



DRAFT ONALASKA SUBAREA PLAN – PHASE 1



20-Year Vision

Onalaska is a vibrant small town, surrounded by farms, timberland and open space, that celebrates its history, encourages unique local businesses, provides affordable housing options, supports existing and new residents, preserves the natural environment, encourages recreation and promotes community events.

Acknowledgments

This plan is the culmination of more than a year of work with the community of Onalaska. Many thanks to the Community Advisory Committee, residents, business owners and interested citizens who filled out surveys, attended community meetings, agreed to be interviewed and invited staff to their homes and businesses to provide input on the plan.

Lewis County Project Team

Mindy Brooks, Director, Community Development

Lee Napier, Former Director, Community Development

Katie Johnson, Office Assistant Senior, Community Development

Community Advisory Committee

Kathy Armitage

LaVeta Arnold

Linda Bailey

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

Table of Contents

CHAPTERS

1: INTRODUCTION	
Why create a subarea plan	1
Public Engagement	4
2: ONALASKA HISTORY	5
3: EXISTING CONTIDITIONS	
Population Growth	9
Existing Zoning & Land Use	10
Housing	12
Land Capacity	13
Public Facilities	14
Environmental Constraints	17
4: VISION, GOALS AND POLICIES	
Community	19
Housing	20
Economic Development	22
Transportation	23
Recreation and Environment	25
Public Facilities	26
Land Use	27
5: NEXT STEPS	32

TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: 2045 Population Allocations	9
Table 2: 2045 Housing Allocations	12
Table 3: Future Land Use Designations	30
Figure 1: Housing types on single family lot	
Figure 2: State Route 508 Cross-Section concept	

MAPS

Map 1: Onalaska Subarea Boundary	1
Map 2: Downtown Onalaska	1
Map 3: Existing Zoning Designations	11
Map 4: Existing Land Use	11
Map 5: Lewis County Water Sewer District 2	14
Map 6: Lewis County Water Sewer District 2 Sewer	15
Map 7: Environmental Constraints	17
Map 8: Onalaska Transportation Concept	24
Map 9: Future Land Use Map	29
Map 10: Future Land Use Map – Downtown	29
Map 11: Urban Growth Area	31

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Public Participation Results	
Attachment C: Findings of Fact	



2019 Onalaska

1: INTRODUCTION

The Onalaska Subarea Plan is a long-range vision, goals and policies that will guide Onalaska's growth and development over the next 20 years. Phase 1 of the Onalaska Plan was developed in collaboration with the community and guided by a 20-member Community Advisory Committee who met monthly during 2023-2024. Additional community input was gathered through surveys, interviews and community meetings (see Attachment A). Technical experts were consulted at key moments during the creation of the plan to coordinate on specific issues such as the capacity of Lewis County Water Sewer District 2 to serve new development.

The subarea plan, Phase 1, includes goals and policies that address the following topics:

- Community
- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Recreation and Environment
- Public Facilities

Two supporting documents were also developed. The documents are attached to the Onalaska Subarea Plan, but do not amend the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan. The supporting documents are:

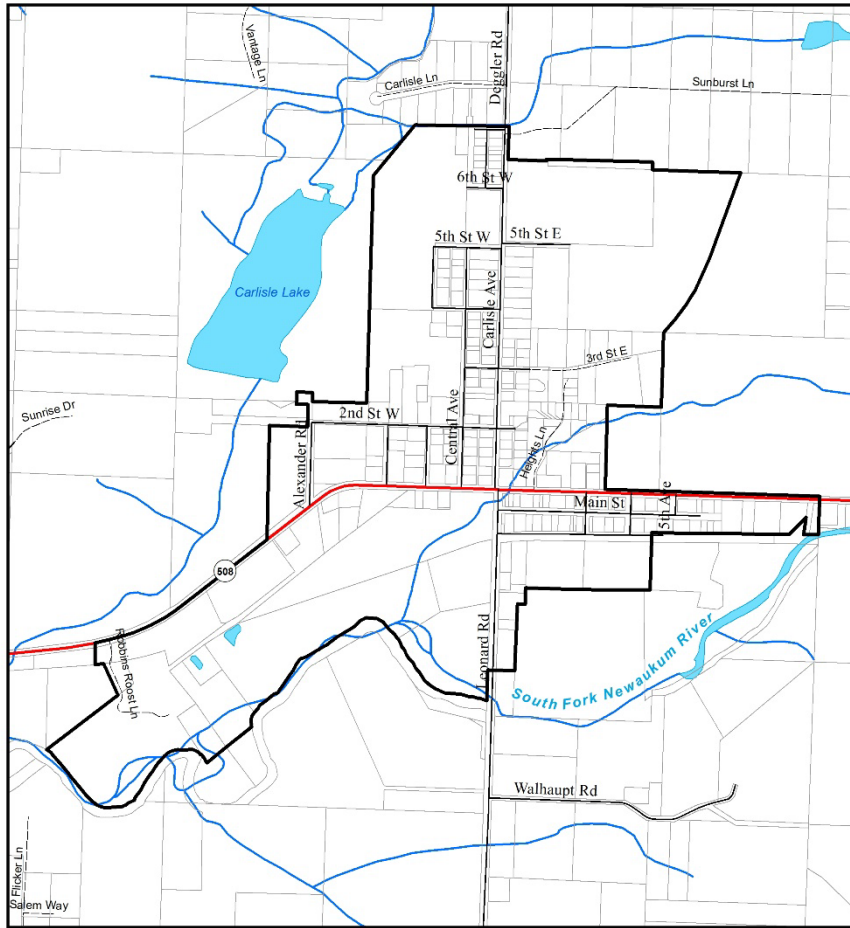
Attachment A: Onalaska Subarea Plan Public Participation (*online*)

Attachment B: Onalaska Findings of Fact (*to be completed*)

The Onalaska Subarea Plan amends the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan and conforms to the Growth Management Act rules set forth in RCW 36.70A.080, as well as the adopted Countywide Planning Policies. The Onalaska Subarea Plan is being completed in two phases. Phase 1 is the vision, goals and policies, including a Future Land Use Map. Phase 2 will be amendments to zoning designations and development regulations that implement Phase 1. Phase 1 will be completed in 2024 and Phase 2 in 2025. Map 1 shows the subarea boundary and Map 2 shows the extent of Downtown Onalaska.



Photo: Mindy Brooks



- Onalaska Subarea Plan**
- Subarea Boundary
 - SR 508
 - Roads
 - Parcels
 - Waterbodies
 - Streams
- Plan Boundary**

