planning. In compliance with the Growth Management Act, it establishes a framework for identifying and conserving critical areas while allowing reasonable use of property and supporting long-term community resilience.

Our Natural Setting and History

Medical Lake is shaped by its unique West Plains landscape, defined by glacial lakes, rolling topography, seasonal wetlands, pine forests, and open grasslands. The lake itself, along with adjacent wetlands and shoreline areas, has long been a defining feature of the community, influencing settlement patterns, recreation, and cultural identity.

Historically, residents relied on these natural resources for water, agriculture, timber, and recreation. Over time, urban development brought increased demand for housing, infrastructure, and services, placing pressure on sensitive ecosystems. At the same time, community appreciation for the lake, trails, and surrounding open spaces has steadily grown, reinforcing a shared responsibility to protect natural systems for future generations.

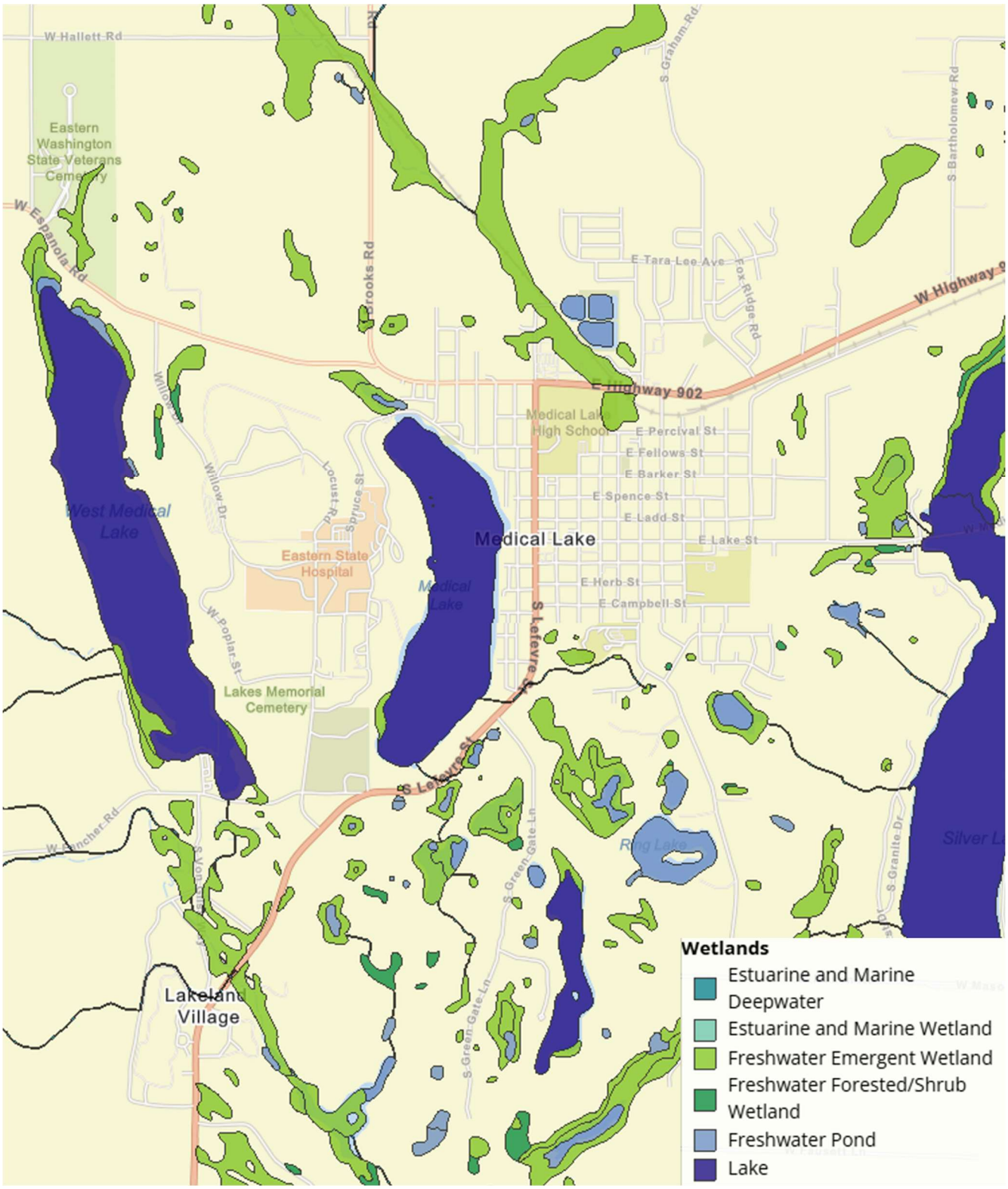
Where We Are Today

Medical Lake's natural environment includes lakes and surface waters, most notably Medical Lake itself, as well as wetlands and riparian areas that support water quality, flood storage, and wildlife habitat. Forested and upland areas provide important habitat, shade, and scenic value, while open space and undeveloped lands contribute to overall ecological function and visual character. Together, these natural systems perform essential functions such as groundwater recharge, stormwater infiltration, habitat connectivity, air and water filtration, and climate moderation.

In accordance with the Growth Management Act, Medical Lake identifies and protects a range of critical areas, including wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas. These areas are regulated through development standards, buffers, and review processes designed to minimize environmental impacts while allowing appropriate and reasonable development to occur.

Natural systems in Medical Lake face increasing pressures from growth, aging infrastructure, invasive species, stormwater runoff, shoreline use, and climate-related stressors. Protection of water quality, shoreline stability, and habitat requires coordinated planning across land use, utilities, transportation, and parks.

Map 14. National Wetlands Inventory



A Vision for Medical Lake's Natural Environment

Medical Lake envisions a future where natural systems are protected, restored, and woven into the fabric of daily life. Lakes and wetlands are clean and resilient. Wildlife habitat is preserved and connected. Shorelines balance recreation with ecological protection. Neighborhoods coexist with nature through thoughtful design and stewardship. Environmental protection is not seen as separate from growth, but as essential to sustaining health, safety, and quality of life.

Our Path (Goals and Strategies)

Goal A – Protect and Restore Critical Areas and Shorelines

- Safeguard wetlands, shorelines, aquifer recharge areas, floodplains, geologically hazardous areas, and habitat through science-based standards and long-term stewardship.

Goal B – Preserve Water Quality and Natural Hydrology

- Reduce stormwater impacts, protect groundwater resources, and support lake health through integrated planning and infrastructure investment.

Goal C – Integrate Natural Systems Into the Built Environment

- Encourage development that respects natural features, minimizes disturbance, and incorporates green infrastructure.

Goal D – Support Environmental Education and Stewardship

- Foster community awareness, partnerships, and shared responsibility for protecting Medical Lake's natural assets.

Goal E – Coordinate Environmental Protection Across City Planning

- Align natural environment policies with land use, parks, capital facilities, and climate resilience efforts.

Chapter 10: Climate Resiliency

This Climate Resiliency chapter guides Medical Lake's response to increasing climate-related risks while protecting public health, safety, and community assets. It integrates the City's 2025 FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan with land use, capital facilities, parks, and mobility planning to ensure coordinated, forward-looking decision-making. By planning for wildfire, smoke, drought, severe weather, and flooding, this chapter establishes a practical framework for building resilience into everyday policies, infrastructure investments, and community programs so Medical Lake remains a safe, healthy, and adaptable place to live for generations to come.

