

ONALASKA SUBAREA PLAN

Public Engagement Results

Updated
October 2024



How to Comment

You may submit comments to the Lewis County Community Development staff on the Onalaska Subarea Plan by:

Email

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U.S. Mail

Community Development, Planning Division
351 NW North Street
Chehalis, WA 98532
Attention: Mindy Brooks

For more information

Visit the website

<https://lewiscountywa.gov/departments/community-development/rezones/comprehensive-plan-and-development-regulation-amendments/onalaska-subarea-plan/>



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1 INTRODUCTION

Lewis County is partnering with the community of Onalaska to develop a subarea plan. A subarea plan is a road map that guides how a specific geography, like Onalaska, will grow and develop over the next 20 years.

The goal of public engagement for this phase of the planning process is to collaborate with the community to develop a shared 20-year vision for Onalaska and identify the goals and policies that will support that vision. Lewis County Community Development staff are committed to non-discriminatory public participation and will engage with all community members.

This report includes the following sections:

1. Public Engagement Overview
2. Subarea Plan Process Overview
3. Stakeholders
4. Results of Public Participation



October 2024 Apple Harvest Festival Booth

2 Public Engagement Overview

Public engagement is a process to ensure that community members and interested parties have a meaningful role in the discussions, deliberations, decision-making and implementation of projects affecting them and their community. Leaders, including the government, have a responsibly to engage and empower the community throughout the planning process.

Public engagement takes many forms and can be viewed as a spectrum ranging from informing the community about projects or plans, to fully collaborating with the community to develop the project or plan (Figure 1). As the planning process for Onalaska takes place, each community member is encouraged to self-select the level of involvement they would like to have.

Figure 1: Public Participation Spectrum



The principles, below, represent a framework to guide Lewis County Community Development staff in establishing consistent, effective and high-quality community engagement.

Partnership: Community members have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them. Participants can influence decision-making and receive feedback on how their input was used. The public can recommend issues for government consideration.

Early Involvement: Public involvement is an early and integral part of issue and opportunity identification, concept development, design, and implementation of visions, goals, policies, and programs.

Building Relationships and Community Capacity: Public involvement processes invest in and develop long-term, collaborative working relationships and learning opportunities with community partners and stakeholders.

Inclusiveness and Equity: Public dialogue and decision-making processes identify, reach out to, and encourage participation of the community in its full diversity. Processes respect a range of values and interests and the knowledge of those involved. Historically excluded individuals and groups are included authentically in processes, activities, and decision- and policy-making. Impacts, including costs and benefits, are identified and distributed fairly.

Good Quality Process Design and Implementation: Public involvement processes and techniques are well-designed to appropriately fit the scope, character, and impact of a policy or program. Processes adapt to changing needs and issues as they move forward.

Transparency: Public decision-making processes are accessible, open, honest, and understandable. Members of the public receive the information they need, and with enough lead time, to participate effectively.

Accountability: County leaders and staff are accountable for ensuring meaningful public involvement in the work of county government.

3 Subarea Plan Process Overview

The subarea plan process will occur in two phases. Phase 1 is creation of the 20-year vision, goals and policies for Onalaska. Phase 1 will occur between fall 2023 and summer 2024 (see Table 1). Phase 2 is adoption of development regulations that implement the goals and policies. Phase 2 will occur between fall 2024 and summer 2025.

Onalaska Subarea Plan Timeline

2023			2024			2025
Spring Project Kick Off	Summer Existing Conditions	Fall Community Vision	Spring Goals & Policies	Summer Draft Plan	Fall Final Plan	Implementation

While the public is encouraged to participate throughout process, there are key roles in decision making that will lead to the final subarea plan:

1. Community Advisory Committee – This committee, which is described in more detail in Section 3, will collaborate with staff on producing the plan and will provide advice to the Planning Commission.
2. Planning Commission – The Planning Commission is an appointed group of citizens that makes formal recommendations to the Board of County Commissioner on long range planning actions. Planning Commission will have workshops throughout the planning process.
3. Board of County Commissioners – The BOCC is the elected decision making body who, upon the recommendation of the Planning Commission, votes to adopt the subarea plan.

In addition to opportunities for the public to participate during the planning process, there will also be at least two formal public hearings – one with the Planning Commission and one with the BOCC – where the public can testify about any aspect of the subarea plan or process.

4 Stakeholders

Any plan that creates policies or changes development regulations will have a direct impact on people in the community. These people are called “stakeholders” because they have a stake in the outcome of the plan. It would be wonderful if the outcome benefitted all stakeholders, but in reality any choice made will have positive and negative impacts on different individuals. Part of the planning process is uncovering who benefits and who is burdened by decisions made in the plan.

Equitable engagement means that the process is designed to ensure that those most impacted from decisions have an opportunity meaningfully participate and influence the outcomes.

Equitable engagement also means that all groups of people shall be heard during the process and no group shall bear a disproportionate share of the negative consequences resulting from decisions made. Lewis County Community Development staff are committed to non-discriminatory public participation and will engage with all community members, including low-income, women, minorities, people with disabilities, people with Limited English Proficiency, seniors and youth populations in the Onalaska Subarea Plan process and decision-making.

Below is a list of the types of community stakeholders in Onalaska. Some individuals may fall within more than one group – you may be a homeowner, an employee, and a member of a church. There is no hierarchy to the list; every stakeholder is equally important and their voice needs to be included in the process. This list is not exhaustive and for that reason it will be continuously updated during the planning process. Groups added will receive special consideration to make sure they are empowered to participate, even if coming to the table later in the process.

Onalaska Community Stakeholders:

- Full Time Resident
- Part Time Resident
- Homeowner
- Long Term Renter
- Short Term Renter
- Business Owner
- Employee
- Developer
- Tribes
- People of Color
- People with Limited English Proficiency
- Communities with Disabilities
- Senior
- Youth
- Churches
- Schools
- Library
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Water/Sewer Districts
- Tourists

**Updated June 2023

Community Advisory Committee

One of the primary public engagement tools utilized in the planning process was a Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC was formed by staff doing a general call for volunteers to serve. Staff hosted a community meeting on June 7, 2023 about the subarea plan and began soliciting for volunteers to serve on the CAC. A press release was issued about the community on May 31, 2023. In addition to the meeting and press release, staff posted requests for CAC volunteers on Onalaska- and East County-specific social media platforms. The total number of CAC members was not capped and anyone who wanted to participate was welcome.

All community members who were interested in being on the CAC received an email with a questionnaire, including availability to meet monthly from September 2023 – August 2024. After the meetings were set, 21 total community members volunteered to serve on the CAC

Anyone who participated in one or more CAC meetings is considered a member of the CAC because each meeting resulted in outputs that are in the subarea plan. For example, the first two meetings were dedicated to developing the 20-year goals for Onalaska and those goals largely did not change throughout the rest of the meetings. Therefore, someone who only participated in the first two meetings still had a hand in developing the goals for Onalaska.

Onalaska Subarea Plan Community Advisory Committee:

Kathy	Armitage
LaVeta	Arnold
Harry Omroa	Bhagwandin
Rob	Blair
Carol	Brock
Brad	Flexhaug
Angela	Gelder
Peggy	Hammer
Julie	Hildahl
Philip	Iverson
Anna	Matsunaga
Pete	Murphy
Megan	Philpot
Hanna	Rasmuson
Rudy	Rodriguez
Ronn	Schuttie
Eduard	Telders
Kim	Vogel-Wilson
Rebecca	Volk
Norm	Wood

The CAC made decisions by general consensus of the group. Voting was not utilized. Members discussed each topic and reached agreement. There were only a few topics where there was significant disagreement during the discussions. The result was often adjusting the language of the goal, policy or concept until the dissenting voices felt they could live with the outcome.

Other Stakeholder Participation

Those community members who did not volunteer to be on the CAC were invited to participate in a number of other ways. Summer 2023 through fall 2024 there were opportunities to provide input to the process. An explanation of each activity and the results are found in Section 5. All activities were promoted by an email sent to the email list and posting to social media platforms. Public hearings were also noticed through the newspaper.

The results of each activity were presented to the CAC for inclusion in their discussions. CAC members were also asked to attend the community meetings.

5 Results of Public Engagement

All of the public participation activities, including the CAC meetings, are included in the results section. The results are summarized and presented in chronological order. Meeting notes from the CAC meetings are available by request, as are the individual surveys.

June 1, 2023 Email List

The public is invited to sign up to receive periodic updates about the Onalaska Subarea Plan project. This email list was originally created on June 1, 2023 at the beginning of the project and has been continuously updated based on requests from the public. As of DATE there were ## people signed up for the list. The public can sign up for the email list at any time using this online form:

<https://us4.list-manage.com/survey?u=e15a047830cb4487f0f83e478&id=e4c8572009>

June 7, 2023 Community Meeting

On June 7, 2023 staff from Community Development hosted a community meeting. The meeting was announced via a press release and on social media. A total of 57 people attended.

Staff provided an overview of the subarea planning process including a large map of the properties included in the subarea plan boundary. Handouts included a summary of the project, an existing zoning map, a survey to be completed at the meeting and a form to fill out to be on the CAC. Fourteen (14) people signed up to be on the CAC and received a follow up email.

The second half of the meeting was a discussion facilitated by staff. Staff asked two questions and responses are summarized below (*in no hierarchical order*).

Question 1 – What are your concerns about the future of Onalaska?

- Impact of growth on schools, water district and fire district.
- Increasing property values and taxes.
- Loss of "small town feel."
- Loss of farmland and rural areas.
- Impact of development on roads and infrastructure.
- Increased crime.
- Increased homelessness.

Question 2 – What are your top priorities for the future?

- Preserve “small town feel.”
- Preserve surrounding farmland.
- Maintain roads and infrastructure.
- Maintain safe neighborhoods and streets.
- Create a downtown “sense of place.”
- Protect and support local businesses.
- Encourage affordable housing options.
- Encourage new jobs.

August 23, 2023 Community Meeting

On August 23, 2023 staff from Community Development hosted a community meeting. The meeting was announced via a press release and on social media. A total of 23 people attended.