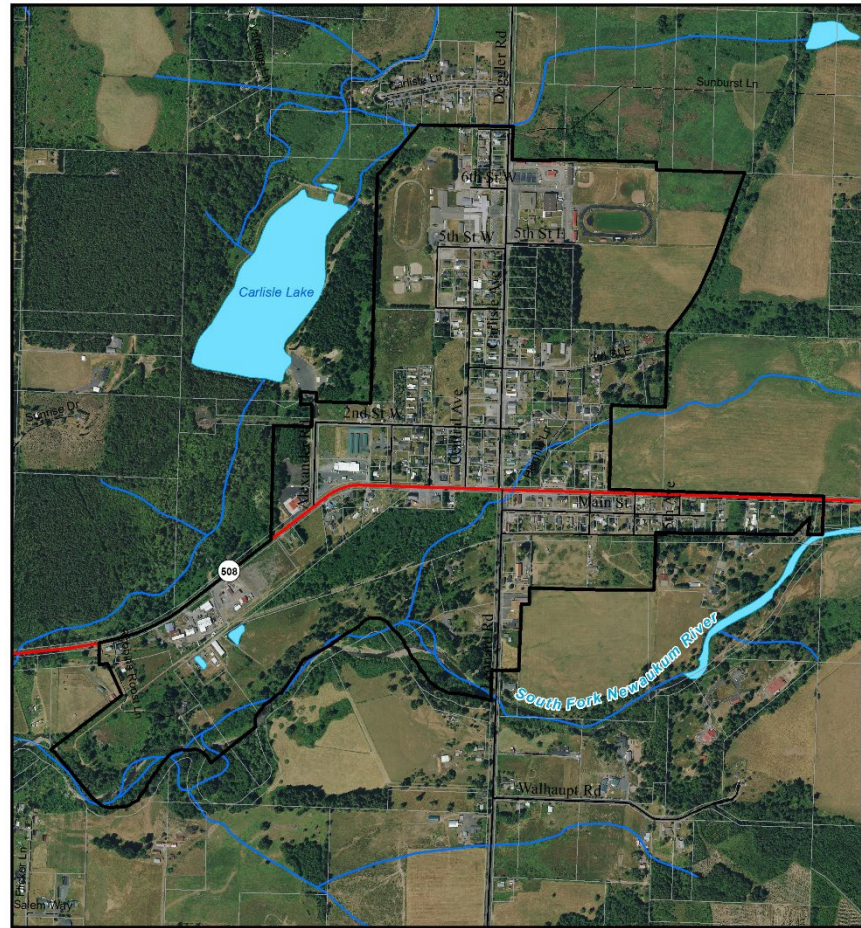


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Updated 5/01/2024
 Planning Division, Community Development



Map 1: Onalaska Subarea Boundary



- Onalaska Subarea Plan**
- Subarea Boundary
 - SR 508
 - Roads
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 - Waterbodies
 - Streams
- Plan Boundary**



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Map 2: Onalaska Subarea Plan with Aerial Photography

Why create a subarea plan for Onalaska?

A subarea plan, similar to any comprehensive planning process, is an opportunity for the public to help determine the long-term vision for the community and set goals and policies to guide and manage development to achieve that vision. The subarea plan is a compass that defines where the community is headed on specific topics like transportation, housing, economic development, recreation, etc.

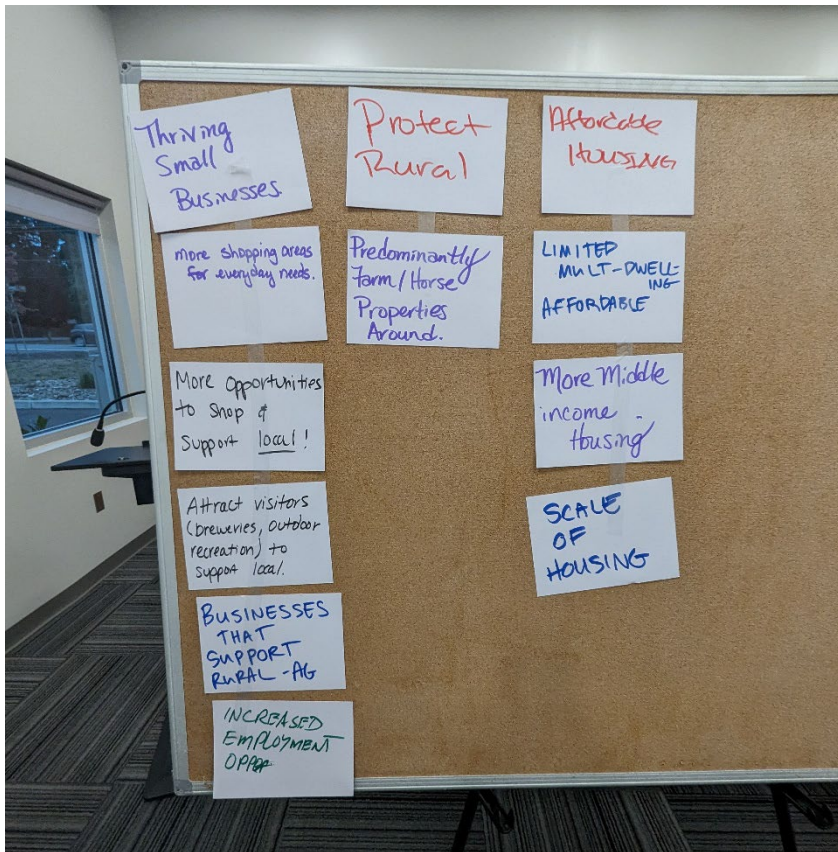
In 2018, Lewis County adopted the [Onalaska Subarea Plan](#) as an amendment to the County's Comprehensive Plan. The plan included existing conditions related to land use, critical areas, and water and sewer service. The plan identified development potential in general but did not complete a land capacity analysis, which is needed to determine the extent of an urban growth area boundary. A recreational concept was included. The result of the plan was application of an urban growth area (UGA) around Onalaska; however, the zoning designation and development regulation were not updated.

This update of the subarea plan includes goals and policies for the plan area that address the comprehensive plan elements of land use, housing, capital facilities and utilities, transportation, economic development, parks and recreation, and, new in 2023, climate resiliency. This update also includes a land capacity analysis that determines what population can be accommodated, in terms of housing and employment, within the UGA based on the existing zoning designations.

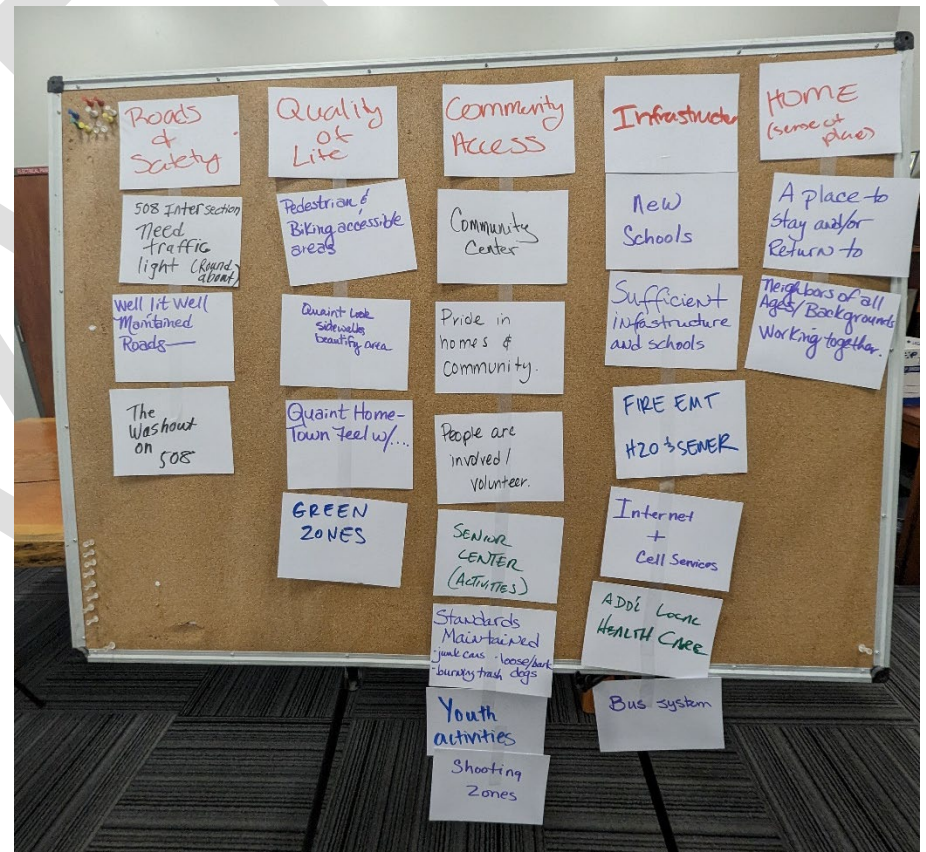
Finally, the current zoning is based on designation of Onalaska as a Limited Area of More Intense Rural Development (LAMIRD), which is what Onalaska was designated until application of the UGA. By applying the UGA, the LAMIRD designation was removed and the zoning is no longer appropriate. Phase 2 will include updated zoning designations and development regulations based on the goals and policies of this plan and the housing needs assessment.