Why Climate Resilience Matters in Medical Lake

For generations, life in Medical Lake has been shaped by our semi-arid West Plains landscape, our namesake lakes and wetlands, and the pine forests and grasslands at the city's edge. Those same features that make our community special, such as abundant outdoor access, a walkable small-town core, and proximity to wildlands, also influence how we experience hazards such as wildfire, smoke, drought, severe weather, and localized flooding. Recent events, including the 2023 Gray Road Fire and recurring regional droughts, underscore that these risks are intensifying and that resilience must be part of everyday decision-making.

In 2024, in response to the experience of the Gray Road Fire, the City contracted with a hazard mitigation firm to create a personalized Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP.) The LHMP provides project lists, maintenance schedules, and grant-ready action worksheets.

Where We Are Today

Medical Lake's primary climate-related hazards are wildfire and smoke, drought, severe weather (wind, snow/ice, extreme heat), and localized flooding. Landslides, earthquakes, and volcanic ashfall are lower-probability but potentially high-impact hazards.

Wildfire & smoke. Hotter, drier summers and frequent winds elevate ignition and spread risk along the wildland-urban interface. Smoke degrades air quality (PM2.5, CO, NOx, VOCs) and poses health risks, even when fires are burning far from the city. The Gray Fire (2023) burned 10,085 acres and destroyed hundreds of structures across the area, a vivid example of changing conditions.

Drought. A recurring pattern (e.g., 2015, 2019, 2021, 2023–2024) stresses groundwater, reduces lake levels, heightens wildfire potential, and affects recreation and local ecosystems.

Severe weather. High winds, snow/ice, and occasional hail cause outages, block roads, and damage trees and power lines; periodic extreme heat challenges residents without cooling.

Flooding. Typically localized during intense rain or rapid snowmelt; post-wildfire landscapes can increase debris-flow and runoff risks.

Emerging Climate Trends

Observed and projected trends for our region include hotter, drier summers; longer wildfire seasons with more smoke days; more intense storms; and greater water-supply stress as snowpack declines

and melt occurs earlier. These trends amplify existing hazards and require that we design infrastructure, landscapes, and neighborhoods with tomorrow's climate in mind.

People, Places, and Systems

People. Seniors, medically fragile residents, low-income households, people with disabilities, residents who rely on power-dependent medical devices, and those without air conditioning are more affected by smoke, heat, and outages.

Places. Areas at the wildland-urban interface are more exposed to wildfire and smoke; low-lying sites and post-fire slopes are more exposed to runoff and debris flows.

Systems & Services. Power distribution lines (wind/ice), stormwater (intense rain), and transportation corridors (SR-902, Lefevre, Brooks, Lake Streets) can be disrupted. Critical facilities, such as Eastern State Hospital, schools, public safety buildings, wells, and the wastewater facility, must remain operational during extreme events.

A Vision for a Climate-Resilient Medical Lake

Medical Lake seeks to be a place where people are safer and healthier during smoke, heat, storms, and floods; where critical services stay online; and where our lakes, wetlands, and forests buffer extremes and remain central to community life. We will grow in ways that reduce exposure to hazards, support vulnerable residents, and keep community members connected and ready. Our investments in streets, parks, utilities, and buildings will be designed for the climate we are entering, not the one we are leaving.

Funding Strategy

The City will pursue FEMA BRIC/HMGP/FMA, NOAA climate resilience opportunities, CDBG, and state programs; and will coordinate closely with SCFD #3, the Medical Lake School District, Fairchild AFB, Avista, Spokane County Emergency Management, and health and social-service partners.

Our Path (Goals and Strategies)

Goal A – Protect People and Neighborhoods

- Improve public awareness, education, communication, & preparedness for all hazards.

Goal B – Strengthen Infrastructure and Essential Services

- Provide protection for critical facilities, infrastructure, utilities, and services from hazard impacts.

Goal C – Plan Growth and Land Use for Long-Term Resilience

- Minimize risks and vulnerabilities of the City of Medical Lake to the impacts of natural hazards and protect lives and reduce damages and losses to property, economy, public health and safety, and the environment.

Part 3: The Future

Medical Lake 2012

Chapter 11: Placemaking

Placemaking in Medical Lake is about strengthening the connection between people, place, and purpose. It reflects the community's identity as a small town rooted in natural beauty, recreation, and a legacy of healing waters. As the City grows and evolves, placemaking will guide how public spaces, streets, parks, downtown, and neighborhoods are designed and experienced, ensuring that development enhances the character of the community rather than diminishing it.

In Medical Lake, placemaking is not a single project or location, it is a communitywide approach to shaping spaces where residents and visitors feel welcome, connected, and engaged. It is expressed through a vibrant and walkable downtown, strong connections to the lake and trail system, high-quality parks and outdoor recreation opportunities, and public spaces that support events, gatherings, and everyday use, all while encouraging development that reflects the scale and charm of a small town. Placemaking supports both quality of life and economic vitality by creating places that people want to live in, visit, and invest in.

Our Identity: A Small Town with Big Outdoor Opportunities

Medical Lake's identity is deeply tied to its natural setting, specifically, three lakes and their associated recreational opportunities. This identity is enhanced by surrounding trails, parks, and open spaces, historically drawing visitors and continuing to serve as a central feature of the community today. The City's small-town character, defined by walkable streets, local businesses, civic pride, and community events, creates a welcoming atmosphere that distinguishes Medical Lake from larger urban areas. Placemaking efforts will reinforce this identity by preserving and enhancing the human-scale design of streets and buildings, supporting locally owned businesses and gathering spaces, promoting visual cohesion through thoughtful signage, landscaping, and design elements, and integrating history and storytelling into public spaces. Together, these elements create an authentic experience that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

Outdoor Recreation as a Foundation for Placemaking

Outdoor recreation is one of Medical Lake's greatest assets and a central component of its future. The City's existing amenities, including Waterfront Park, the 3-mile lake trail, neighborhood parks, and regional connections, already attract residents and visitors alike. Placemaking will build on this strong foundation by strengthening connections between downtown, the lake, and the trail system, enhancing access points, wayfinding, and gathering spaces, supporting year-round recreation opportunities, and integrating recreation with local businesses and community events. By linking recreation spaces with commercial areas and neighborhoods, Medical Lake can create a seamless experience where outdoor activity and daily life intersect.

Tourism and the Local Economy

Tourism in Medical Lake is closely tied to its natural environment, recreation opportunities, and small-town atmosphere, with the community historically drawing visitors to its lake, parks, and events and continuing to benefit from regional visitors participating in sports, festivals, and outdoor activities. Placemaking strengthens tourism by creating distinct destinations such as downtown, the waterfront, and trailheads; encouraging events and programming that attract visitors; supporting businesses that serve both residents and tourists; and enhancing the overall visual quality and

experience of the city. A coordinated approach to placemaking and tourism helps ensure that economic development reinforces community values rather than detracting from them.