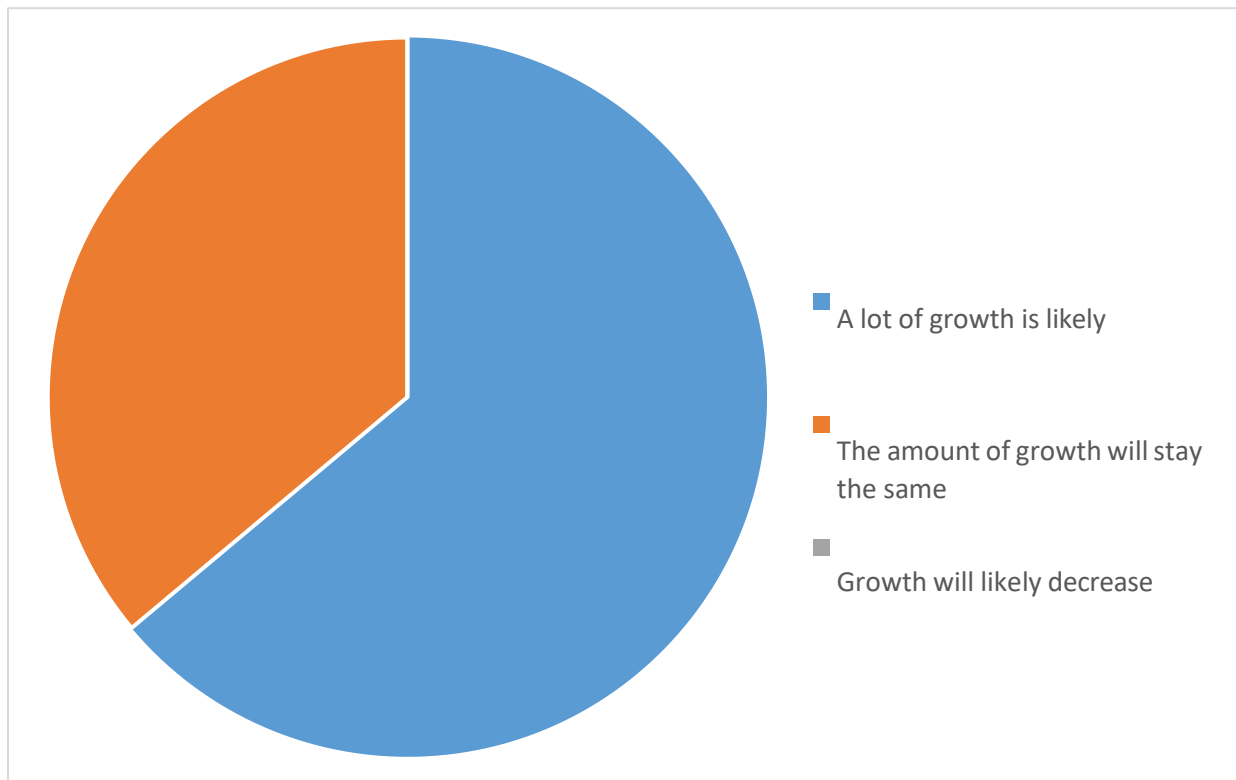
Staff presented an overview of what a subarea plan is and how it is created, followed by a summary of the existing development capacity within the Onalaska urban growth area. Materials related to the topics presented are available on the webpage. Following the staff presentation, there was a group discussion about the community's concerns regarding future growth and development. Below is a summary of the discussion.

1. **Small Town Character** – This was the top concern of the attendees and they stated that they enjoy and want to preserve the pace of life and the way Onalaska looks and feels. They like having a safe community and that they know their neighbors. Having space between houses and yards is a priority. And they appreciate the easy access to surrounding natural areas. They are worried about new residents wanting to change the town. And they are worried about commercial development like Dollar General or McDonalds, which they feel do not fit in the small town.
2. **Services** – The second concern that received a lot of discussion was services, including school capacity, water capacity, fire/EMS/police services and traffic. Attendees were worried about more people moving on Onalaska will exceed the current capacity of the facilities. In particular, there was concern about the school and teacher/student ratio. Another big concern was the ability of fire and EMS to serve a growing population, particularly given that there are no emergency medical services (e.g., urgent care, hospital) nearby. There was also concern that the existing residents would bear the cost of needing to increase capacity, instead of the cost being placed on the new developments. Finally, transportation safety was discussed, and one suggestion was the need for four-way-stops on SR508.
3. **Housing Affordability** – Attendees also discussed rising property and housing prices. There was a concern about property tax increases making it harder for people to keep their homes, particularly for people on a fixed income. And there was concern about new developers with more wealth pushing out locals.
4. **Preserving Farmland** – The final item discussed was preserving the surrounding farmland. One attendee commented that Onalaska is a "food oasis" and she would like to keep it that way. There was a concern that 5 acre lots that are currently in small-farm production will get bought by outside developers and no longer be used for farming. Finally, there was a concern that if the urban growth area is kept too tight it might push people in to the rural areas.

September 1, 2023 Community Survey – Community Priorities

On July 5, 2023, an online survey was distributed to the community. A link to the survey was posted on the website, shared via social media and shared in a press release. The link was also sent via email to the Onalaska Subarea Plan email list. A total of 138 people participated in the survey. Below are the results of the survey.

Question 1: How much do you believe Onalaska is likely to grow over the next 5 years?

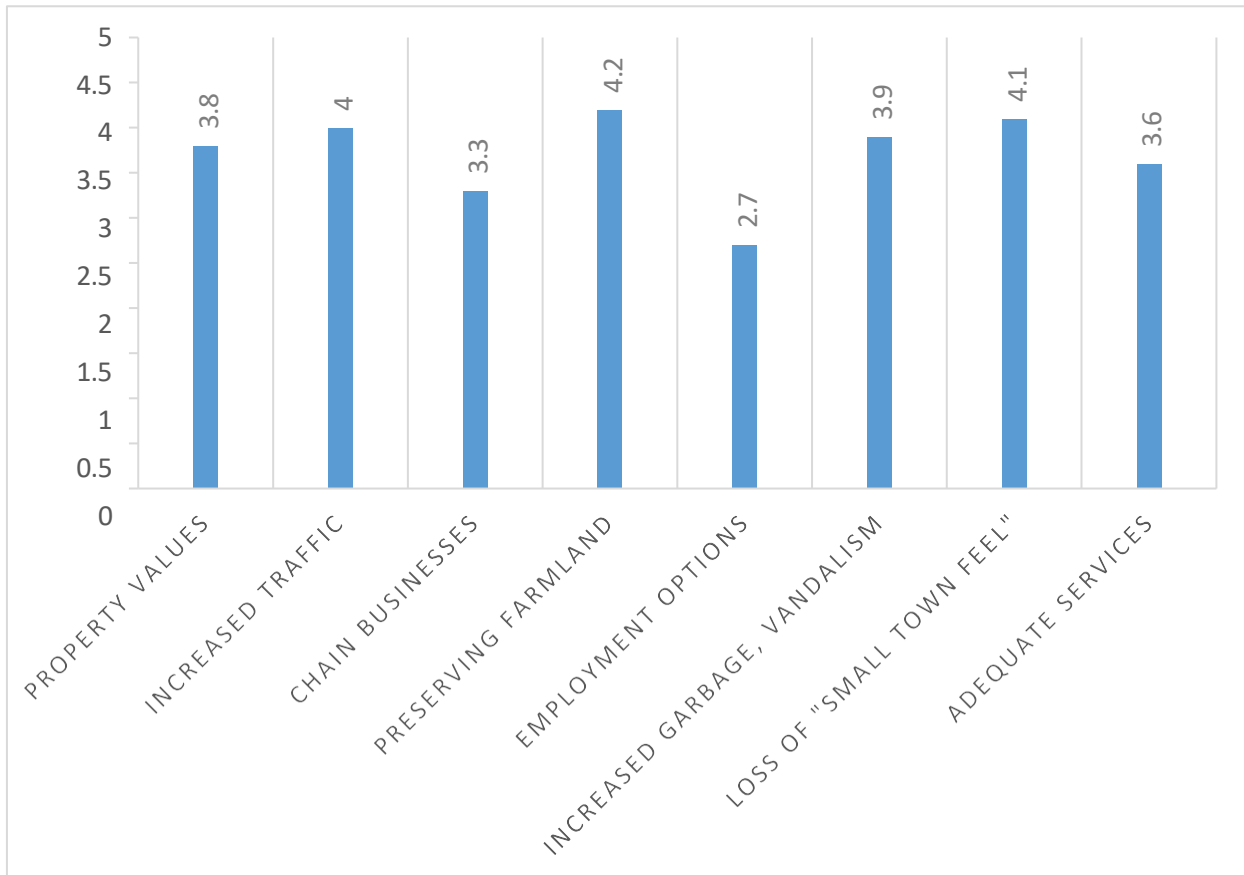


Question 2: On a scale of 0 (not concerned) to 5 (very concerned), which of the following are you concerned about?

A list was provided of eight (8) concerns heard by staff at community meetings leading up to the launch of the project, as well as an open-ended other option. Below is a graph that shows the average rating for each concern. The highest concerns were:

1. Preserving Farmland
2. Loss of "small town feel"
3. Increased Traffic

The lowest concerns were employment options and chain businesses.



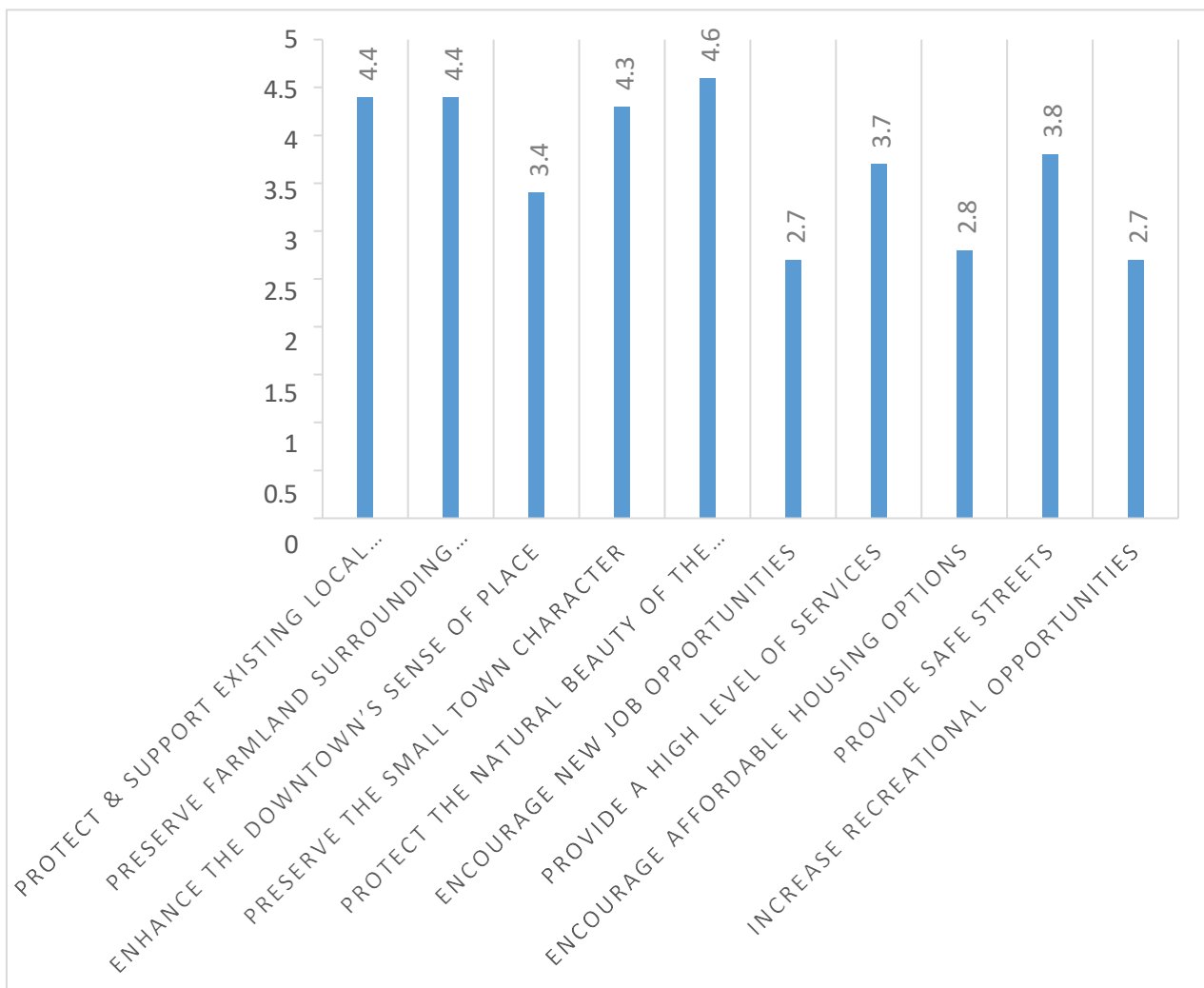
People provided 33 comments in the open-ended other option. The most common topics were related to concerns about schools, crime, infrastructure, and preserving the "small town feel," and transportation. In addition, a few new themes were brought up including internet access/broadband, no shooting zones, and the role community members in decision making.