Public Engagement

The subarea plan vision, goals and policies were developed by the community of Onalaska through public engagement, including a 20-member Community Advisory Committee that met monthly in 2023 and 2024, 3 community meetings, and other events. The primary themes that emerged from the engagement were protecting the rural character Onalaska, need for affordable housing and services (e.g. grocery, doctor's office) that support people living in Onalaska, transportation improvements and ensuring that infrastructure and services keep up with development. The full results of public engagement are found in Attachment A: Onalaska Subarea Plan Public Participation. (Note – Future engagement will include the public hearings process that allows for public comment to the Lewis County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.)



September 2023 Community Advisory Committee Priorities



September 2023 Community Advisory Committee Priorities

2: ONALASKA HISTORY

With a special thank you to Edna Fund for providing a succinct summary of the history of Onalaska. Photos are courtesy of the Lewis County Historical Museum with proper citations.

Considering four areas of the United States have Onalaska as their name, they all had in common large sawmill operations by the William Carlisle & Company, later to be known as the Carlisle Lumber Company. Those areas were in Wisconsin, Arkansas, Texas, and Washington. Today all that remains of that era in Washington State is the large smokestack, mill pond, and Carlisle-built homes.

The Carlises, father and son William and William A., purchased Onalaska land in 1902, and in 1914, construction began. During the construction of the mill, the Carlisle family drove a fancy Oldsmobile touring car to see the timber-laden property. Since this was an expensive car, the local residents were greatly impressed with that kind of car.

During the building process, Paige Twiss, a correspondent from nearby Alpha for the Lewis County Advocate, wrote this report about a large steam donkey, "Never before have the natives of this locality seen anything so big invading these jungles. The engine has two 11 x 13 cylinders, weighs 35 tons and rests on a sled over 40 feet long. It passes by all bridges and moves along steadily through brush, logs and the stumps. Everything has to be before this leviathan of the woods in its wake follows a curious mob of happy people, old and young, with eyes bulging like saucers and mouths agape."

Thirty days later, Mr. Twiss wrote, "A mill site has been cleared out of the heart of the woods and wagon load after wagon load of heavy machinery for the new mill has been wending its way like a line of huge antediluvian turtles through the mud and rain from the terminus of the Chehalis and Cowlitz RR at Newaukum Prairie to their destination at Onalaska. This mill is to do the preliminary work such as cutting the ties for the new railroad and the manufacturing of the lumber for the new town. There is plenty of work to do before the railroad gets here. Then this mill will be sold or discarded and gigantic mills before mentioned will be shipped over the new railroad to take its place."

January 1, 2025



P10473- Galloping Goose on CC&C RR tracks was a vehicle made of a truck chassis with a passenger cab which ran between Chehalis and Onalaska, WA 1912 to 1925.

The largest inland mill in the world at the time was this mill. In 1915, the "Wonder City" was the term used by news reporters to describe Onalaska. Over 1,000 workers had arrived. Houses were built for the workers by Mr. Carlisle who estimated 225 houses had been built, with four, five, and six rooms, with the best lumber, of course. Homes for the mill officials were a step-up and located on Carlisle Avenue with many upscale homes still in Onalaska. However, there was still not enough housing. The mill workers would pull slabs and pieces of tin and make shanties from the "leftovers." That area of Onalaska was called "Slab Town," which was south of present-day State Route 508.

In Spring 1942, U.S. Army trucks came to Onalaska for the Japanese, as a result of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's executive order to remove persons of Japanese ancestry and place them in relocation camps. A daughter of one of the Carlisle family said her father cried when he saw the Japanese people being taken away by the trucks.

The four-, five-, and six-room company houses were sold and mounted on truck beds to be taken to another location in the community. Some residents felt the moving the houses for six months was like a funeral march out of Onalaska.

What remains today is a non-incorporated community with growth predicted. The smokestack still stands with a mill pond which is used as an innovative high school aquaculture program for fish enhancement. The Carlisle-built houses are still there—the worker and the executive management homes. More homes will join them as Onalaska continues to grow. Even though it is no longer entitled the "Wonder City," it is a community with a promising future. Stores who opened in Onalaska included J.C. Penney, a drug store, a tailor shop, ice plant, dry cleaners, a company store, and a theatre. A church and elementary school soon followed. Following those were restaurants, pool halls, barber shops, and a hotel.



P20650- Carlisle Lumber Company yard overview, mill and pond, sawdust burner at Onalaska, WA., ca 1919.



P21595- Aerial photo of Onalaska, WA, 1938.



P2648- Onalaska Store, (Carlisle Mill Company Store) on Carlisle Avenue of Onalaska, WA. Two story frame building with large panes of glass on first floor, standard windows on second floor. Balcony extends from the second floor with picket fence on one end and a fourth of the front, trellis from the ground to the balcony on one end. Wooden stairway on side up to balcony. Numerous wooden crates under stairs. Four old washing machines used as planters in front and side.

The workforce was quite diverse with Japanese, Swedish and Greek employees living within its own annexes, large cookhouse and bunkhouse provided by the company.

Two railroads were built to carry produce, livestock and logs from the Onalaska area. They were the Chehalis and Cowlitz River Railroad (C.&C. R.R.) and Newaukum Valley Railroad. The C.&C. R.R. Came south from Chehalis to Onalaska, and the Newaukum Valley Railroad was from Napavine to Onalaska. Approximately 300,000 board feet of finished lumber left in twelve rail cars a day.

The depression slowed the growth of the town; however, the Carlisle mill continued to run with a minimum wage of .28/hour. Rents were cut in half by the Carlisles. In 1934-35, many of the workers joined unions. A three-year strike occurred, with no lights for Onalaska when the mill was not operating. It re-opened until 1942, when Weyerhaeuser took over Carlisle's timber holdings and the mill was sold for scrap.



P23829 - Carlise Mill, Onalaska, WA Employed 1000, 1914-1942. Smokestack is 225 ft high.

3: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Population

Onalaska is not an incorporated city; however, the Washington State Office of Financial Management provides estimated populations for small areas such as unincorporated UGAs. The 2022 small area estimate for the Onalaska UGA was 562 people.

In 2023, Lewis County coordinated with the Planned Growth Committee (PGC) to assign the 2045 population allocations to all cities and UGAs in the county. The PGC is comprised of the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners and the Mayor of each city in Lewis County, or their designee. The PGC recommended the 2045 population allocations to the Lewis County Planning Commission who held a public hearing and then made a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The BOCC held a public hearing and then adopted the 2045 population allocations in June 2023 (Ordinance 1346). Onalaska’s 2045 population allocation is 700 people. Table 1 shows the full Lewis County population allocations.

Table 1: Lewis County 2045 Population Allocations

Jurisdiction	2022 Total Population	2045 Population Allocation	20-Year Population Increase	20-Year Growth Rate
Centralia	22,376	24,000	1,624	7.26%
Chehalis	9,845	13,500	3,655	37.13%
Morton	1,302	1,351	49	3.75%
Mossyrock	906	1,058	152	16.78%
Napavine	1,969	2,978	1,009	51.24%
Pe Ell	658	680	22	3.30%
Toledo	747	2,537	1,790	239.63%
Vader	899	1,110	211	23.47%
Winlock	2,115	4,756	2,641	124.87%
Total City	40,817	51,969	11,152	27.32%
Onalaska	562	700	138	24.56%
Packwood	910	1,200	290	31.87%
Other Rural	41,157	41,582	425	1.03%
Total Unincorporated	42,629	42,379	1,222	2.97%
Total Lewis County	83,446	94,348	12,374	13.06%