Downtown as the Heart of the Community

Downtown Medical Lake is central to placemaking efforts, serving as the primary location where civic life, local businesses, and visitor experiences intersect. Future placemaking in downtown will focus on creating a walkable, pedestrian-friendly environment, enhancing public gathering spaces and streetscapes, encouraging mixed-use development that blends housing and commercial activity, and strengthening connections between downtown and the lakefront and parks. A strong and vibrant downtown will serve as both a community hub and a visitor destination.

Placemaking and Economic Development

A commonly used definition describes placemaking as the process of creating quality places where people want to live, work, play, shop, learn, and visit. It is a community-driven approach that combines physical improvements with social, cultural, and economic initiatives.

For a City with limited municipal resources and little ability to influence which businesses choose to locate here, placemaking is a particularly feasible economic development strategy because it focuses on improving the qualities of the community that are already within local control. Rather than relying on costly incentives or large-scale recruitment efforts, placemaking leverages existing assets such as public spaces, local culture, community events, historic character, walkability, and civic engagement to create a more attractive and vibrant place. These improvements can increase community pride, support existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, attract visitors, and make the town more appealing to residents and potential investors. Even modest, low-cost projects such as downtown beautification, public art, gathering spaces, trails, or community events can generate visible results and build momentum for future investment. By enhancing quality of life and strengthening the Medical Lake's identity, placemaking will help create the conditions that naturally attract economic activity, making it a practical and sustainable development approach for communities with limited financial and regulatory resources.

Attracts and Retains Talent

Companies increasingly choose locations where employees want to live and work. Vibrant downtowns, public gathering spaces, trails, cultural amenities, and walkable neighborhoods help communities attract and retain skilled workers.

Supports Local Businesses

Well-designed public spaces increase foot traffic and encourage people to spend more time in commercial districts. This often leads to higher sales for restaurants, retailers, and service businesses. Events, markets, and festivals can further boost economic activity.

Encourages Private Investment

Investments in public spaces, streetscapes, parks, and downtown improvements frequently stimulate additional private development. Developers and investors are more likely to invest in areas that demonstrate community commitment and quality of life.

Increases Tourism and Visitor Spending

Unique destinations, historic districts, waterfronts, public art installations, and cultural attractions can draw visitors from outside the community. Tourism spending benefits residents and businesses alike by bringing new economic activity into the community and supporting investments that make the area an even better place to live and visit.

Improves Property Values and Tax Base

Successful placemaking initiatives often increase demand for nearby residential and commercial properties. Higher property values can expand the local tax base and provide resources for additional community improvements.

Strengthens Community Identity and Competitiveness

Communities compete for residents, businesses, and investment. Placemaking helps create a distinctive identity that differentiates a city or town from competing locations, making it more economically competitive.

A Vision for the Future

Medical Lake envisions a future where placemaking enables the community to thrive while staying true to its roots. In this future, residents can easily walk or bike between neighborhoods, parks, downtown, and the lake, and public spaces are active, welcoming, and well-maintained. Outdoor recreation is integrated into everyday life, while visitors are drawn to the community's natural beauty and authentic character. At the same time, local businesses benefit from increased activity and a strong sense of place. Placemaking will ensure that as Medical Lake grows, it remains a community defined by connection to nature, to each other, and to its history.

Our Path (Goals and Strategies)

Goal A – Strengthen Community Identity and Small-Town Character

- Strengthen community identity and small-town character by maintaining human-scale development, creating cohesive streetscapes and public spaces, and celebrating local history and culture.

Goal B – Enhance Outdoor Recreation and Connectivity

- Expand recreation opportunities by linking trails, parks, and open spaces, improving lake access, and integrating recreational opportunities with neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Goal C – Support Tourism and Economic Vitality

- Boost tourism and economic vitality through year-round attractions, engaging events, and support for local businesses serving visitors and residents.

Goal D – Create Vibrant, People-Oriented Public Spaces

- Foster lively, people-focused public spaces through improved design, pedestrian-friendly features, and active programming.

Goal E – Strengthen Downtown as a Destination

- Enhance downtown as a destination through walkable mixed-use development, improved lake connections, and quality public space investments.

Chapter 12: Zoning and Development Standards

Zoning is one of the City's primary tools for implementing the vision of the Comprehensive Plan by regulating how land is used, developed, and redeveloped over time. In Medical Lake, zoning is not only a regulatory framework but also a proactive strategy to shape growth in a way that supports the community's values, preserving small-town character, enhancing outdoor recreation, encouraging economic vitality, and maintaining a high quality of life.

Purpose of Zoning

The purpose of zoning in Medical Lake is to translate the vision of the Comprehensive Plan into clear and predictable development standards that:

- Direct growth to appropriate locations within the City and Urban Growth Area
- Encourage a mix of housing types to meet community needs
- Support local businesses and a thriving downtown
- Protect natural features, including the lake, shorelines, and open spaces
- Promote walkable, connected neighborhoods and multimodal access
- Ensure that development is compatible with existing community character

Through these functions, zoning serves as a bridge between long-term planning goals and day-to-day development decisions.

A Context-Sensitive Approach to Growth

Medical Lake recognizes that its development pattern includes both historic neighborhoods and newer areas, each with different characteristics and needs. Zoning must be flexible enough to respect these differences while ensuring consistent progress toward community goals.

Older neighborhoods near the downtown and lake reflect the City's historic, compact form, often with smaller lots, established trees, and limited infrastructure such as sidewalks. In these areas, zoning will support reinvestment and incremental infill while preserving neighborhood character and scale.

Newer and developing areas provide opportunities to implement modern standards, including connected street networks, sidewalks, and a wider range of housing types. Zoning in these areas will encourage thoughtful design, connectivity, and efficient use of land while maintaining compatibility with the broader community.

This context-sensitive approach allows Medical Lake to evolve without losing the qualities that make it unique.

Supporting Housing Choice and Community Needs

Zoning plays a critical role in expanding housing opportunities while maintaining neighborhood stability. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and state requirements, Medical Lake will continue to support a variety of housing types, including detached single-family homes, accessory dwelling units, townhouses, cottage housing, plexes, and apartment buildings.

By allowing a broader mix of housing types, zoning can support residents at different income levels and life stages, enable aging in place, and provide opportunities for workforce housing. These efforts align with the community goal of being inclusive, adaptable, and resilient.

Strengthening Downtown and Mixed-Use Areas

Downtown Medical Lake is the heart of the community and a focal point for zoning strategies that support placemaking and economic vitality. Zoning in downtown and mixed-use areas will encourage a mix of residential, commercial, and civic uses, promote pedestrian-oriented design with active ground-floor spaces, support redevelopment and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and foster a vibrant environment that serves both residents and visitors. By allowing flexibility in how land can be used, zoning will help downtown evolve into a lively destination that reflects the City's small-town charm while supporting local businesses and tourism.

Integrating Recreation and Natural Features

Medical Lake's natural environment, particularly the lake and surrounding parks and trails, is central to its identity and quality of life. Zoning will support this identity by integrating recreation and environmental features into development patterns through the protection of shoreline areas, wetlands, and environmentally sensitive lands, while also encouraging development that connects to parks and trail systems. In addition, zoning will support land uses that enhance recreational access and tourism and promote design that reflects the natural landscape. By reinforcing connections between neighborhoods, recreation areas, and commercial districts, zoning helps create a cohesive and accessible community.