Question 3: Below are guiding principles that can be used to shape a subarea plan for Onalaska. On a scale from 0 (not important) to 5 (very important) how important is each principle to you?

A list was provided of ten (10) priorities heard by staff at community meetings leading up to the launch of the project, as well as an open-ended other option. Below is a graph that shows the average rating for each principle. The highest priorities were:

1. Protect the natural beauty of the surrounding area.
2. Preserve farmland surrounding Onalaska.
3. Protect and support existing local businesses.
4. Preserve the small town character.

The lowest priorities were to encourage new job opportunities, increase recreational opportunities and encourage affordable housing options.

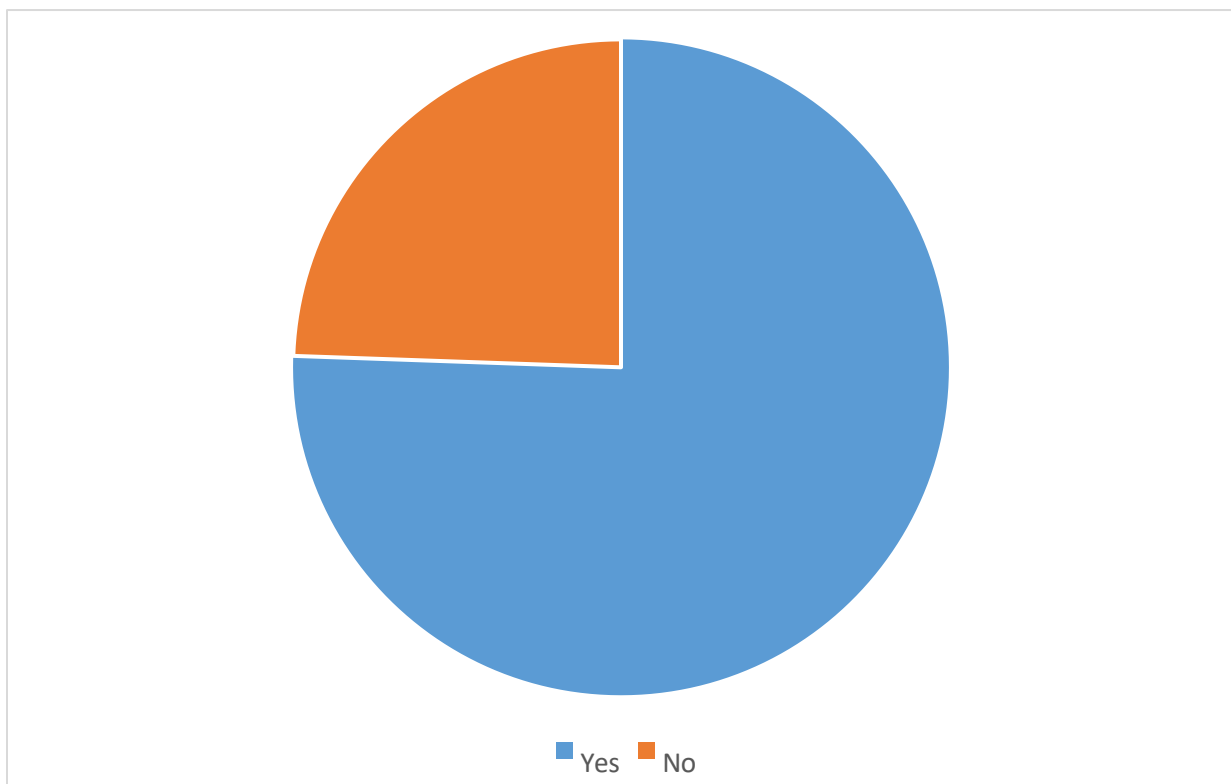


Question 3, continued: People provided 24 comments in the open ended “other” option. The responses varied significantly and covered a number of topics, including:

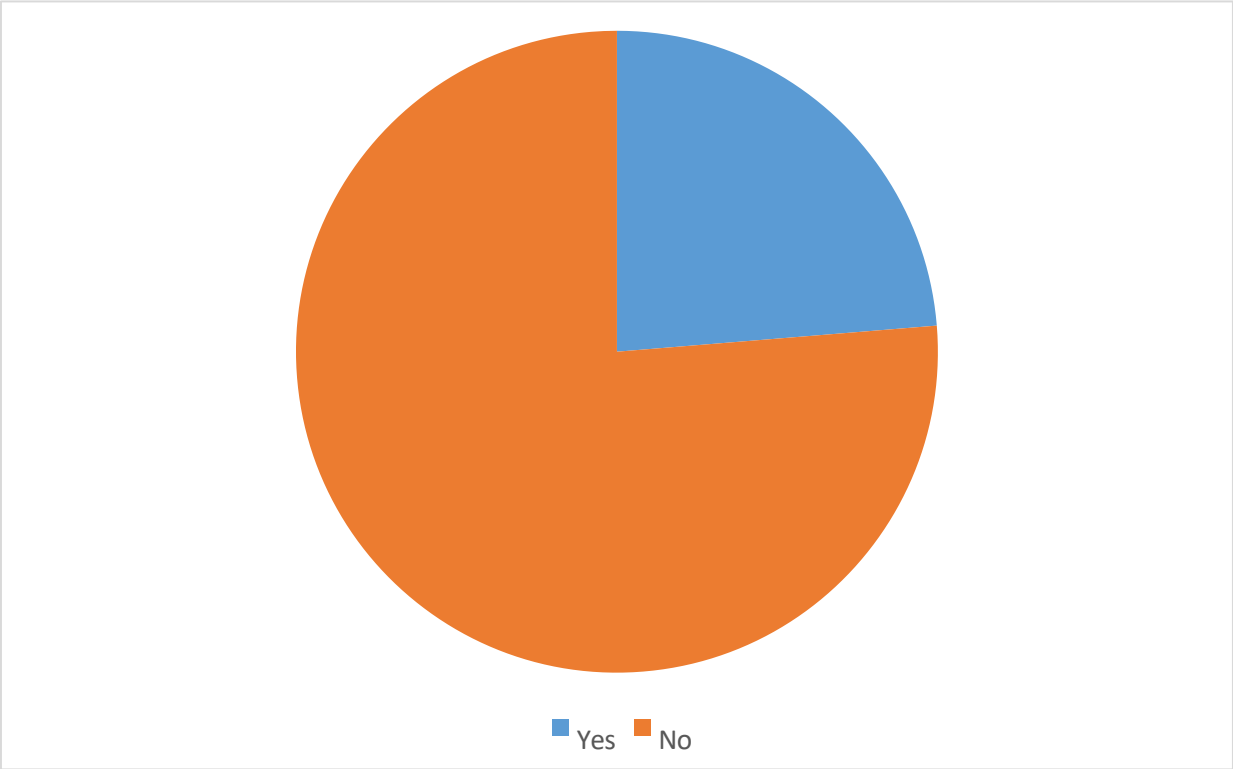
- Maintain the current type of community and lifestyle, do not promote more people moving to Onalaska
- Improve infrastructure including Broadband, roads, sidewalks, public transportation, water, etc.
- Create a community core with more retail and restaurants
- Update the zoning (industrial, housing and commercial)
- Consider the appropriate types of housing to support people living and working in Onalaska
- Improve safety and reduce crime
- Limit government control on decisions

Survey questions 4-7 were optional questions about the person completing the survey. Responses to those optional questions are below.

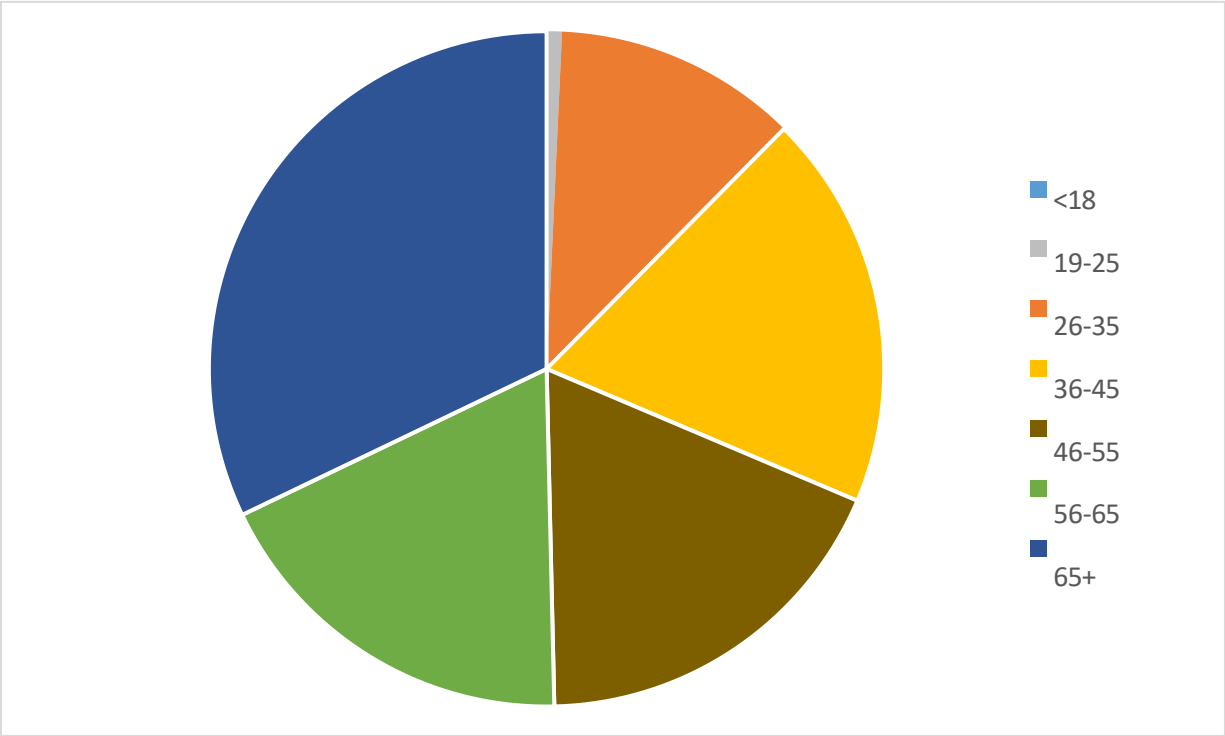
Question 4: Do you live in Onalaska?