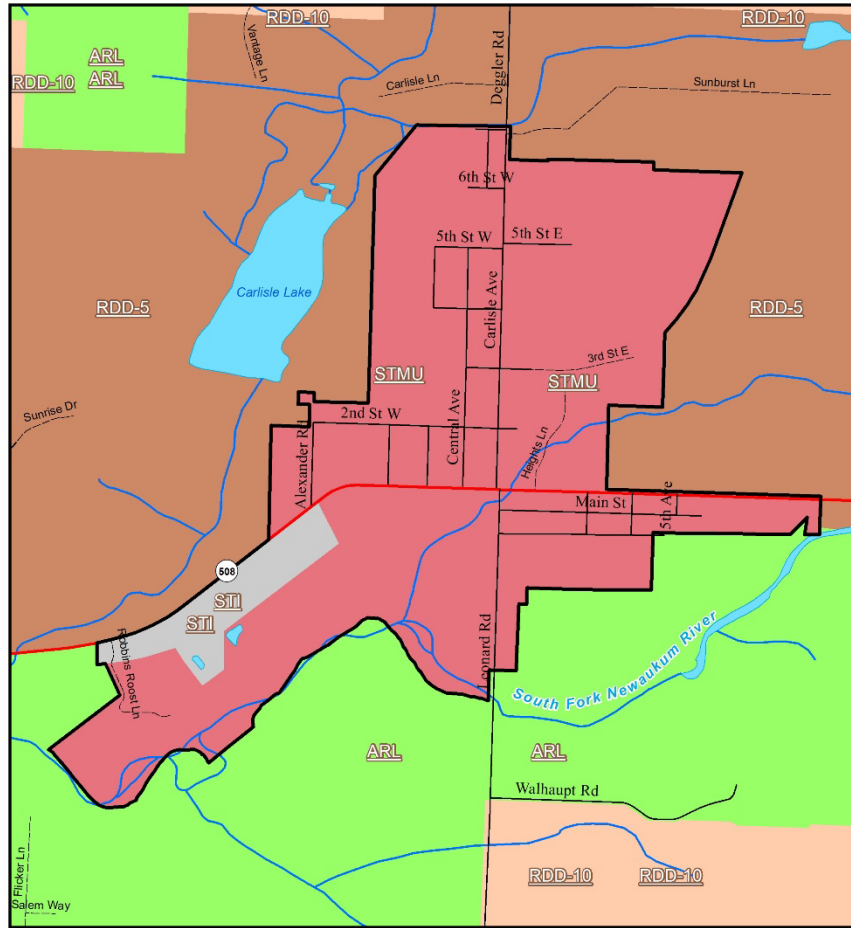
Existing Zoning & Land Use

The study area includes all of the “limited areas of more intense rural development” (LAMIRDs) in the Onalaska UGA, as shown in Map 3. There are two zones: Small Town Mixed Use (STMU) at 293 acres and Small Town Industrial (STI) at 18 acres.

There are no agricultural resource lands or forest resource lands within the plan area. Lewis County Code (LCC) Chapter 17.42 provides the list of allowed uses in each zone. Existing land uses within the study area are shown in Map 4. It is important to understand that existing uses may not match the allowed use in LCC 17.42 because some existing uses predate the zoning code regulations. Those uses are allowed to persist in their current development footprint and are referred to as a “legal nonconforming use.”

The STMU zone does not have a minimum allowed density and the density of development is determined by health code and available utilities. If there are both public water and sewer, then the minimum lot size is 6,000 square feet. However, that does not clarify the density of development that is allowed on each site. Allowed uses in existing STMU zoned areas include single family residential, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, sporting goods stores, restaurants, grocery stores, fuel stations, hotels/motels, RV parks, small event centers and other small businesses, as well as schools, doctor’s office, churches, etc. With sewer, multifamily residential would also be allowed. There are 195 acres of vacant land in the Onalaska Subarea boundary that is currently zoned for STMU and could be developed with the above listed uses.

The STI zone also does not have a minimum allowed density because new residential uses are not allowed in that zone. Allowed uses in the existing STI zoned area include manufacturing, mills/log yards, handling of goods, storage, retail associated with industrials uses, composting, waste management, standalone grocery, event centers and kennels.



Onalaska Subarea Plan

- Small Town Mixed Use *STMU*
- Small Town Industrial *STI*
- Subarea Boundary
- SR 508
- Roads
- Waterbodies
- Streams

Zoning Designations

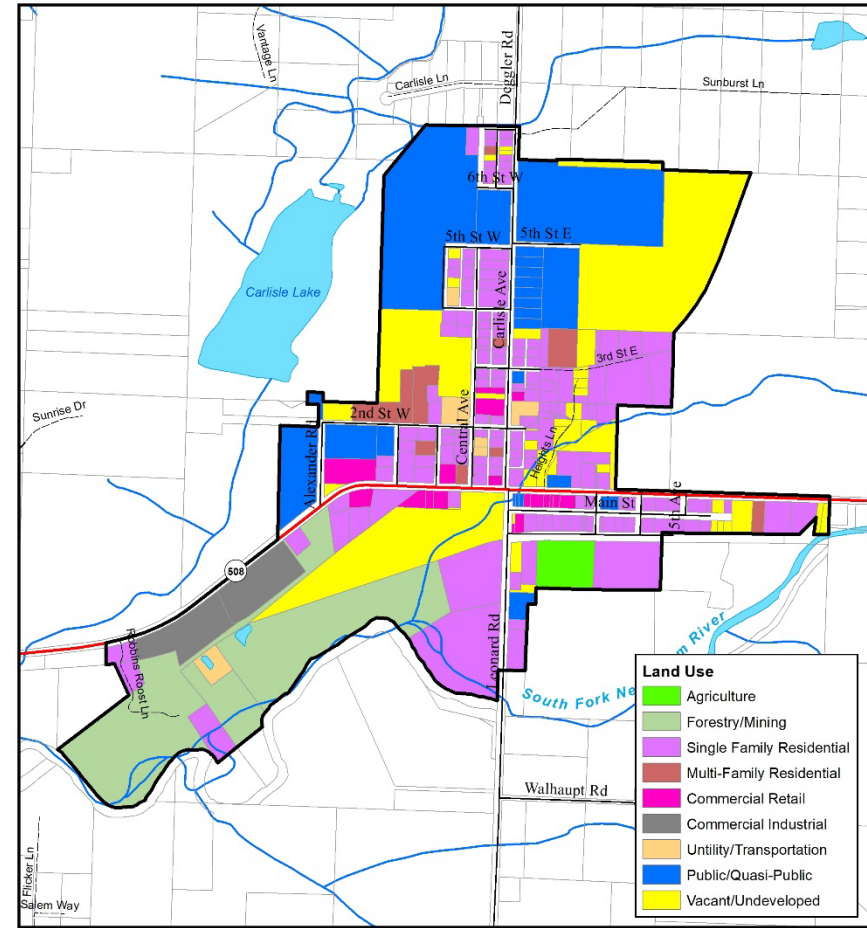
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 Planning Division, Community Development

0 0.075 0.15 0.3 Miles



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Map 3: Existing Zoning Designations



Onalaska Subarea Plan

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

Existing Land Use

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0 0.075 0.15 0.3 Miles



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Map 4: Existing Generalized Land Use

Housing

In 2023, Lewis County coordinated with the Planned Growth Committee (PGC) to assign the 2045 housing allocations to all cities and UGAs in the county. The PGC recommended the 2045 housing allocations to the Lewis County Planning Commission who held a public hearing and then made a recommendation to the BOCC. The BOCC held a public hearing and then adopted the 2045 housing allocations in June 2023 (Ordinance 1346). The Onalaska UGA was included in the total unincorporated Lewis County housing allocation. To better understand the split of housing between the Onalaska UGA, Onalaska and other rural areas, staff used the same methodology to split the housing, as shown in Table 2. It is important to note that Lewis County is only required to adjust zoning designations and development regulations such that housing that is affordable at each income level could be built.