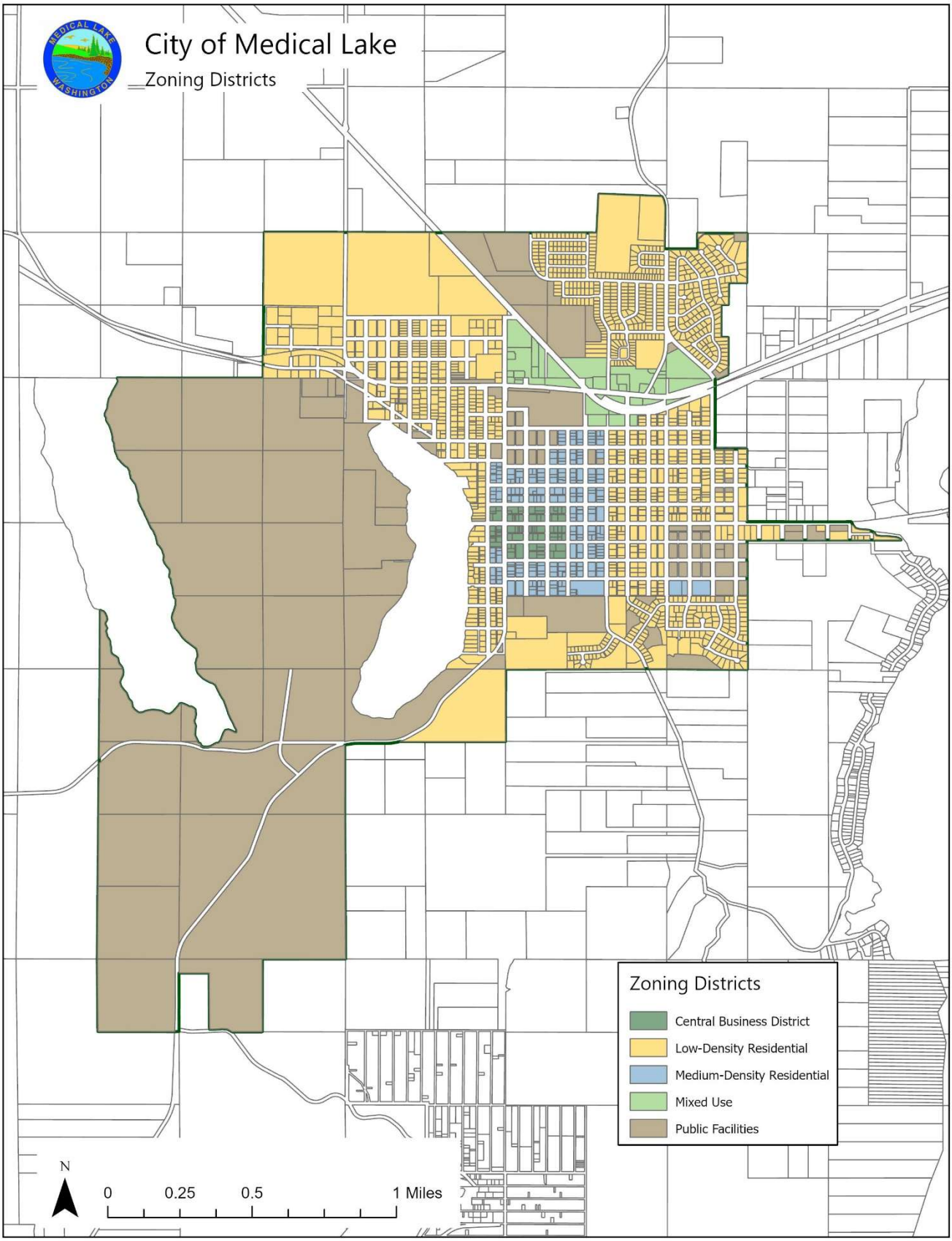
Promoting Walkability and Connectivity

Zoning will play an important role in advancing a more connected and walkable Medical Lake by establishing development standards that encourage pedestrian-friendly site design, strengthen connections between neighborhoods, schools, parks, and downtown, and support multimodal access such as walking and bicycling. These standards also promote street patterns that improve connectivity and reduce barriers, helping to create a more integrated transportation network. Together, these efforts support the broader goal of creating a community where residents can easily move between destinations without relying solely on cars.

A Vision for Zoning in Medical Lake's Future

Medical Lake envisions a zoning framework that is clear, flexible, and responsive to community needs. In this future, zoning supports compact, walkable neighborhoods; a vibrant and active downtown; expanded housing opportunities; and a strong connection to parks, trails, and the lake. Development reflects the scale and character of a small town while accommodating growth in a thoughtful and sustainable way.

Map 15. Zoning Districts



Our Path (Goals and Strategies)

Goal A – Align Zoning with the Comprehensive Plan Vision

- Maintain alignment between zoning and the Comprehensive Plan by ensuring consistency in districts and standards while regularly updating development regulations to reflect evolving needs and state requirements.

Goal B – Support Housing Diversity and Affordability

- Support diverse, efficient housing through a mix of housing types, fewer barriers, and smart use of land served by existing infrastructure.

Goal C – Strengthen Downtown and Economic Development Areas

- Promote vibrant mixed-use areas through zoning, encouraging pedestrian-oriented design and active public spaces, and supporting adaptive reuse and reinvestment.

Goal D – Preserve Community Character and Natural Assets

- Support compatible growth by reflecting small-town scale, protecting natural areas, and incorporating natural features into development.

Goal E – Promote Connectivity and Walkability

- Enhance connectivity by supporting walkable and bike-friendly development, strengthening connections, and coordinating zoning with mobility planning.

Chapter 13: Urban Growth Area

The Urban Growth Area (UGA) defines where future growth in Medical Lake is expected to occur and where urban levels of services, infrastructure, and development will be provided. By defining where urban development can occur, rural lands and environmentally sensitive areas are preserved. As a fully-planning city under the Growth Management Act, Medical Lake is required to plan for and accommodate 20 years of growth while ensuring that development occurs in an efficient, coordinated, and sustainable manner. The UGA plays a critical role in shaping the future of the community by directing growth to appropriate locations, supporting infrastructure investment, preserving natural resources, and reinforcing the City's small-town character and connection to its natural environment.

Growth Capacity and Opportunity

Medical Lake's UGA currently contains sufficient land capacity to accommodate projected population and housing needs; however, regional demand for housing across the West Plains presents an opportunity for the City to play a greater role in meeting broader housing needs.

The UGA includes a mix of vacant land, underutilized parcels, and potential redevelopment areas that can support a range of housing types, employment uses, and community services. Growth within the UGA will occur through a combination of infill development in established areas, redevelopment and adaptive reuse opportunities, and new development in designated expansion areas. This balanced approach allows the City to make efficient use of existing infrastructure while accommodating new growth in a thoughtful and coordinated manner.

Preserving Community Character While Growing

A key challenge for the UGA is accommodating growth while preserving the qualities that define Medical Lake, including its small-town feel, natural setting, and strong sense of community. Growth within the UGA will be guided to ensure compatibility with existing neighborhoods and consistency with community values. By continuing the pattern of streets and buildings, integrating development with natural features and creating connections to parks, trails, and recreation areas, the City can grow without losing its character.