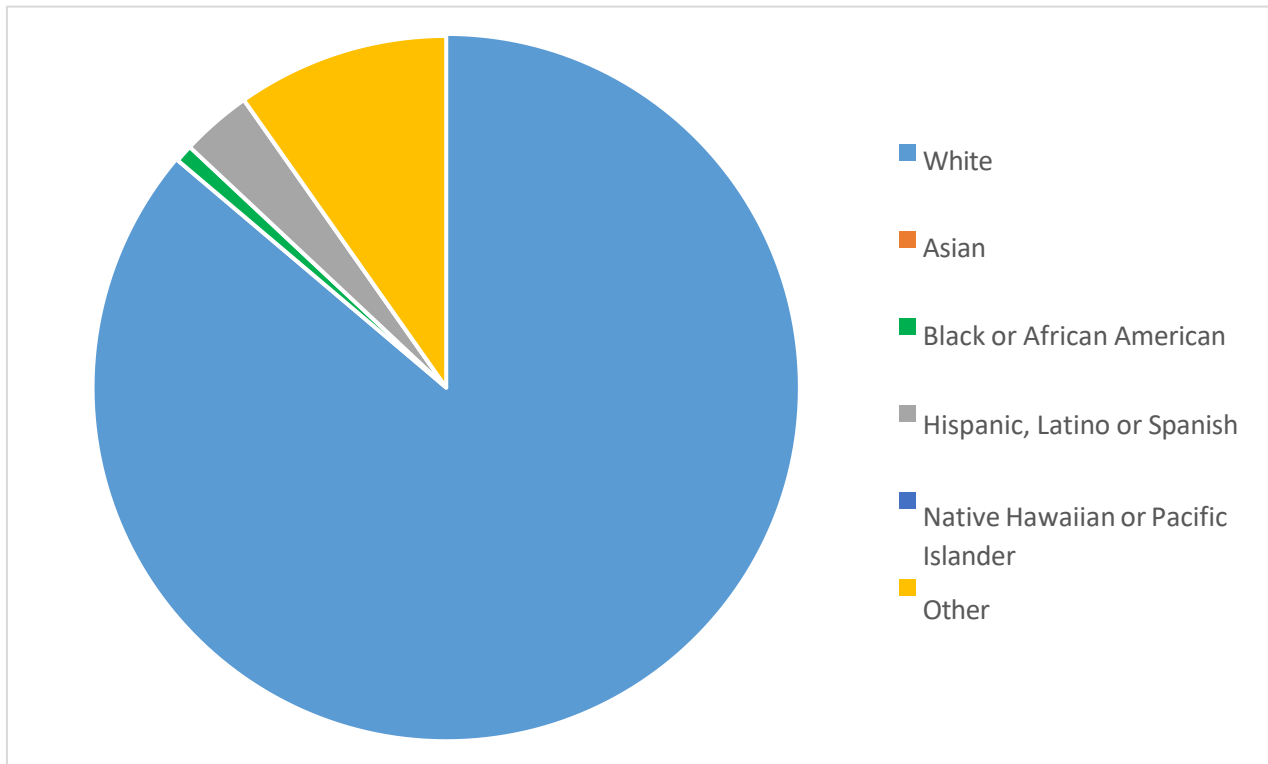
Question 5: Do you work in Onalaska?



Question 6: What is your age group?



Question 7: How would you describe yourself?



September 19, 2023 CAC Meeting 1

The committee members were asked to individually write down 5-10 things they hope to be true about Onalaska 20 years from now. The statements needed to be positive. Then they were asked to star their top 3-5. In small groups of two, they shared their top priorities and then chose 2-3 to share with the group. Those were written on cards and given to the facilitator. As a large group the cards were organized by topic and discussion about each card occurred. All cards were included in the discussion – nothing was dismissed. Below is a summary and on the last page are pictures of the final boards with all cards included.

Question - What is your vision of Onalaska 20-years from now?

Topic	Card	Explanation
A. Quality of Life	Pedestrian and biking accessible areas	Need more designated areas for people to walk and bike through town
	Quaint look of sidewalks, beautiful areas	Improve the way sidewalks and public areas look, create a beautiful looking town
	Quaint homes, small town feel	Keep Onalaska small in scale, keep is small town
	Green zones	Have landscaped paths and parks through town
B. Thriving Small Business	More shopping areas for everyday needs	Need more options to buy daily necessities like groceries
	More opportunities to shop and support local	Need more locally owned businesses, places to purchase locally grown produce or locally made goods
	Attract visitors (breweries, outdoor recreation) to support local	Need local places for entertainment that don't require driving to Chehalis, especially on a Friday night
	Business that support rural agriculture	Grow businesses in town that directly support the surrounding agriculture
	Increased employment options	To keep younger people and attract them back, there needs to be more employment options close to where they live. There is no incubator rental storefronts in town.

Topic	Card	Explanation
C. Protect Rural	Predominantly farmland around Onalaska	Protect the surrounding farmland and rural areas, don't allow sprawl
D. Community Access	Community center	A public community center with a meeting room anyone can use, maybe a library
	Pride in homes and community	People who have pride in their community tend to take better care of their home and yard
	People are involved and volunteer	In order for Onalaska to grow responsibly everyone needs to get involved and come together to make things happen
	Senior center and activities	Need a senior center that have lots of activities for the aging populations
	"Standards" maintained - junk cars, loose/barking dogs, burning trash	Nuisances like junk cars and barking dogs impact everyone in a negative way
	Youth activities	There needs to be more activities for youth in the community
	No shooting zones	Make sure everyone understands the "no shooting zones" and possible make changes as needed
E. Infrastructure	New schools	The schools are at capacity now
	Sufficient infrastructure	As the community grows and changes it will need more infrastructure
	Fire, EMT, water and sewer	These services need to be maintained and improved as the community grows
	Internet and cell services	There is not consistent reliable internet and cell service
	Additional local health care	Need a local doctor and/or dentist
	Bus/Transit system	Need a more frequent and consistent transit option, especially for the aging population
F. Sense of Place	A home to stay and return to	Onalaska needs to be a place where people want to stay and want to come back to.
	Neighborhoods for all ages and backgrounds working together	The community needs to support all ages and all backgrounds. People should feel welcome.

Topic	Card	Explanation
G. Roads and Safety	508 Intersection needs traffic light or roundabout	508 needs traffic calming, especially at the intersection with Carlisle Avenue.
	Well lit, well maintained roads	It is now the financial responsibility of the property owner to pay for the lighting, meaning there is not enough street lighting for safe streets.
	Fix the washout on 508	There is a "sink hole" that needs to be permanent fixed, not just another band aide
H. Affordable Housing	Limit multi-dwelling units	There is a need for multifamily housing but not too much or too big
	More middle income housing	The middle housing options are missing - ADU, duplex, triplex, etc.
	Scale of housing	The scale of mulitfamily must fit in Onalaska. 30-unit apartment complex does not fit.

October 7, 2023 Apple Harvest Festival

On October 7, 2023, staff hosted a booth at the Apple Harvest Festival to share information about the subarea planning process and continue to invite community members to serve on the CAC. A total of 14 people signed up to receive more information.

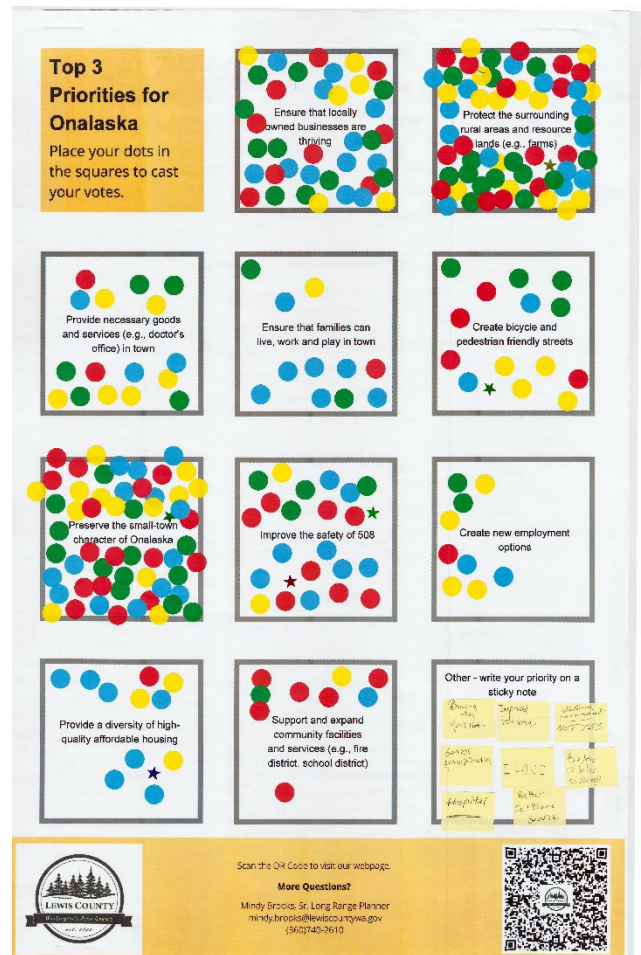
At the festival, two handouts were provided: subarea plan overview and frequently asked questions about Onalaska and the county. There was a sign up sheet where people could provide their email to be added to the notifications list. And there were two posters. The first poster was a map of Onalaska and the surrounding area. People were invited to put star where they live, work or play. The second poster included policy statements based on the first three community meetings. People were invited to pick their top three priorities.

Top Three Priorities

The statements on the poster came from two community meetings (June 7 and August 23) and the first Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting (September 19). People were invited to take three dots and place them next to the statements that they feel are the most important. There was also an open space for people to suggest other priorities. Because each statement represents a priority that the community identified, none of the statements will be removed from the planning process. The exercise serves instead to help staff and the CAC understand what the community feels is the most important and therefore what should be a priority focus of the discussions going forward. Below are the results of the poster survey, in order. Images of the posters are found on page two.