Table 2: Lewis County 2045 Housing Allocations

			Permanent Housing Needs by % of Area Median Income							Emergency Housing
			0-30%							
		Total	Non-PSH	PSH	>30-50%	>50-80%	>80-100%	>100-120%	>120%	
Onalaska UGA	2045 Allocation	167	27	11	88	29	3	3	6	4
Packwood	2045 Allocation	336	61	27	184	39	7	5	13	17
Other Rural	2045 Allocation	67	0	0	0	0	18	15	34	21
TOTAL Unincorporated Lewis County	2045 Allocation	570	88	38	272	68	28	23	53	0
	Estimated Housing Supply (2020)	19,519	667	25	3,146	4,704	2,798	2,016	6,163	0

Onalaska needs to have 167 dwelling units to accommodate the 20-year population growth. Most of that housing, 155 dwelling units, needs to be affordable to people making less than 80% Area Median Income (AMI). A significant amount of that housing needs to be permanent supportive housing (PSH), which includes assisted living facilities, adult family homes and shelters.

Affordable housing means a person spends no more than 30% of their monthly income on housing. A person making minimum wage, \$16.28 per hour (2024), can afford to pay \$781 per month on housing. A person making \$67,169 per year (2023 per capita AMI in Lewis County) can afford to pay \$1,679 per month on housing. The average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Washington is \$2,031 (Source: apartments.com). At the time of this report, there were no long term rentals near Onalaska (Source: zillow.com, apartments.com). At the time of this report, the average listing price for a single family house in Onalaska is \$528,572 (Source: zillow.com).

Land Capacity Analysis

In June 2024, Lewis County completed a Land Capacity Analysis (LCA) for the county that included an evaluation of the Onalaska UGA. The LCA methodology is a separate document that is adopted by the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan. The methodology uses the existing land use to determine vacant and underdeveloped parcels, which can accommodate new residential and employment uses. Critical areas, such as wetlands, are deducted. Assumptions are made regarding how much land will be needed for new infrastructure, such as streets, and public uses, such as parks. Then, using development assumptions for the existing zoning designations, the result is how many more dwelling units and jobs can be accommodated within the UGA over the next 20 years. This is compared to the population and housing allocations to determine if the existing UGA, with the existing zoning designations, can accommodate anticipated growth.

The Onalaska UGA has residential capacity to accommodate 804 people, which is 104 more people than are anticipated on the 2045 population allocation. Onalaska can accommodate 324 dwelling units; however, 304 would be single family and only 20 dwelling units would be multifamily. Therefore, Onalaska cannot accommodate needed housing that would be affordable at the lower income brackets based on the existing zoning designations. Onalaska has an employment capacity of 229 commercial retail jobs and 525 commercial industrial jobs.

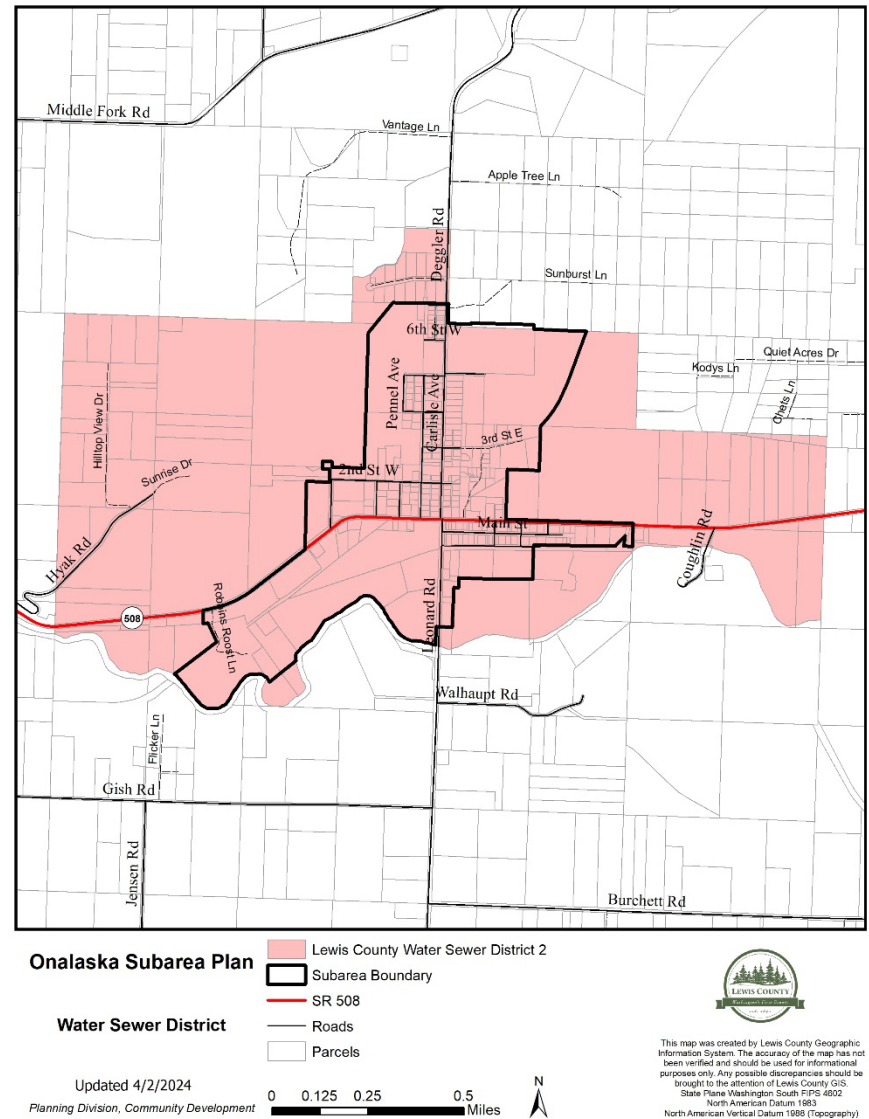
Public Facilities

Water

Onalaska has two community wells drawing from an aquifer that is classified as unconfined and semi-confined and serves approximately 239 individual connections. As of March 2024, Lewis County Water District 2 (LCWD2) could accommodate up to 262 additional single family residential connections or a mix of residential and commercial connections under the current system configuration and Water Rights. The system, including the wells, is owned and operated by LCWD2. Map 5 shows the currently approved service area of LCWD2, although not all properties in the service area are connected to the public water supply.

LCWD2 relies on two wells that withdraw from an aquifer, which mimics the hydraulic gradient of the nearby Newaukum River. The wells are established at 355 ft. and 512 ft. depth. The water from the wells is pumped up to a reservoir located up Sunrise Drive and then gravity-fed back down to the individual connections. Some hookups are fed on the way up to the reservoir. Monitoring of the wells has never detected any fluctuation in the level of the aquifer, even during drought events. The district water is tested routinely and requires minimal disinfection or other types of water quality treatment. If the threshold of connections is reached, LCWD2 will likely need to add another reservoir and possibly an additional well.

Some properties located within the LCWD2 service area rely on alternative water supplies including small public water systems and individual wells.