Applicable Zoning

The proposed UGA expansion areas are intended to be zoned Low-Density Residential. This zoning district allows single-family residences, accessory dwelling units, cottage housing, and group living. Any diversion from this intended zoning will require further analysis for impacts to infrastructure.

Supporting Outdoor Recreation and Natural Assets

The lakes, trails, parks, and open spaces of Medical Lake are central to its identity and appeal. Growth within the UGA must be coordinated with the protection and enhancement of these natural assets. Future development will maintain and improve access to the lake and shoreline areas, expand connections to the citywide trail system, protect environmentally sensitive areas, including wetlands and critical recharge areas, integrate green infrastructure and stormwater management practices. These efforts ensure that growth supports both recreation and environmental stewardship while maintaining the community's high quality of life.

Integrating Park Space

The proposed UGA includes future expansion areas that will require the identification and development of additional park facilities as urban development occurs. As these areas develop, park sites should be identified early in the planning process and integrated into neighborhood design so that the majority of residents are located within a one-quarter mile walking distance of a neighborhood park. Park land dedication, impact fees, developer-installed park improvements, and other funding mechanisms should be considered to achieve this level of service.

Infrastructure and Service Coordination

The success of the UGA depends on the City's ability to provide adequate public facilities and services concurrent with development. This includes water, wastewater, stormwater, transportation, parks, and public safety services. Medical Lake will align growth within the UGA with Capital Improvement Program investments, utility system capacity and planned upgrades, transportation improvements that support safety and connectivity, and park and recreation expansion. By coordinating infrastructure with growth, the City ensures that new development does not outpace the systems that support it.

Regional Coordination and the West Plains

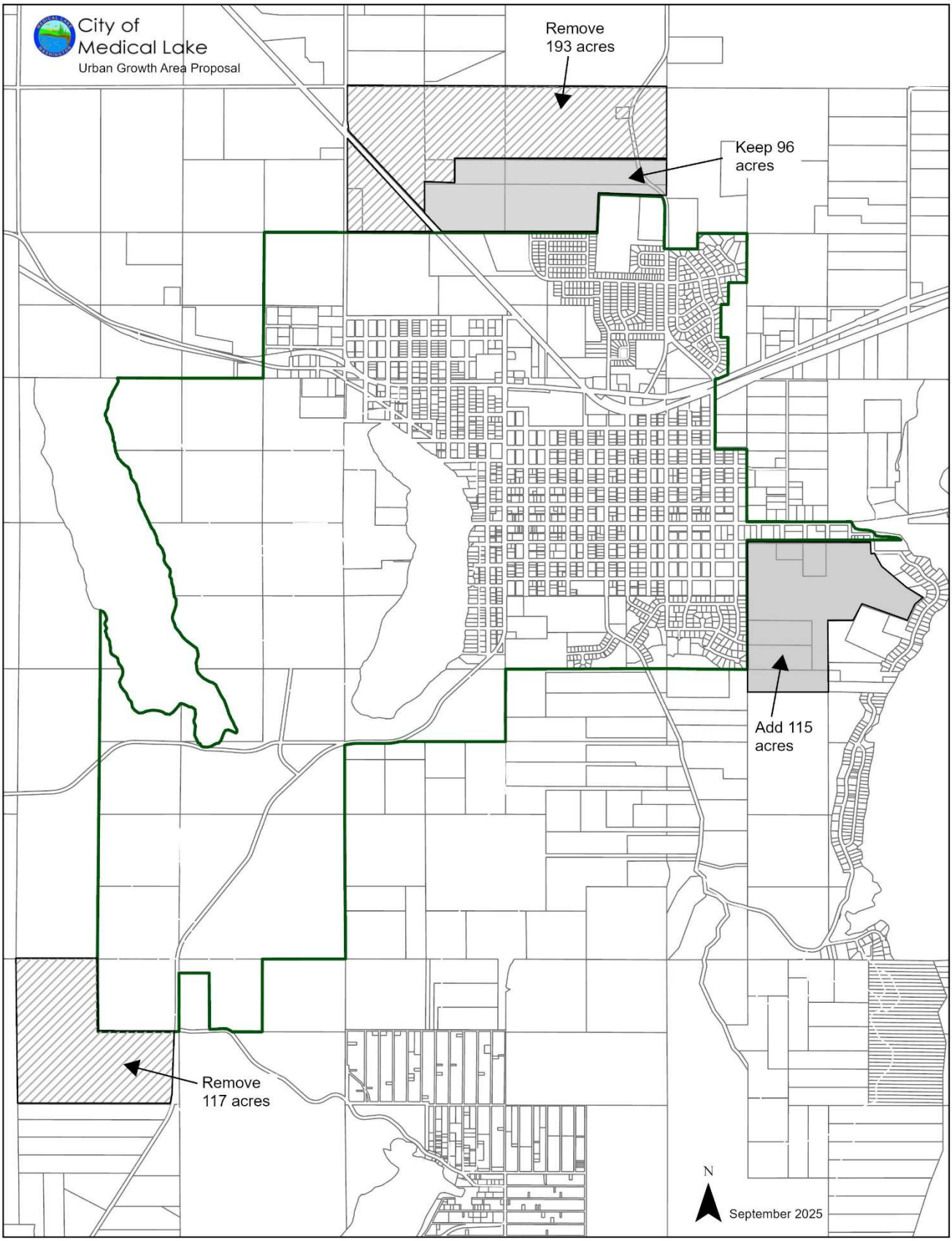
Medical Lake is part of the broader West Plains region, which includes Cheney, Airway Heights, Fairchild Air Force Base, and surrounding unincorporated areas. Growth in the UGA must be considered within this regional context. Coordination will focus on housing supply, transportation connections, economic development, workforce needs, and infrastructure planning. Through collaboration with regional partners, Medical Lake can ensure that its UGA supports both local and regional goals.

Under the Growth Management Act (GMA), Spokane County is responsible for coordinating growth management for all jurisdictions within the county. While the County ultimately determines the boundaries of the Urban Growth Area (UGA), individual cities and towns may request changes. Medical Lake has requested the proposed changes found in Map 16, Proposed Urban Growth Area Revisions.

A Vision for the Urban Growth Area

Medical Lake envisions a future where the UGA accommodates growth in a way that is intentional, connected, and reflective of community values. In this future, development within the UGA is compact and walkable, neighborhoods are connected to parks and the lake, and new growth enhances the community's identity rather than detracting from it. Infrastructure keeps pace with development, and natural systems are protected and integrated into the built environment. The UGA becomes not just a boundary for growth, but a framework for creating a vibrant, resilient, and sustainable community.

Map 16. Proposed Urban Growth Area Revisions



Our Path (Goals and Strategies)

Goal A – Direct Growth to Appropriate Areas

- Prioritize infill and redevelopment before expansion of the UGA to support efficient infrastructure and delivery of services.

Goal B – Support Housing and Economic Opportunity

- Accommodate a range of housing types and densities while providing land for commercial uses and employment.

Goal C – Preserve Community Character and Identity

- Ensure development reflects Medical Lake's small-town scale and design while protecting natural features and open spaces.

Goal D – Coordinate Growth with Infrastructure

- Support efficient, coordinated growth by aligning development with infrastructure capacity, ensuring concurrency, and prioritizing fiscally responsible investments.

Goal E – Strengthen Regional Collaboration

- Promote coordinated regional growth through interagency collaboration for housing, transportation and economic development.