1. Protect the surrounding rural area and resources lands (61)
2. Preserve the small town character of Onalaska (57)
3. Ensure that locally owned businesses are thriving (38)
4. Improve the safety of 508 (23)
5. Provide necessary goods and services in town (16)
6. Create bicycle and pedestrian friendly streets (15)
7. Provide a diversity of high-quality affordable housing (12)
8. Ensure that people can live, work and play in town (11)
9. Create new employment options (9)
10. Support and expand community facilities and services (9)
11. Other priorities: better cell services/internet (4), senior transportation (1), bowling alley/movie theater (1), hospital (1) and love (1)

Perhaps the best comment was provided by a young lady, under 10 years old, who asked if she could provide a comment and thought that “love” is the highest priority. Staff would agree.



October 17, 2023 CAC Meeting 2

The meeting began with a reminder of the CAC mission, purpose and process. The CAC is a group of people who have volunteered to give advice to Lewis County staff and Planning Commission about the vision of Onalaska in 20 years with goals and policies to achieve that vision. The final product is a document, prepared by staff, that captures the CAC's discussions and direction. The process to adopt is a public hearing at the Planning Commission, followed by a public hearing at the Board of County Commissioners.

Next, there was Q&A on the materials that were shared prior to the meeting.

Workshop

The goal of the workshop was to finalize the draft vision statement that came from the first meeting. The draft statements were sent to the CAC 2 weeks prior to the meeting. In small groups, the CAC members were asked to take those statements and revise them to be clearer. It was noted that defining the words in the statement or figuring out how to achieve the vision is the work of the next 6 meetings, this is simply finalizing the vision statements. Everyone was able to work on 3 statements of their choosing. Below are the final statements, organized by topic.

Community

1. Preserve the small-town character and history of Onalaska.
2. Maintain the unique sense of place.

Land Use

1. Protect surrounding rural and farmlands from overdevelopment and overcrowding.

Housing

2. Encourage affordable, quality, clean housing options.

Economic Development

3. Promote and encourage conditions that enable local businesses to thrive and prosper.
4. Attract businesses that serve and employ local residents.
5. Provide necessary purchased goods and services without leaving Onalaska.

Transportation

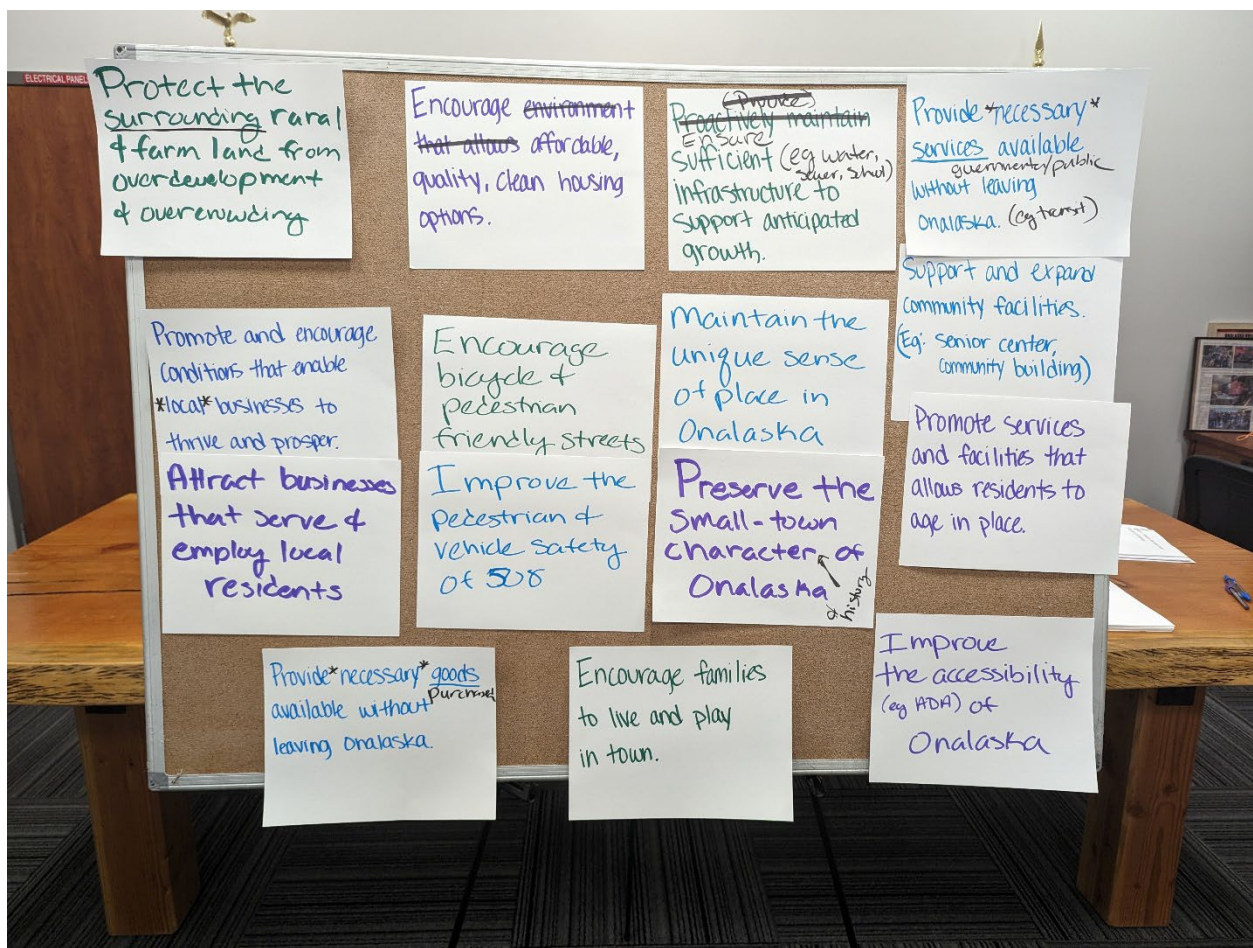
1. Encourage bicycle and pedestrian-friendly local streets.
2. Improve the pedestrian and vehicular safety of State Route 508.
3. Improve the accessibility of Onalaska.

Recreation and Environmental

1. Encourage families to live and play in town.

Public Facilities

1. Ensure sufficient infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer) to support anticipated growth.
2. Provide necessary governmental/public services (e.g., schools, EMS, transit) within town.
3. Promote services and facilities that allow residents to age in place.
4. Support and expand community facilities (e.g., senior center, community center).



November 21, 2023 CAC Meeting 3

The meeting began with a reminder of the CAC mission. The CAC is a group of people who have volunteered to give advice to Lewis County staff and Planning Commission about the vision of Onalaska in 20 years with goals and policies to achieve that vision. The final product is a document, prepared by staff, that captures the CAC's discussions and direction. The process to adopt the subarea plan includes a public hearing at the Planning Commission, followed by a public hearing at the Board of County Commissioners.

Next, there was Q&A on the materials that were shared prior to the meeting. One of the questions was related to a misconception. The question was if Onalaska would be incorporated as a city. Onalaska currently has an urban growth area (UGA) placed around the main part of town. A UGA is one of the requirements for incorporation. The second requirement is to have a population within that UGA of 1,500 residents. In 2022, the Office of Financial Management's small area estimate for Onalaska was a population of 562 people. The projected 20-year population is forecasted at roughly 700 people, less than half what is necessary to consider incorporation. Therefore, incorporation will not be considered as part of the subarea plan.

Following Q&A, the members were split into 3 small groups to discuss two vision statements. The vision statements were developed during the first two CAC meetings and are available on the webpage in the Meeting 2 notes <https://lewiscountywa.gov/departments/community-development/rezones/comprehensive-plan-and-development-regulation-amendments/onalaska-subarea-plan/>. The small groups used the guiding questions provided by staff to provide additional details about each statement. The results of the conversation were reported to the larger group. There was considerable agreement and overlap between the groups. A summary is provided below. Also included are responses from a CAC member who was unable to attend. Staff had offered to anyone who could not attend to provide responses before the meeting.

Small Group 1: Preserve the small-town character and history of Onalaska

1. What does "small town character" mean?

- People can afford to live in and near town
- Local stores and local places to gather
- A similar visual look, but structures are allowed to be unique (not cookie-cutter)
- A culture of being neighborly, knowing and welcoming people, feeling safe
- Slower pace than the city

2. What is unique about Onalaska that exemplifies small town character?
 - Surrounded by small farms, town is center
 - History of homesteading, similar look to houses and businesses
 - Small grocery store, gas station, post office – locally owned
 - Carlisle Lake and school within walking distance
 - Community events (Apple Festival) and involvement – community experiences
 - No traffic congestion
3. What is the history of Onalaska that needs to be preserved?
 - Historic buildings from the logging era
 - Carlisle Lake and smokestack
 - Small farms and the farm-focused community
4. What in Onalaska exemplifies its history?
 - Carlisle Park, Quilt Shop, Logger Café, Presbyterian Church, Brenda's, Justice Grocery

Small Group 2: Statement: Maintain the unique sense of place.

1. What is unique about Onalaska?
 - Onalaska is a crossroads where people shop and gather
 - Original logging-era houses and buildings
 - It's a complete community, not a bedroom community – has school, grocery, post office, hardware, and affordable homes
 - Carlisle Lake, school, Observatory
 - Newaukum River valley
2. What creates a "sense of place" now?
 - Historic houses and buildings
 - Locally owned, unique business not found anywhere else
 - Keep "crafter culture"
 - Carlisle Lake and school within walking distance
 - Surrounding farms, rural areas and nearby recreation
3. What should be preserved in order to maintain the "sense of place"?
 - Small population, not a lot of new development
 - Encourage locally-owned businesses
 - Encourage community gathering spaces, youth sports/activities
 - Preserve historic buildings and structures (e.g. smokestack)
 - Preserve the surrounding small farms and rural areas

- Protected the natural environment

4. What could be added to support or increase the “sense of place” of Onalaska?

- Encourage new, small businesses
- New businesses should fit the look and feel of Onalaska – logging and farming roots
- Traffic calming and bike/ped improvements so it continues to be safe to walk and bike around town
- Support multi-generational housing, kids returning
- Complete community, not a bedroom community – housing, jobs, stores
- Renew wild salmon runs
- Continue to support teaching on Onalaska’s history, including indigenous people and Chinese labor
 - Tour guide with written history
 - Local museum

December 19, 2023 CAC Meeting 4

The meeting began with staff letting the group know that WSDOT reached out and will be starting planning work for a project to address SR508. WSDOT would like to create an email list to keep people informed and staff asked if everyone on the CAC was OK with us sharing your emails. Everyone in attendance answered yes. (Staff will reach out to CAC members not in attendance to get their permission.)

Next was Q&A on the materials sent to the CAC on December 5. Staff explained the population and housing allocations and the implications. The primary impact of the housing allocations is that Onalaska's updated zoning designations will need to allow housing options that would be affordable at all income levels; however, the state regulations do not require proof that the housing at those income levels is constructed. The current zoning designation of Small Town Mixed Use (STMU) does allow housing options that are affordable at all income levels. In fact, there is likely much more capacity available for new housing than is actually needed based on the population and housing allocations. A future meeting will be used to discuss how to adjust the zoning designations to meet the goals and policies of the CAC, including those related to housing.