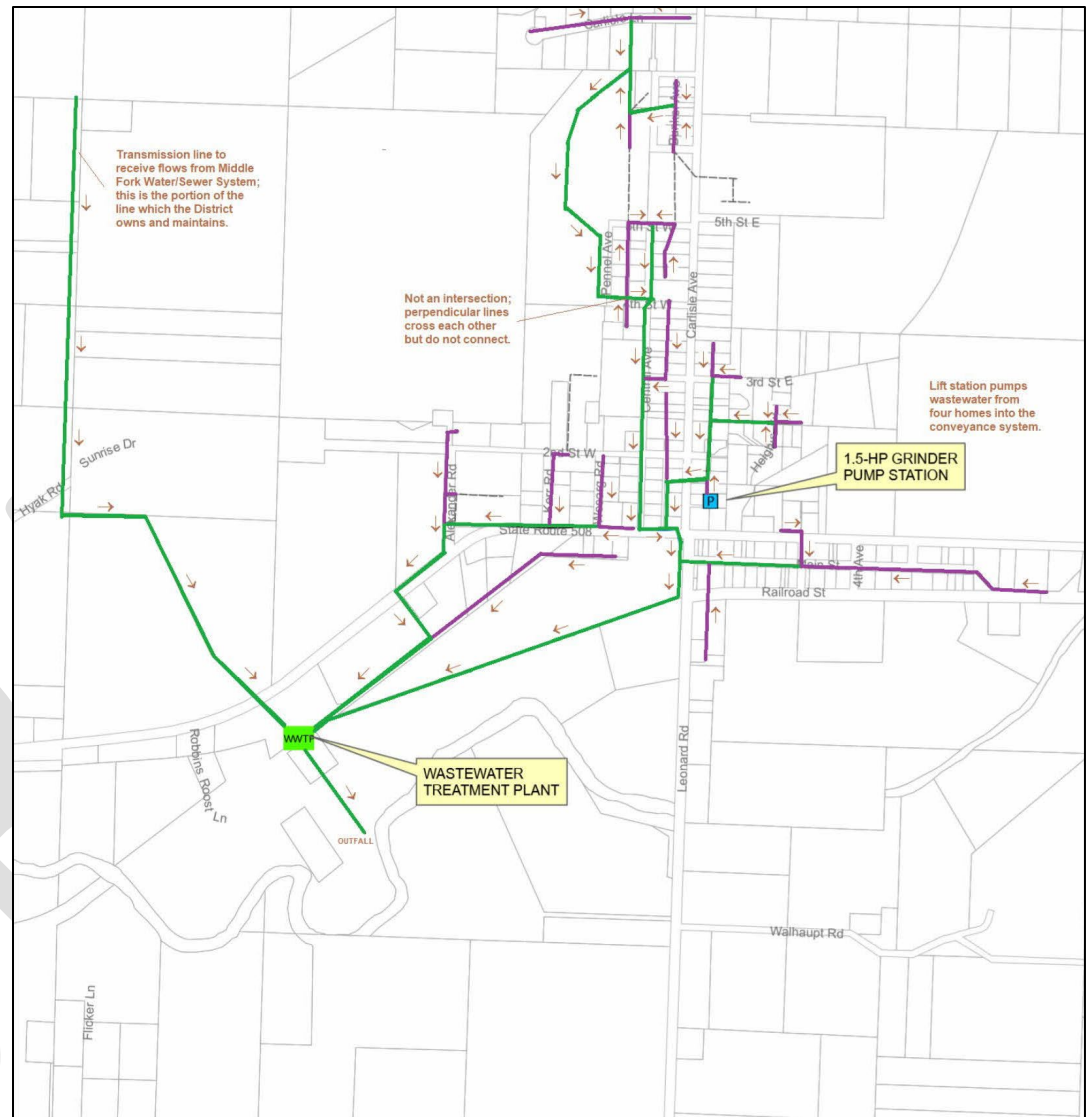


Map 5: Lewis County Water Sewer District 2

Wastewater

The town of Onalaska’s sewer collection and treatment system is operated and maintained by LCWD2. LCWD2’s treatment plant has an sulfate reducing bacteria (SBR) system with a design compacity of 107,000 gallons per day. As of March 2024, the treatment plant is running approximately 50,000 gallons of waste per day. Operating at 47% compacity under the current systems configurations. LCDW2 currently serves 235 sewer customer connections for residential and commercial properties with the ability to accommodate 325 more connections under the current system.

The wastewater of Onalaska is gravity fed to a treatment plant located at 1678 St HWY 508. There the waste is treated, tested, and filtered back into the Newaukum River. Waste that is unable to be treated at LCWD2’s is taken to Three Rivers Wastewater treatment plant in Longview, WA. Some properties located within LCWD2 service area rely on alternate or private sewage systems.



Map 6: Lewis County Water Sewer District 2 Sewer System

Stormwater

Because Onalaska is unincorporated, jurisdiction for stormwater regulation falls under LCC 15.45. Lewis County ensures compliance with LCC 15.45 through a permitting process when regulated development proposals, such as subdivisions or new and re-development, are reviewed to determine if the requirements are met. Maintenance of stormwater facilities, such as detention ponds, are the responsibility of the property owner. Generally, new and re-development must meet the state Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual for drainage plans to reduce impacts of stormwater on receiving waters (e.g. streams and rivers).

Transportation

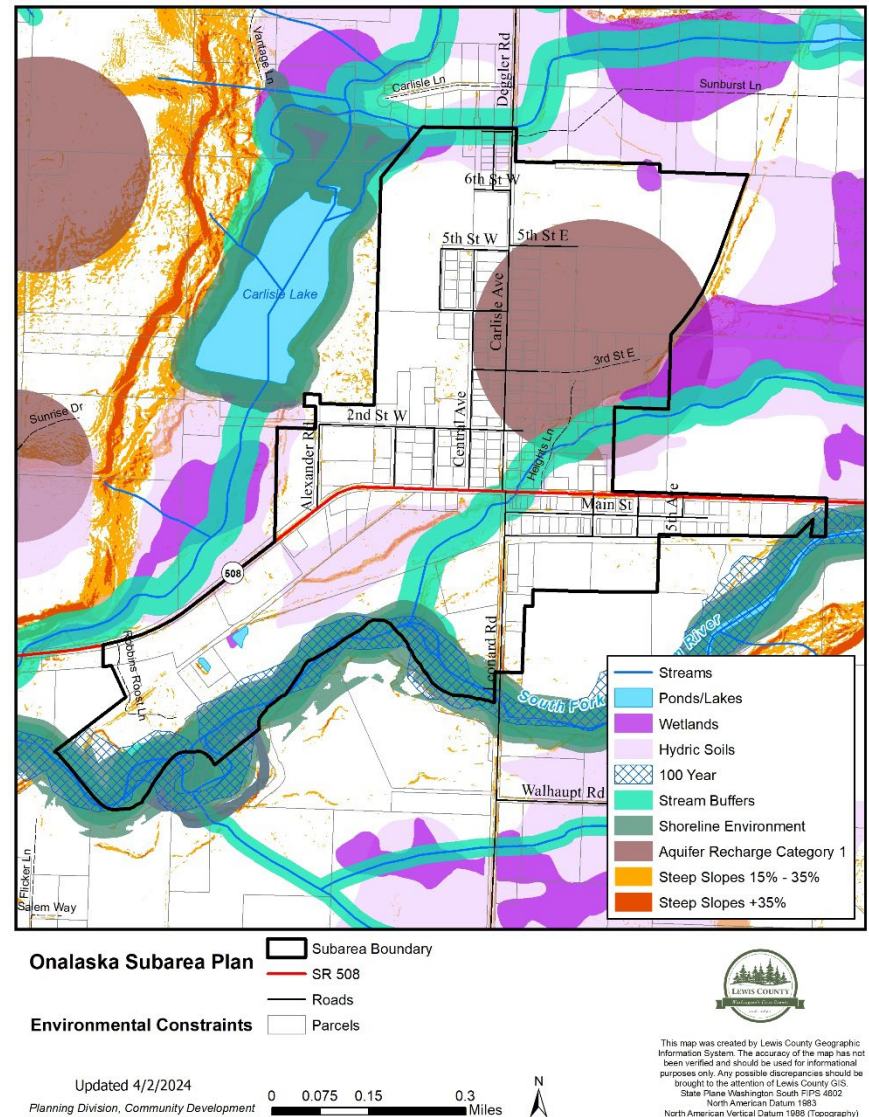
Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) owns and maintains State Route 508, which runs through the center of the Onalaska Subarea. Along with traffic, the right-of-way also provides area for utilities. Lewis County maintains 3.55 miles of roadway in the study area.

Environmental Constraints

Onalaska has many environmental resources located in the subarea and around the town. Along the south edge of town is the South Fork Newaukum River and is home to Coho salmon, Steelhead trout and spring and fall Chinook salmon, as well as cutthroat and rainbow trout. Carlisle Lake is located west of town. Historically it was the Onalaska Mill Pond. Since 1953, the lake has been planted with rainbow trout in April. Coho salmon have also been raised in net pens in the lake. Both the river and lake are integral to the community's character.