Chapter 14: Next Steps

The Comprehensive Plan establishes the City's long-range vision, goals, and policies for growth, development, infrastructure, environmental stewardship, economic vitality, and quality of life over the next twenty years. While the Comprehensive Plan provides policy direction, successful implementation requires a coordinated framework that translates long-range policy into strategic priorities, operational actions, capital investments, and measurable outcomes. Medical Lake accomplishes this through the Healing Waters Strategic Plan, which serves as the City's primary strategic implementation framework. The Strategic Plan bridges the gap between long-range planning and day-to-day operations by aligning organizational priorities, departmental work plans, budgets, and performance measures with the community's adopted vision and policy direction. The Comprehensive Plan and Healing Waters Strategic Plan are intended to function together as complementary and mutually reinforcing documents.

Relationship to Healing Waters Strategic Plan

The Comprehensive Plan answers the question, "Where is Medical Lake going?" while the Healing Waters Strategic Plan answers the question, "How will Medical Lake get there?" The Strategic Plan organizes community priorities into six major Targets of Excellence:

- Thriving Local Economy and Government Efficiency,
- Healthy and Sustainable Environment,
- Engaged and Empowered Citizens and Stakeholders,
- Multi-Modal Connections into and Throughout the Community,
- Healthy Living and Recreation, and
- Community Safety and Security.

These targets provide the strategic framework for implementing Comprehensive Plan goals and policies.

Supporting Plans and Functional Plans

The Comprehensive Plan is supported by a collection of specialized plans that provide policy, technical, capital, operational, and regulatory guidance. These plans include the Capital Improvement Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, Communications Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Shoreline Master Program, Water System Plan, Sewer System Plan, and Stormwater System Plan. Together, these plans help inform implementation activities, project prioritization, infrastructure investments, service levels, and long-range resource planning. The recommendations and priorities contained within these plans should be regularly evaluated and incorporated into updates of both the Comprehensive Plan and the Healing Waters Strategic Plan.

Department Work Plans

Departmental Work Plans serve as the City's primary operational implementation tool. Each year, City departments translate strategic objectives into core service delivery activities, annual priorities, capital projects, regulatory initiatives, partnership activities, resource requests, and performance measures. Work plans should clearly identify connections to Comprehensive Plan goals and policies, Strategic Plan objectives, supporting plans and master plans, budget priorities, and performance indicators. This approach ensures that daily operations remain aligned with long-term community goals.

Budget and Capital Planning

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan requires thoughtful allocation of financial resources. The City's annual budget and Capital Improvement Program should be developed in a manner that advances Comprehensive Plan policies, Strategic Plan objectives, departmental work plan priorities, long-range asset management goals, and community investment priorities. Budget decisions should demonstrate clear alignment with adopted plans and desired community outcomes.

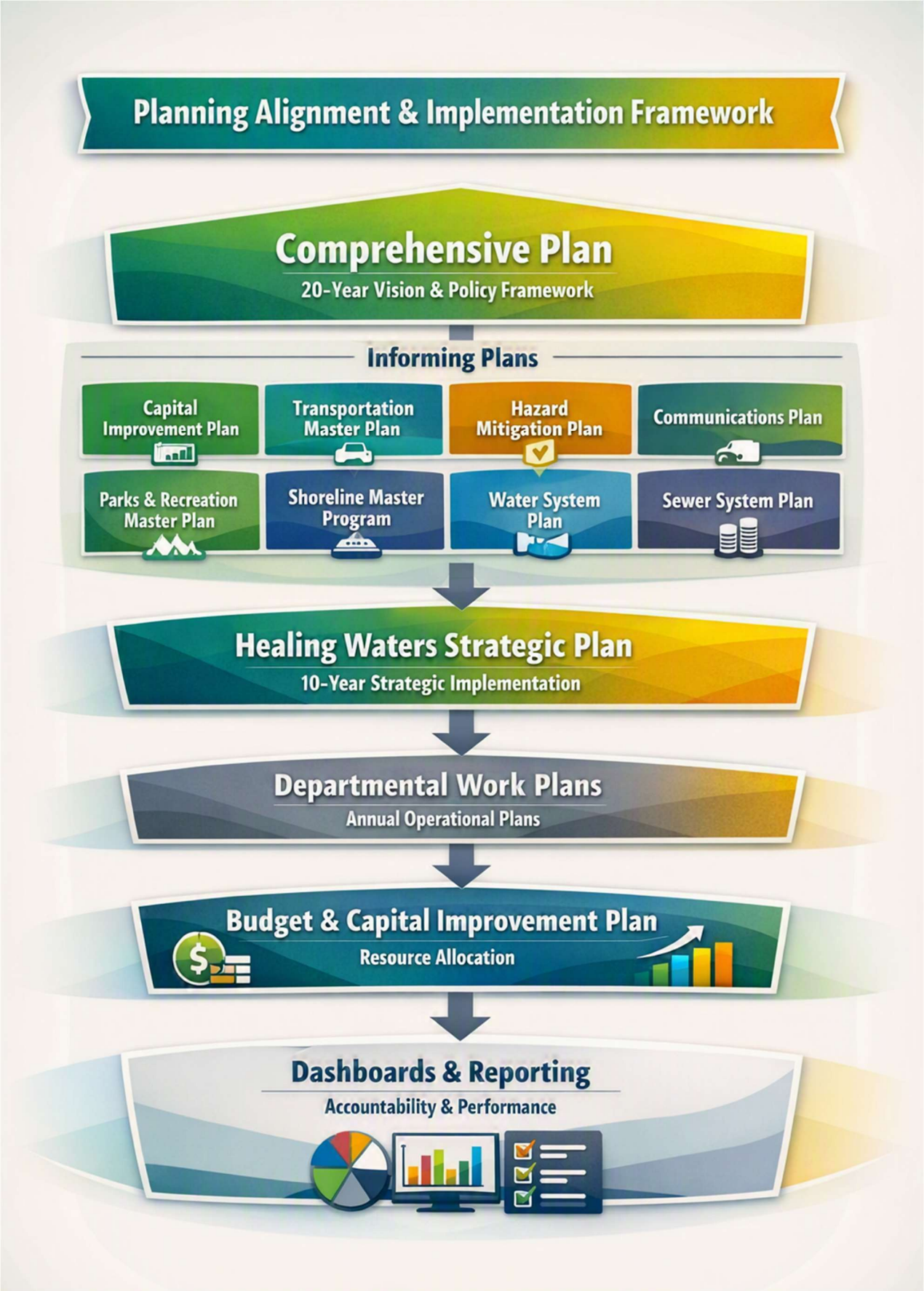
Performance Measurement and Dashboards

To promote transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement, the City will maintain dashboards and performance reporting systems that track progress toward strategic and community goals. Performance measures may include community indicators such as housing production, population trends, economic development activity, environmental conditions, and public safety outcomes. Service indicators may include service delivery levels, permit processing times, utility reliability, recreation participation, and public engagement metrics. Capital indicators may include Capital Improvement Program project completion, infrastructure condition, asset replacement progress, and grant funding secured. Dashboards should be regularly reviewed by the City Council, staff, advisory boards, and the public to evaluate progress and identify emerging needs. This supports the Strategic Plan's emphasis on measurement, evaluation, transparency, and accountability.