Following Q&A, the members were split into 3 small groups to discuss two vision statements. The vision statements were developed during the first two CAC meetings and are available on the webpage in the Meeting 2 notes <https://lewiscountywa.gov/departments/community-development/rezones/comprehensive-plan-and-development-regulation-amendments/onalaska-subarea-plan/>. The small groups used the guiding questions written by staff to provide additional details about each statement. The results of the conversation were reported to the larger group. There was considerable agreement and overlap between the groups. A summary is provided below.

Small Group 1: Encourage families to live and play in town.

5. What prevents or discourages families from living in town?

- Cost of housing and lack of housing options, no ability to step up from an apartment to a starter home
- No playground, no sidewalks or safe walking paths
- Speed and lack of pedestrian facilities on 508
- Lack of employment nearby
- Limited consumer goods, no full grocery store
- Lack of childcare options
- Lack of entertainment options

- No assisted living or other supportive housing options
 - Overall aesthetics of town
6. What services and amenities do families need to live in town?
- Health care, grocery store, post office, gas station, laundry
 - School, childcare
 - Water, sewer, EMS, law enforcement
 - Safe streets, sidewalks, street lighting, public transit
7. What does playing in town mean, provide examples?
- Walking, play sports, fishing
 - Community events such as dinners, festivals, etc.
 - Family oriented activities like movie night, skate park, arcade, theater
 - Entertainment options for adults such as ax throwing, pool, shuffleboard
 - A place like Mill Town Smokehouse in Morton or Packwood Brewery that are gathering places
 - Preserve and enhance use of Carlisle Lake, school, churches and community spaces
8. How can playing in town be encouraged and enhanced?
- Need a recreation center, event center, or community hall space for events
 - More promotion of events and activities, need a newsletter
 - List of existing places that have space that can be used for meetings
 - Community support for school sports and activities
 - Safe walking paths and bicycle facilities
 - Leadership – there is no city council, so others need to volunteer

Small Group 2: Encourage affordable, quality, clean housing options.

1. Who needs affordable housing in Onalaska?
- Young adults, recently graduated
 - People working in service industries, minimum wage earners
 - Young families, people transitioning from rental to ownership
 - Retirees
 - Elderly adults on fixed income
2. What kinds of housing is affordable for the people listed in #1?
- Multifamily housing including triplex, quadplex, rowhouses, small apartment complexes
 - Small starter homes, condos – less expensive ownership options
 - Mobile homes, RVs

- Home-share, room-share
 - Assisted living
3. Where should those housing options be located in Onalaska?
- Close to utilities (e.g., water, sewer) and amenities (e.g., grocery, post office)
 - Near sidewalks, safe streets and transit options
4. How might we make sure those housing options are high quality while remaining affordable? (Note – This was discussed at length as a group because “quality” is such a subjective term. The notes reflect the longer group discussion.)
- New housing needs to fit the size and scale of Onalaska.
 - Appropriate design standards can help new buildings fit into the historic areas.
 - Appropriate street widths, sidewalks, street lighting and landscaping.
 - There needs to be maintenance of older housing so it doesn’t become rundown.

February 20, 2024 CAC Meeting 5

Note – The January meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.

The intention of Meeting 6 was to brainstorm a transportation concept for the Onalaska subarea, which is the existing UGA. Before breaking into small group, there was a short Q&A session. The main topic was about land use and the UGA. Meeting 7 will be brainstorming future land uses and considering if changes to the UGA are desired. Then the CAC will revisit the transportation concept to make appropriate adjustments.

The CAC was split into 3 groups of 5. Each group had a map of Onalaska, trace paper and colored markers. The instructions where to:

1. Identify the primary destinations.
2. Identify who is using the destinations.
3. Discuss the modes of transportation and routes used to get to the destinations.
4. Discuss improvements needed to make those routes safer or more efficient?
 - a. Are there roads that need sidewalks added or improved?
 - b. Are there roads that need bike lanes added or improved?
 - c. Are there roads that need safety fixes at specific intersections?
 - d. Is parking needed?
5. Identify any missing street connections or road extensions that need to be built out.
6. Identify the primary routes to access the UGA in general, how those are used and should be used and safety improvements needed.

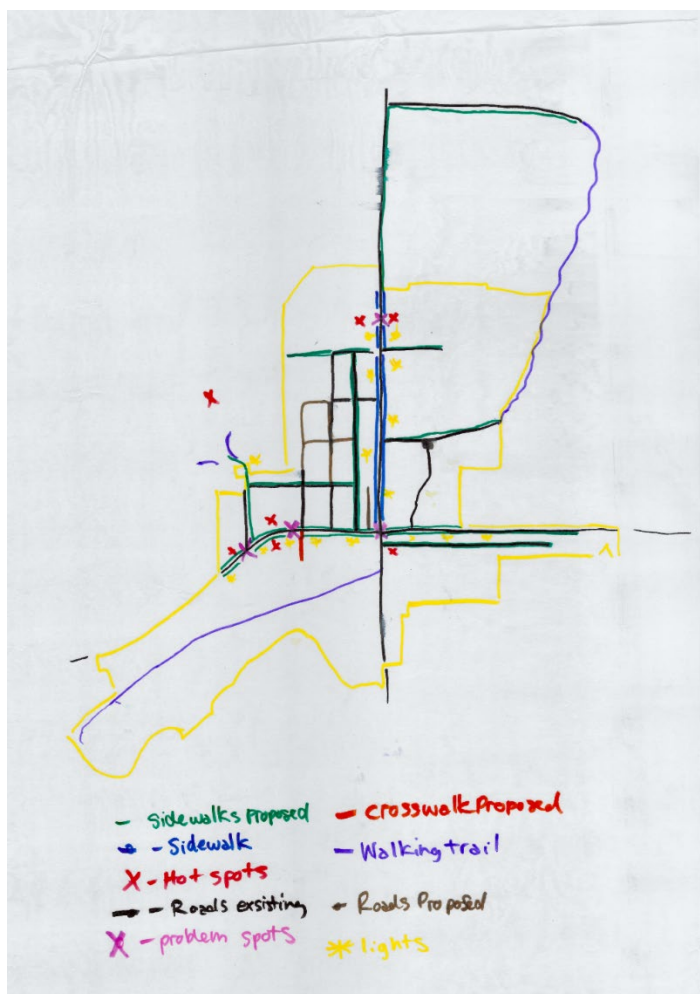
The small group work continued for one hour and then each group reported out the results to the entire CAC. There was a lot of overlap between the concepts. Each concept is included as an image after the summary.

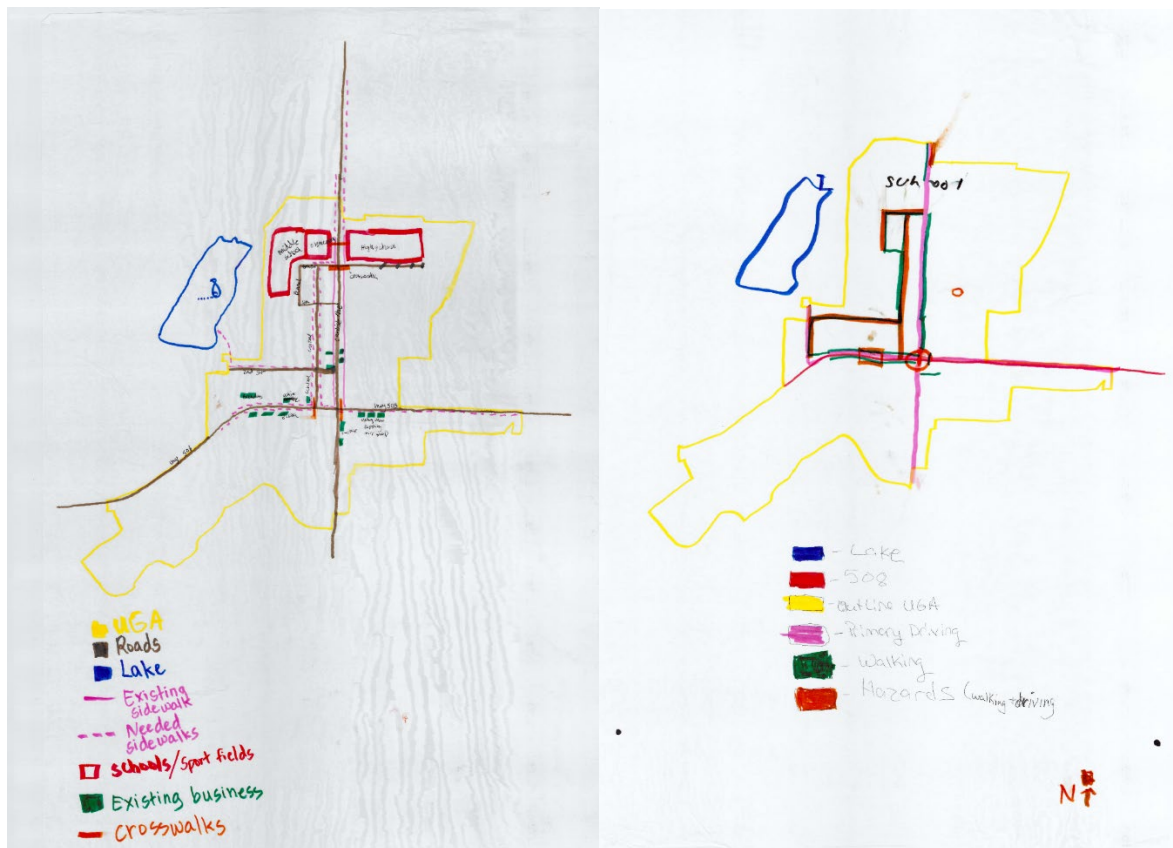
Transportation Concept Overarching Summary

The points below are not provided in hierarchical order.

1. Traffic calming should be added on 508 entering the UGA from the west.
2. Sidewalks are needed along Highway 508 through the entire UGA.
3. Sidewalks are needed along Central Avenue from 5th to 508 as an alternative walking route the school.
4. Sidewalks should be extended north on Degger Road to Carlisle Lane.

5. Crosswalks should be added or improved on 508 at Central Avenue and Carlisle Avenue; and Carlisle Avenue at 5th Street and between the schools.
6. The grid pattern of roads should be extended throughout the neighborhood west of Carlisle Avenue and north of 508.
7. A walking path should be improved from 508 to Carlisle Lake.
8. Connectivity should be created east of Carlisle Avenue between 3rd Street East, along Heights Lane to 508.
9. A walking path should be added that follows the older rail corridor from Dluhosh Road in the north to 3rd Street East, then follow the roads until it reaches the old mill site.





March 29, 2024 CAC Meeting 6

The intention of Meeting 6 was to brainstorm land use concepts for the Onalaska subarea, which is the existing UGA. The CAC was broken into three groups; each group would get to address all three topics. The topics were housing, business and open space. The instructions were to draw on trace paper, over a map of Onalaska, where different uses should be allowed based on the guiding questions below. In addition, each group should ensure that the 20-year vision statements would be met by their concept. Each group was provided a list of the vision statements, as well as maps of existing conditions including critical areas, land use, zoning and water district boundary. Each concept is included at the end of the meeting notes. Staff layered the different concepts and created one draft land use concept that intends to capture the areas of agreement across all nine individual concepts. The draft land use concept, along with the draft transportation concept, will be the topic of CAC Meeting 8 on April 16.