The environmental resources also create constraints (Map 7) for future development and growth. The South Fork Newaukum River has a mapped 100-year floodplain; this area has a 1% chance of flooding per year. During large flood events, the river can have significant impacts on homes and businesses built in the floodplain. There is a tributary to the river that flows through town and associated wetlands and hydric soils. These resources manage water during the winter but can also flood and impact structures. Critical aquifer recharge areas are important to protecting wells for potable water.

Reducing the impacts of natural hazards, which can result in damage to property and infrastructure, is important to creating a sustainable future for Onalaska.



Map 7: Onalaska Environmental Constraints

4: VISION, GOALS AND POLICIES

Vision – Onalaska is a vibrant small town, surrounded by farms, timberland and open space, that celebrates its history, encourages unique local businesses, provides affordable housing options, supports existing and new residents, preserves the natural environment, encourages recreation and promotes community events.

The goals and policies, maps and illustrations on the following pages clarify this vision. Phase 2 will implement the vision, goals and policies through new and updated zoning designations and development regulations.



2023 Photo of Onalaska (photo by: Mindy Brooks)

Community

Community Goal 1 – Maintain a unique sense of place.

Onalaska has locally owned small businesses that provide unique and charming products and services.

Policies

CM1.1: Preserve and enhance historic buildings and sites.

CM1.2: Enhance public open spaces with information about Onalaska's history.

CM1.3: Support existing businesses and encourage new unique and locally-owned businesses.

CM1.4: Preserve the rural atmosphere by limiting artificial noise and light.

CM1.5: Protect the rural areas, farms and forest lands surrounding Onalaska.

Community Goal 2 – Support and grow community events, festivals and gatherings.

People have longer, healthier and fuller lives when they are able to live in a community that has well established social networks including family, friends, events, gatherings, etc. Throughout a person's life the types of facilities and social networks change and a community that has a diversity of options is better situated for people to age in place.

Policies

CM2.1: Enhance social connections by promoting use of community spaces for gatherings and events.

CM2.2: Add new community spaces, such as an event center, community hall or senior center.

CM2.3: Broadly distribute information about events, festivals and gatherings.

Community Goal 3 – Support and grow educational opportunities.

The Onalaska School District is a vital part of the community, providing local educational opportunities as well as space for community event.

Policies

CM3.1: Support Onalaska School District to provide K-12 and continuing education opportunities.

CM3.2: Create a partnership with Centralia College, and others, to support local education in agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry and other rural resource-based industries.

CM3.3: Support Timberland Regional Library's continuing education programs for local residents.

CM3.4: Provide local classes in gardening, general home repair, food preservation, etc. at a local community center.



Heavenly Quilts & Fabrics (Photo by: Mindy Brooks)

Housing

Housing Goal 1 – Encourage a diversity of housing options that meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Affordable housing is a primary concern for the community. Affordable housing means everyone in Onalaska is able to find housing that meets their income constraints. In practice, that means ensuring a wide range of housing types that meet the needs of minimum to median wage earners. A diversity of housing types can be designed to fit the small-town character of Onalaska, including multifamily housing options such as triplex, quadplex, rowhouses and small apartments, that provide a more affordable option for many residents. Higher density housing options should be located near infrastructure, such as sidewalks, sewers, etc., as well as amenities including grocery and post office.

Policies

HS1.1: Encourage high and medium density housing in and near Downtown Onalaska that is designed to fit “small town” character.

HS1.2: Encourage a diversity of single family housing types including duplexes, tiny home villages and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

HS1.3: Encourage similar residential development patterns and lot sizes between established neighborhoods.

HS1.4: Encourage the development of affordable long-term rental units such as dormitories and hostels.

HS1.7: Support options to alleviate property cost burden for people on low and fixed incomes.

Housing Goal 2 – Provide housing options that allow residents to age in place.

People have longer, healthier and fuller lives when they are able to live in a community that has well established social networks including family, friends, church, community center, etc. To remain in a community as people age, they may experience changes in the type of housing they need. People may desire smaller houses with less yards to maintain or shares living opportunities to reduce the cost of housing or ADA accommodations.

Policies

HS2.1: Encourage ADUs, duplexes, triplexes and cottage housing.

HS2.2: Provide opportunities for senior housing and assisted living facilities.

HS2.3: Support programs that help cost-burdened homeowners maintain their homes.

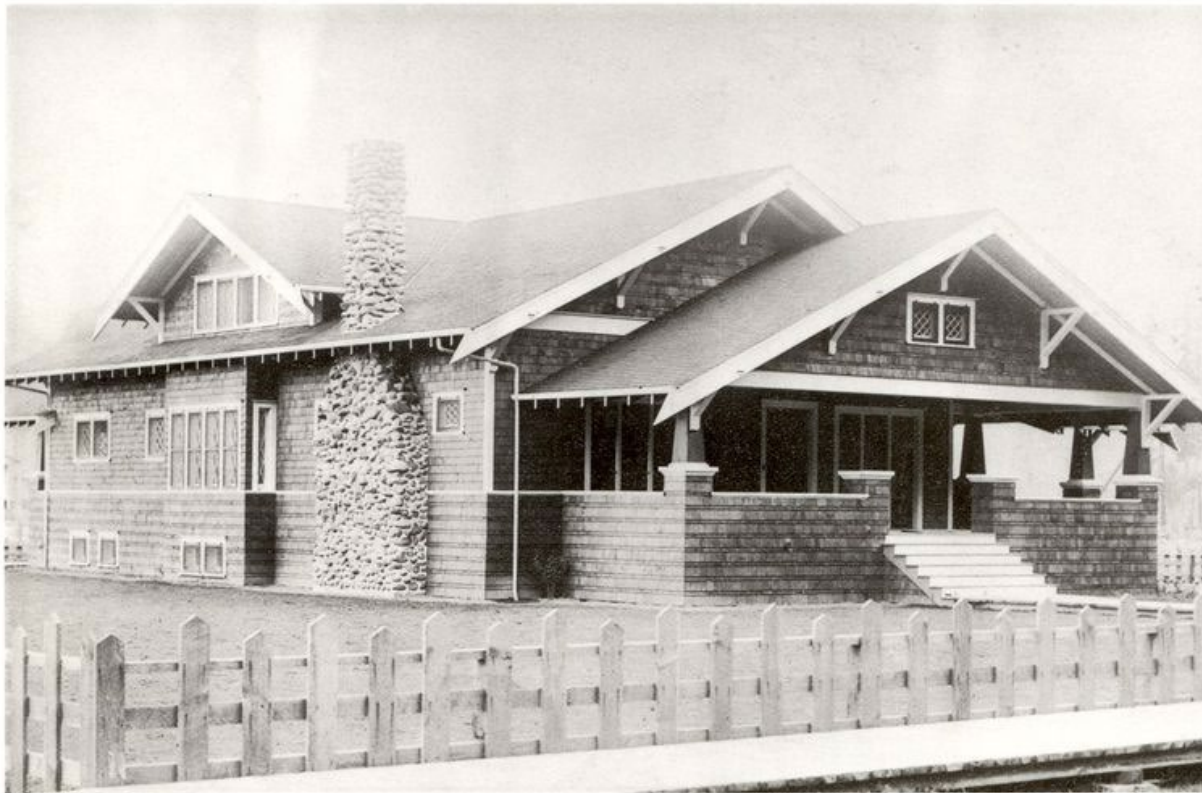
Housing Goal 3 – Preserve historic housing.

Onalaska was built based on the mill and many of the original houses from that era remain. Preserving these houses is important to the character of Onalaska and provides an existing housing stock located near the schools.

Policies

HS3.1: Explore options for designating historic structures or creating a historic district along Carlisle Avenue between SR508 and 5th Street.

HS3.2: Provide financial incentives to property owners for renovations that maintain the historic character of the houses.



Lewis County Historic Museum. P1317- W.A. Carlisle home in Onalaska, WA. Home built in 1914-15.

Economic Development

Economic Development Goal 1 – Promote and encourage conditions that enable local businesses to thrive and prosper.