Monitoring and Plan Updates

Planning is an ongoing process rather than a one-time event. The City will periodically monitor changing community conditions, review performance measures, evaluate implementation progress, update supporting plans, amend the Strategic Plan when necessary, and amend the Comprehensive Plan as conditions warrant. This cyclical approach supports informed decision-making and helps ensure Medical Lake remains responsive to future opportunities, challenges, and community needs.

The State of Washington establishes requirements governing the timing and process for amending a Comprehensive Plan. The City is generally limited to an annual amendment cycle, during which all proposed amendments must be considered concurrently. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan must be comprehensively reviewed and updated according to the schedule established by the State. This required review, known as the Periodic Update, follows a ten-year cycle. Medical Lake's next mandated update is scheduled for 2036. The procedures and criteria for amending and updating the Comprehensive Plan are found in MLMC Chapter 19.137 – Comprehensive Plan.


Planning Alignment & Implementation Framework
Comprehensive Plan
20-Year Vision & Policy Framework
Informing Plans
Capital Improvement Plan
Transportation Master Plan
Hazard Mitigation Plan
Communications Plan
Parks & Recreation Master Plan
Shoreline Master Program
Water System Plan
Sewer System Plan
Healing Waters Strategic Plan
10-Year Strategic Implementation
Departmental Work Plans
Annual Operational Plans
Budget & Capital Improvement Plan
Resource Allocation
Dashboards & Reporting
Accountability & Performance

Chapter 15: Action Items

The following action items within the Comprehensive Plan are directly derived from the community's adopted goals and are intended to support the City Council in prioritizing and advancing the strategic objectives identified in the Healing Waters Strategic Plan. These action items serve as a menu of potential strategies, projects, and initiatives that can help move the community toward its desired outcomes. They are not mandatory requirements, nor are they associated with specific implementation timelines. Rather, they are provided as a flexible resource that elected officials and staff can use to generate ideas, inform decision-making, and identify opportunities for achieving the Plan's stated goals as priorities, resources, and circumstances evolve over time. For convenience sake, they have been categorized into the six targets of excellence set by the Strategic Plan.

Thriving local economy and government efficiency

Business Development and Investment

a. Foster a business-friendly environment that supports business retention, expansion, entrepreneurship, and investment through effective regulations, streamlined permitting, strategic partnerships, and ongoing engagement with the business community.
b. Promote a diverse and resilient local economy by supporting a broad mix of commercial, service, tourism, industrial, professional, home-based, and employment-generating businesses that expand economic opportunities and strengthen the local tax base.
c. Pursue grants, incentives, partnerships, and technical assistance programs to support business development, workforce development, small business growth, façade improvements, and economic opportunity.
d. Partner with local businesses, educational institutions, tourism organizations, and economic development agencies to support workforce training, entrepreneurship, business succession planning, and regional economic development efforts.
e. Promote Medical Lake as a year-round destination by leveraging its parks, trails, recreational assets, cultural resources, historic character, community events, and natural amenities to support tourism and local businesses.
f. Strengthen downtown and commercial districts through placemaking, public realm improvements, strategic infrastructure investments, wayfinding, streetscape enhancements, and redevelopment efforts that support economic vitality and community identity.
g. Conduct a feasibility study to evaluate preservation, reuse, and investment opportunities for the Historic Train Depot.

Government Planning and Regulatory Effectiveness

a. Ensure the municipal code is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and maintain compliance with applicable State laws and regulations.
b. Coordinate infrastructure planning, capital investments, municipal code updates, and zoning regulations to support anticipated growth and development.
c. Review and update impact fees to ensure they adequately reflect projected population growth and future infrastructure and facility needs.

d. Update the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and alignment with long-term community goals.
e. Encourage infill development, redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and revitalization of underutilized properties to maximize existing infrastructure, leverage public investments, and create new economic opportunities.

Infrastructure and Asset Management

a. Modernize drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure to maintain regulatory compliance, improve operational efficiency, support growth, and increase system resilience.
b. Invest in drinking water storage, distribution system reliability, and well system modernization to ensure a dependable and sustainable water supply.
c. Upgrade wastewater treatment facilities and municipal building systems, including HVAC, roofing, and other major assets, to improve energy efficiency, reduce operating costs, and extend asset life.

Regional Coordination and Efficient Service Delivery

a. Coordinate with Spokane County, West Plains jurisdictions, and regional partners to plan for anticipated growth, align development patterns, and ensure the efficient provision of public facilities and services.
b. Coordinate annexation planning with infrastructure investments, utility extensions, and capital facilities planning to ensure orderly, cost-effective growth and service delivery.
c. Develop and maintain annexation, urban service extension, and growth management policies that support logical municipal boundaries and the efficient expansion of public services.
d. Monitor and evaluate Urban Growth Area (UGA) capacity, including periodic reviews of population growth, development activity, housing production, and land supply to ensure compliance with regional growth forecasts and state requirements.
e. Coordinate long-range transportation and utility planning to preserve options for future infrastructure extensions, including potential service connections to the west shore of Silver Lake and other expansion areas.

Healthy and sustainable environment

Quality Neighborhoods and Placemaking

a. Preserve and enhance the unique character of downtown through context-sensitive zoning, placemaking, and design standards.
b. Develop design and development standards that reinforce small-town character, placemaking objectives, and human-scale development patterns.
c. Develop and implement a comprehensive wayfinding program for streets, trails, parks, downtown, transit facilities, and other community destinations to improve navigation, accessibility, and user experience.

Sustainable Land Use and Growth Management

a. Ensure land division and subdivision standards reflect historic street and block patterns while promoting connectivity through coordinated sidewalk, trail, and street networks.
b. Prioritize infill development, redevelopment, and the efficient use of land within existing service areas before expanding urban development into undeveloped areas.

c. Establish future land use and zoning designations for UGA expansion areas that promote a balanced mix of housing types, open space, and community amenities.

Dependable Infrastructure

a. Strengthen stormwater management and erosion/sediment control requirements to minimize development impacts on natural resources.
b. Develop and implement a comprehensive stormwater management strategy that improves system capacity, reduces runoff and pollutant loading, and addresses increasingly intense rainfall events while meeting evolving State and Federal requirements.
c. Improve stormwater management practices within the watershed by incorporating green infrastructure, biofiltration swales, and other treatment measures that reduce runoff impacts and protect lake water quality.

Environmental Stewardship

a. Protect and manage shoreline resources in accordance with the Shoreline Management Act, by preserving ecological functions, water quality, and public access.
b. Protect the aquifer recharge area and long-term health of the lakes through coordinated water quality protection, watershed stewardship, and pollution prevention measures.
c. Implement shoreline restoration and stabilization projects, including erosion control measures, native vegetation enhancement, and habitat improvements to address shoreline degradation and increase environmental resilience.
d. Protect and manage critical areas in accordance with the Growth Management Act and other applicable regulations to preserve ecological functions, public safety, and environmental quality.
e. Develop and implement management and stewardship plans for City-owned wetlands and other environmentally sensitive properties to support long-term conservation, restoration, and habitat protection.
f. Protect, restore, and enhance wildlife habitat within parks, wetlands, open spaces, and other City-owned lands, while supporting habitat connectivity through ecological corridors and other conservation measures.
g. Promote sustainable landscaping, water conservation, and urban forestry practices that improve environmental quality, enhance habitat, reduce urban heat impacts, and strengthen community resilience.