Guiding Questions for Each Group

1: Housing and Supporting Services

Where should multifamily residential housing be located (e.g., apartments, rowhouses)?

Where should medium density housing be located (e.g., triplexes, cottage housing)?

Where should low density housing be located (single family, duplex, ADU)?

Where should supporting services be located (e.g., library, school, grocery, doctor's office, etc.)?

2: Businesses and Commercial Uses

Where should there be a concentration of commercial businesses?

Are there different areas appropriate for small versus larger commercial businesses?

Include areas that may not be commercial now but could be redeveloped overtime.

Where should mixed use go – ground floor commercial, second story residential?

What is needed to make these areas thrive (e.g., sidewalks, parking, lighting, etc.)?

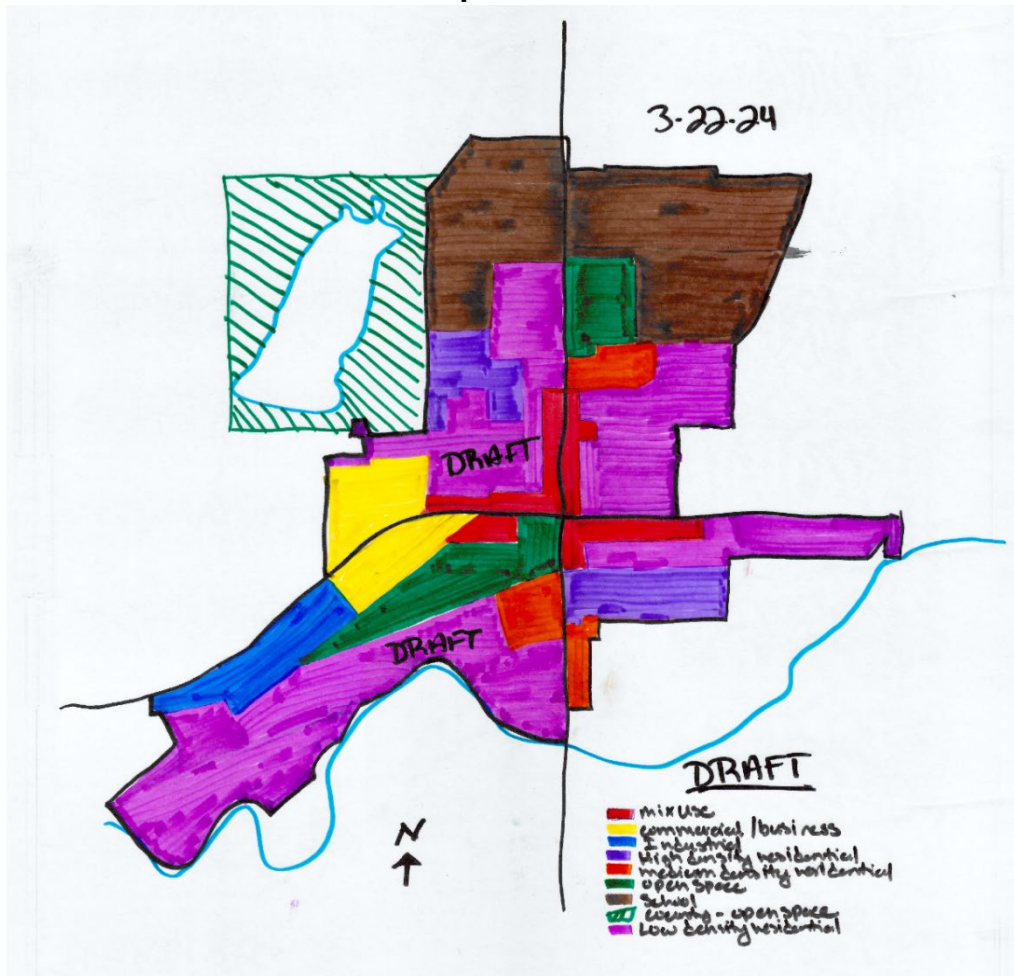
3: Open Space, Recreation and Environment

Where are open spaces that should be preserved?

Where are existing recreational opportunities that should be preserved?

Where could recreational opportunities be added or enhanced?

What environmental features should be preserved and where?

DRAFT Combined Land Use ConceptLegend Notes

Red – mixed land uses, commercial ground floor required, residential second floor allowed; max size commercial 5,000 square feet (based on Justice General Store and The Carlise)

Purple – high density residential, triplex, rowhouse, small apartments; no new single family; ground floor commercial allowed

Orange – medium density residential, duplex, triplex; single family and ADUs allowed; no commercial

Pink – low density residential, single family, ADUs and duplexes; no commercial allowed

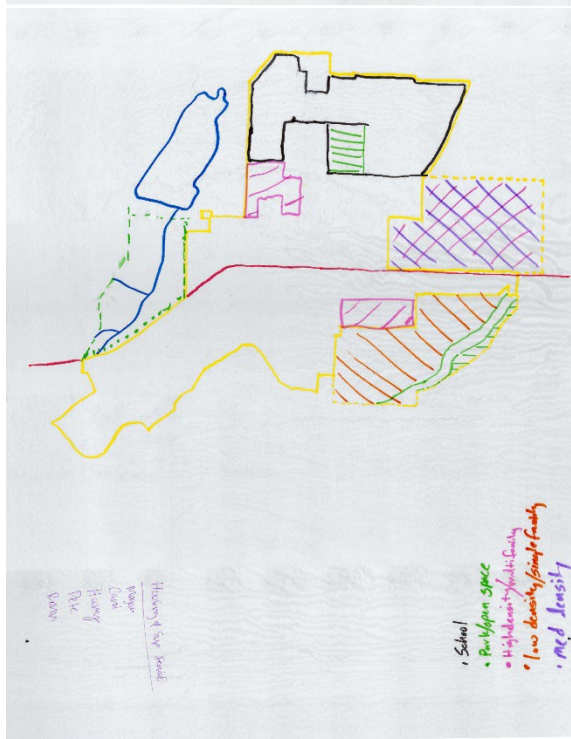
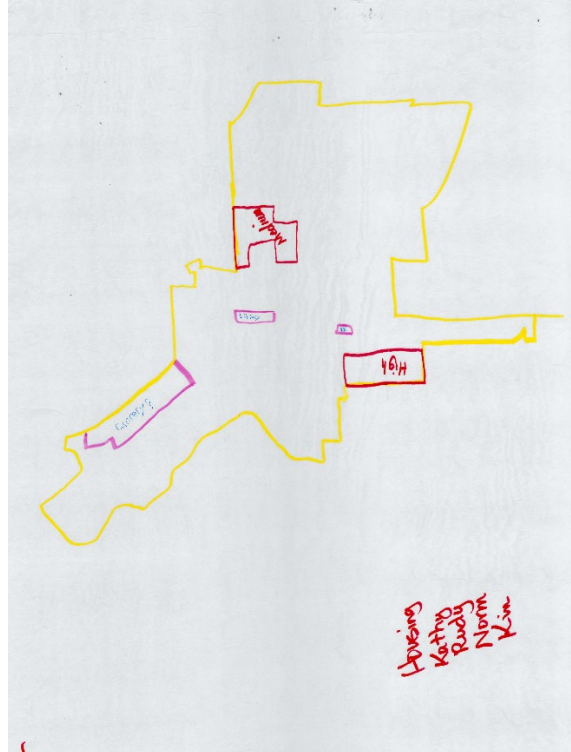
Yellow – commercial/business district; max size 10,000 square feet (based on Brenda's Country Market)

Blue - industrial/business district; max size 20,000 square feet (current allowance in STI)

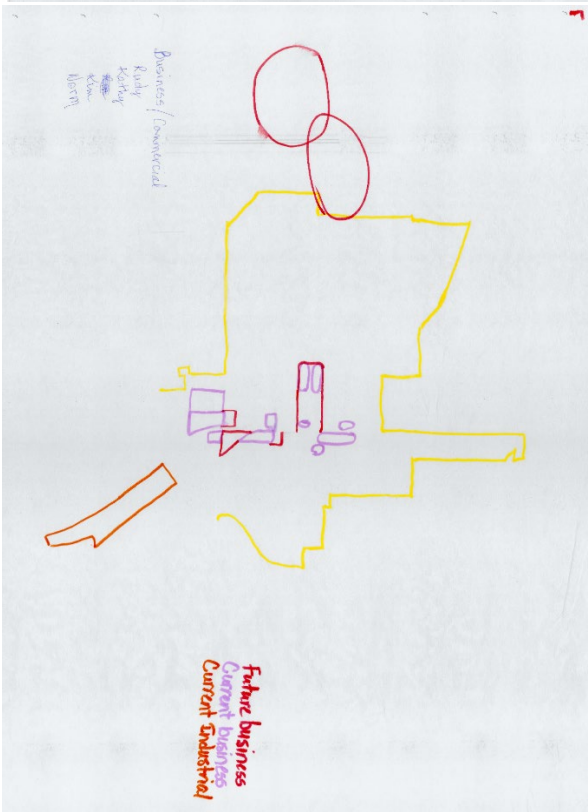
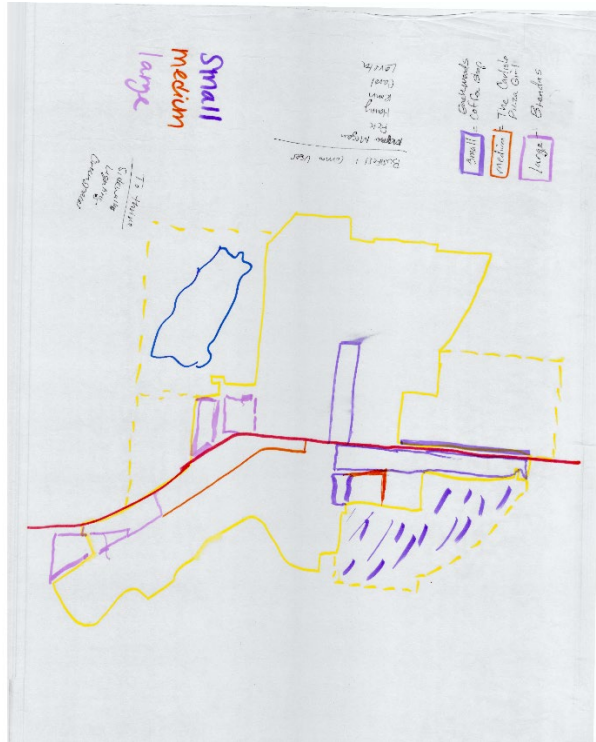
Green – open space and recreation; one single family caretaker accommodations allowed

Brown – school properties

Housing Concepts



Business Concepts



Open Space Concepts



April 16, 2024 CAC Meeting 7

Before the meeting, staff sent the CAC the draft land use concept and draft transportation concept, which were developed based on the conversations and drawings produced by CAC during Meeting 6 and Meeting 7. At Meeting 8, the CAC discussed the concepts and made changes. The updated concept is on page 3. A summary of the discussion, by land use designation is below.

Note 1 – The majority of the Onalaska UGA is currently zoned Small Town Mixed Use, which allows nearly all uses except industrial. The changes proposed by the CAC limit uses in some areas and focus the higher density uses, currently allowed anywhere, along SR508 and Carlisle/Leonard. There are no new uses proposed, only a reorganization of where current uses is allowed.

*Note 2 – The designations and associated development regulations, produced during Phase 2, will apply to **new** development. Existing developments and uses can stay, be maintained, and be replaced.*

Mixed Use

The extent of the designations along SR508 was supported. Discussion focused on the extent of the designation north on Carlisle Ave and south on Leonard Rd. To the north the agreement was to include through Parcel 011296051000 on the west, which is the old 2 story grocery store, and to include through Parcel 011296079000 on the east, which is the Presbyterian. The reason is that these parcels mark the extent of the existing commercial development and transition to historic housing. To the south there was discussion to include Parcel 03298033001004 as a new area for commercial development located across from the land designation for high density residential development. There was not full agreement about this option with some concern about limiting lower density residential development.

SR508 in this location should be redeveloped as a complete street with pedestrian and bicycle facilities, on-street parking and loading, and traffic calming at SR508 and Kerr Road, Carlisle Ave, and 3rd Ave. Leonard Rd and Carlisle Ave should also be a complete street with improvements for pedestrians and bicycles at Railroad Street, 2nd St and 3rd St.

Commercial Business District

The extent of the designation was supported because it encompassed the existing larger commercial areas. They confirmed that height limits should be 35 ft to match existing small-town character and because the Fire District cannot support taller structures both from an equipment standpoint and staffing. Traffic calming and pedestrian/bicycle improvements are necessary at SR508 and Alexander Rd for safety.

Industrial

The extent of the designation was supported. Typically, there are no height limits associated with industrial development; however, the CAC recommends capping new development at 35 feet for the same reasons as the other areas – to protect small town character and due to Fire District limitations.

Residential High

The discussion focused on the location of the high-density area at the location shown on the map or moving it to the land around the western extension of 3rd St and north extension of Kerr Road. The reason argued for moving it north was to avoid people needing to cross SR508. However, ultimately the group agreed to keep it where shown on the map near where the extension of Mixed Use is proposed and because improvements to the SR508 intersection are recommended. Staff will produce a land capacity analysis to help the CAC determine if the amount of high-density area is sufficient for addressing the new housing requirements from the state.

Residential Medium

The extent of the designation was supported, and the group recommended including the land north of 2nd St W based on current types of residential located in that area.

Residential Low

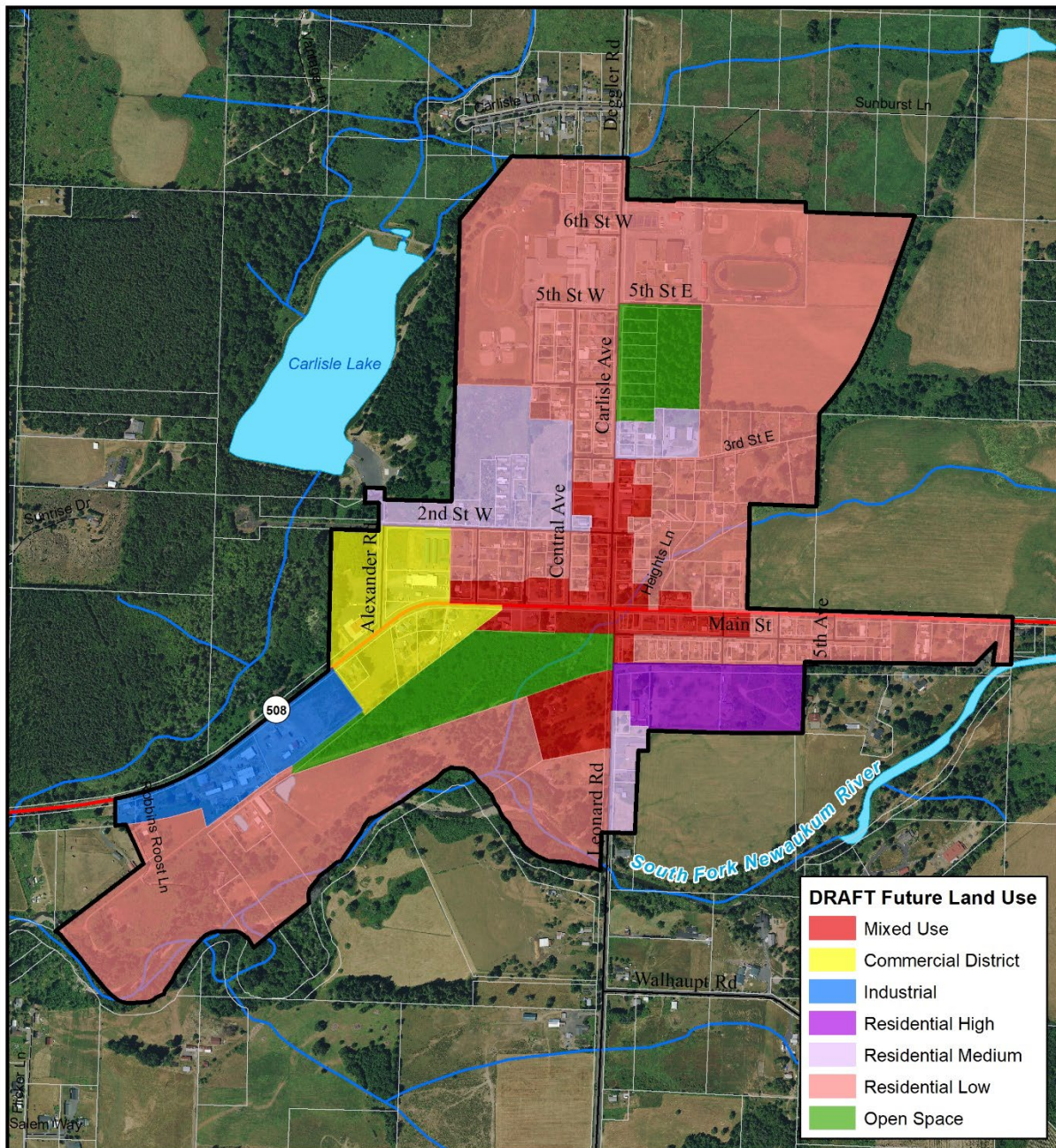
The extent of the designation was supported, with the clarification that institutional uses, the school, is an allowed use. There was discussion about applying for a historic designation for the houses along Carlisle Ave from 3rd St north to 5th St to preserve the houses. Staff will provide additional information about historic designations for the next meeting.

Open Space

The extent of designation was supported for the property south of SR508. There was considerable discussion, with no agreement, on Carlisle Park on the school's property. The discussion focused on what needs the school may have on the property and if the trees should be protected long term. Staff will provide additional information for the next meeting.

Design Guidelines

The CAC discussed the option of using design guidelines to discourage certain types of new development, namely big-box, national grocery store and restaurants (e.g., Dollar General, Starbucks). There was not full agreement about using design guidelines or other tools, such as prohibiting drive-throughs. Staff will provide additional information for the next meeting.



Onalaska Subarea Plan

DRAFT Future Land Use

Updated 4/16/2024
Planning Division, Community Development

- Subarea Boundary
- SR 508
- Roads
- Parcels
- Waterbodies
- Streams

0 0.075 0.15 0.3
Miles



This map was created by Lewis County Geographic Information System. The accuracy of the map has not been verified and should be used for informational purposes only. Any possible discrepancies should be brought to the attention of Lewis County GIS.
State Plane Washington South FIPS 4602
North American Datum 1983
North American Vertical Datum 1988 (Topography)

May 21 & June 18, 2024 CAC Meetings 8 & 9

The draft plan was reviewed by the CAC over the course of two meetings. The committee members discussed and made suggestions to the wording of the goals and policies. New goals and policies were added as needed to address topics that had been discussed previously but not yet included in the plan. The Future Land Uses map and Transportation Concept were further refined to reflect committee priorities.

At the close of Meeting 9 staff asked if the CAC was supportive of taking the draft plan to the public for review. The committee members were in agreement. It was decided to present the draft plan at the 2024 Apple Harvest Festival because a larger percentage of the wider Onalaska community would be in attendance. The results of the engagement will be brought back to the CAC in the fall to make any final adjustments to the draft plan before it goes through the adoption process.

October 5, 2024 Apple Harvest Festival

On October 5, 2024, staff hosted a booth at the Apple Harvest Festival to share the draft Onalaska Subarea Plan and receive comments. Staff printed maps of the existing zoning and the Future Land Uses map and provided handouts that explained the proposed changes.



2024 Apple Harvest Festival Booth

A third poster included policy statements from the draft plan and people were invited to pick their top three priorities. Because each statement represents a priority that the CAC identified, none of the statements will be removed from the planning process. The exercise serves instead to help staff and the CAC understand what the community feels is the most important and therefore what should be a priority focus of the discussions going forward. In addition, people could provide other priorities that had not yet been included. Below are the results of the poster survey, in order.

1. Preserve Carlisle Lake, large stands of trees and surrounding streams and wetlands (22)
2. Protect surrounding rural areas, farms and forest lands (21)
3. Improve the safety of State Route 508 (20)
4. Ensure sufficient infrastructure (e.g. water sewer) and necessary public services (e.g. EMS) to support anticipated growth (11)
5. Encourage bicycle, pedestrian and ADA friendly streets (10)
6. Support and grow community events, festivals and gatherings (9)
7. Promote and encourage conditions that enable local business to thrive and prosper (8)
8. Preserve historic housing (8)

9. Support and grow educational opportunities (7)
10. Provide housing options and local services that allow residents to age in place (5)
11. Encourage a diversity of housing options that meeting the needs of existing and future residents (3)

**Onalaska
20-year
Priorities**

What are your highest priorities? Place your dots to vote.

Encourage bicycle, pedestrian and ADA friendly streets.	Encourage a diversity of housing options that meet the needs of existing and future residents.
Promote and encourage conditions that enable local business to thrive and prosper.	Support and grow educational opportunities.
Improve the safety of State Route 508.	Support and grow community events, festivals and gatherings.
Provide housing options and local services that allow residents to age in place.	Ensure sufficient infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer) and necessary public services (e.g., EMS) to support anticipated growth.
Protect surrounding rural areas, farms and forest lands.	Preserve historic housing.
Preserve Carlisle Lake, large stands of trees and surrounding streams and wetlands.	

 The statements were created during 10 meetings of the Community Advisory Committee from November 2023 through June 2024. 

Onalaska Subarea Plan

Staff contact

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