Engaged and empowered citizens and stakeholders

Accessible and Responsive Government

a. Provide public outreach, workshops, and educational programs focused on environmental stewardship, natural hazard preparedness, and actions residents can take to protect community resources and reduce risk.

Community Partnerships

a. Strengthen partnerships with the Medical Lake School District, community organizations, service clubs, and volunteers to expand recreational opportunities and maximize community resources.

b. Coordinate with state agencies, Spokane County, conservation organizations, and community partners to protect critical areas, enhance natural resources, and advance regional conservation objectives.

Community Identity and Sense of Place

a. Celebrate and enhance community identity through public art, historic preservation, interpretive signage, storytelling, cultural programming, festivals, and the activation of downtown, parks, trails, and other public spaces.

Community Stewardship and Volunteerism

a. Support community stewardship, environmental education, volunteer initiatives, hazard preparedness training, and grant-funded restoration projects that foster environmental awareness and community resilience.
b. Promote long-term stewardship of the lakes and shoreline through partnerships, public education, monitoring programs, and coordinated implementation of restoration and water quality initiatives.

Multi-modal connections into and throughout the community

Active Transportation and Connectivity

a. Encourage walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods that support a vibrant community, increase transportation options, and enhance overall quality of life.
b. Create a safe, connected, and accessible active transportation network by closing sidewalk gaps, upgrading ADA-compliant facilities, improving crossings, expanding bicycle infrastructure, and supporting Safe Routes to Schools and shared-use paths.
c. Enhance multimodal connectivity throughout the community by improving access between neighborhoods, parks, schools, downtown, transit services, and other key destinations.

Trails, Pathways, and Recreation Connections

a. Develop a comprehensive citywide trail master plan to guide the expansion and long-term development of the trail network to strengthen connections between parks, community destinations, and other key amenities.
b. Improve trailheads through the addition of signage, safe crossings, multimodal access, and ADA-accessible facilities.
c. Provide trail-support amenities at appropriate locations, including seating, shade structures, lighting, restrooms, drinking fountains, and other user-oriented facilities.
d. Strengthen physical and visual connections between downtown and Medical Lake through enhanced pedestrian, bicycle, wayfinding, and public realm improvements that reinforce the lake as a defining community asset.

Transit and Regional Mobility

a. Partner with Spokane Transit Authority (STA) to improve access to transit and enhance transit stop amenities, including accessibility, comfort, and multimodal connections.
b. Coordinate with the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Spokane County, and Spokane Transit

Authority (STA) to strengthen regional multimodal transportation connections across the West Plains.

Transportation System Planning and Management

a. Establish Complete Streets design standards that support safe, comfortable, and accessible travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists.
b. Work collaboratively with WSDOT on roadway classification and transportation planning efforts to improve funding opportunities, support corridor improvements, and establish clear expectations for frontage and access improvements.
c. Identify and prioritize the vacation of public rights-of-way occupied by existing City and School District facilities where roadway purposes are no longer needed, while maintaining appropriate access, connectivity, and utility functions.

Healthy living and recreation

Parks, Recreation, and Community Wellness

a. Continuously enhance park facilities and amenities to meet the evolving recreational needs of a growing and diverse population.
b. Expand recreational programming, community events, and year-round recreation opportunities, including indoor and shoulder-season activities that serve residents of all ages and abilities.
c. Support a diverse range of recreational opportunities, including youth sports, family-oriented activities, and intergenerational programs that promote community health and well-being.
d. Ensure equitable access to parks and recreational amenities by providing neighborhood park space and facilities within a quarter-mile walking distance of residents in new growth and development areas.

Parks and Recreation Infrastructure

a. Rehabilitate and modernize existing park infrastructure, including playground equipment, safety surfacing, restrooms, lighting, shelters, irrigation systems, picnic areas, and other park amenities.
b. Enhance and preserve the urban tree canopy and integrate green infrastructure within parks and recreational areas to improve environmental quality, resilience, and visitor experience.
c. Improve park accessibility, comfort, and usability through the addition of ADA-compliant access routes, seating, shade structures, and other visitor-support amenities.
d. Pursue grants, partnerships, and alternative funding sources to support park improvements, recreational programming, and long-term system sustainability.

Lake Access and Outdoor Recreation

a. Enhance public access to Medical Lake through strategic improvements to access points, trails, viewpoints, and shoreline amenities that balance recreation, environmental protection, and public safety.
b. Expand lake-oriented recreational opportunities that support community health, recreation, tourism, and appreciation of the community's natural resources.

Community safety and security

Emergency Preparedness and Resilience

a. Develop a multipurpose community center that serves recreational and community needs while providing emergency shelter and disaster response capabilities.
b. Strengthen emergency preparedness through the development of a citywide evacuation plan, including designated evacuation routes and staging areas.
c. Develop and maintain a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of critical City services during emergencies and disasters.

Public Safety Infrastructure and Services

a. Strengthen the resilience and reliability of critical infrastructure by incorporating redundancy into water and wastewater systems and providing emergency power at essential public facilities.
b. Coordinate with regional and partner agencies to assess and plan for long-term Fire/EMS and law enforcement facility needs.

Transportation Safety and Accessibility

a. Implement a citywide intersection and pedestrian safety program that includes high-visibility crosswalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, advance warning signage, flashing beacons, traffic calming measures, and other proven safety improvements at high-priority locations.
b. Improve safety and mobility along SR 902 and other high-risk corridors through corridor planning, traffic calming strategies, operational improvements, and targeted safety enhancements.
c. Invest in streetscape and public realm improvements, including lighting, landscaping, seating, gateway features, and pedestrian-oriented design elements that enhance community character, support economic vitality, and improve accessibility and comfort for all users.

Hazard Mitigation and Community Risk Reduction

a. Identify, assess, and monitor areas vulnerable to natural hazards, including wildfire, flooding, erosion, and other risks, to inform land use planning, emergency preparedness, and hazard mitigation efforts.
b. Develop and implement a community-wide wildfire preparedness and resilience program, including Firewise principles, public education, and risk-reduction strategies for residents and property owners.
c. Adopt development standards and mitigation measures for areas affected by Fairchild Air Force Base noise contours to support compatible land uses while protecting public health, safety, and military operations.

Conclusion

This Comprehensive Plan reflects Medical Lake's commitment to shaping a future that honors its past while embracing thoughtful, sustainable growth. It is both a vision and a practical guide, grounded in community values, informed by data, and aligned with state and regional requirements. Throughout this document, a consistent theme emerges: growth should strengthen rather than diminish what makes Medical Lake unique. By prioritizing safe and connected neighborhoods, diverse housing opportunities, a vibrant downtown, strong public services, and stewardship of the natural environment, the City positions itself to meet the needs of today while preparing responsibly for tomorrow. This plan recognizes that resilience, especially in the face of recent challenges, is a defining characteristic of the community, and it builds on that strength to create a more adaptable and inclusive future. With clear goals, coordinated strategies, and a commitment to ongoing collaboration, Medical Lake is equipped to guide change in a way that enhances quality of life, supports economic vitality, and preserves the small-town character and sense of belonging that define the community.