Residents need many services during their everyday lives including grocery, medical, dental, pharmacy, education, banking, electrician, plumber, veterinarian, clothing, salon, etc. When these essential services are located a long way away (20+ miles), it can result in many long vehicle trips that are costly and potentially unsafe, or people leaving Onalaska and choosing to live in another community. Providing services where people live have many benefits that support families living in and near Onalaska and people being able to age in place.

Policies

ED1.1: Create a concentrated retail area in Downtown Onalaska to encourage people to shop and dine in town

ED1.2: Work with private, non-profit and public partners to attract and retain grocery, medical, dental, veterinarian and other specialized services.

ED1.3: Provide infrastructure that supports grocery, restaurants, medical, dental, veterinarian and other specialized services.

ED1.4: Encourage locally-owned, small-scale businesses.

ED1.5: Work with local schools and other partners to provide education and mentorship for new business owners.

ED1.6: Require new on-site surface parking for businesses facing SR508 to be located behind or to the side of the primary building.

ED1.7: Designate on-street parking on local streets near Downtown Onalaska, wherever possible.

Economic Development Goal 2 – Attract businesses that serve and employ local residents.

The key to supporting a diversity of residents is to have local employment opportunities. While Onalaska is relatively close to I5 and access to employment in Chehalis and Centralia, growing local employment will sustain the town long term.

Policies

ED2.1: Work with partners, such as the Economic Alliance of Lewis County, to attract new electricians, plumbers, carpenters and other skilled laborers, as well as medical, dental, pharmacy, veterinarian and banking jobs that pay a living wage.

ED2.2: Create a partnership with Centralia College, and others, to support trade skills and educational opportunities.

ED2.3: Partner with local farms to create local farm-direct businesses in Onalaska (e.g., farm-to-table restaurants, farmers markets, etc.)

Transportation

Transportation Goal 1 – Encourage bicycle and pedestrian-friendly local streets.

Streets should be safe and accessible to all residents, in particular children walking and biking to school. This will support a vital retail core by promoting shoppers to get out of their cars and visit multiple shops.

Policies

TR1.1: Create pedestrian and bicycle routes along SR508 in Downtown Onalaska and along Carlisle Avenue north to the schools and along Leonard Road south to the edge of the urban growth area.

TR1.2: Add sidewalk on all existing and new streets in Onalaska.

TR1.3: Add crosswalks at primary intersections along SR508, Carlisle Avenue and Leonard Road.

TR1.4: Add lighting along all streets in Onalaska.

Transportation Goal 2 – Improve the pedestrian and vehicular safety of State Route 508.

Traffic needs to be travelling at slow speeds when approaching and going through downtown. Marked on-street parking, improved street lighting and marked/lighted crosswalks are needed.

Policies

TR2.1: Add traffic calming along SR508 at Alexander Road and Carlisle Avenue.

TR2.2: Designate on-street parking that makes efficient use of SR508 right-of-way and provides safe pedestrian access to businesses.

Transportation Goal 3 – Improve the accessibility of Onalaska.

The transportation network should be accessible to everyone including those in a wheelchair or with sight impairment.

Policies

TR3.1: Encourage public transit options including frequent bus service with stops at community amenities and call-a-ride options for front door service.

TR3.2: Extend the historic block pattern of roads as development and redevelopment occurs.

TR3.3: Retrofit existing sidewalks and intersection to be American Disability Act (ADA) compliant.

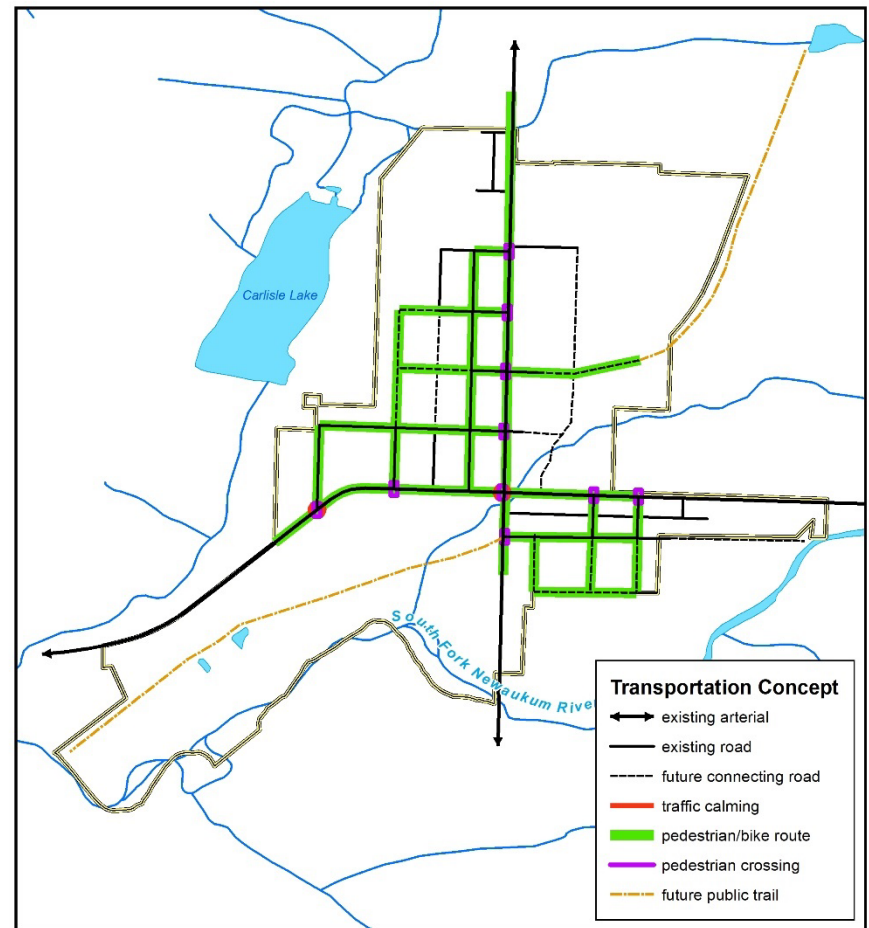
TR3.4: Improve wayfinding options for the physically challenged and hearing and sight impaired.

Onalaska Transportation Concept

Downtown Onalaska is bisected by SR508. Along SR508, there are many community amenities including Lewis County Fire District 1, Brenda’s gas station and market, Post Office, The Carlisle restaurant, Pizza Girl, All In, Backroads Coffee, and Onalaska Tire. Along Carlisle Avenue there are additional community amenities including Finn’s Custom Meats, Justice General Store, Logger Burger Bar and Heavenly Quilts and Fabrics, as well as the Onalaska schools. Surrounding these main roads are established neighborhoods and areas where new residential development will occur.

Map 8 is the transportation concept. Increasing the walkability of Onalaska will have multiple benefits. First, it will create a safer environment for residents calming traffic as it moves through town and designating walking and biking routes. Second, by getting people out of their cars, it will increase opportunities for people to support local businesses. Studies have shown that when people are encouraged to walk in a downtown area, they tend to stop at more businesses and spend more money, thus improving the local economy.

The concept also includes a larger trail system that follows the historic railroad corridor. This trail system would extend out to regional recreational amenities and provide an alternative transportation facility for bicycle and pedestrian travel. This concept does not suggest what kinds of facilities should be used to create walking and biking routes or to calm traffic. The concept also proposes new general street alignments that will extend the existing downtown block pattern and provide access to new residential development over time. This will improve safety by providing access for fire and emergency vehicles. The actual street alignments will be determined as future development occurs by Lewis County Public Works and Onalaska Fire District.



Onalaska Subarea Plan

Subarea Boundary

Waterbodies

Streams

DRAFT
Transportation Concept

Updated 4/2/2024

Planning Division, Community Development



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Map 8: Onalaska Transportation Concept

Recreation and Environment

Recreation and Environment Goal 1 – Encourage families to live and play in town.

Families are an important part of any town. Families support the local economy by purchasing goods and services. Families also invest in social capital including schools, sports and clubs. To support families living and playing in town, there needs to be educational opportunities including high quality schools and libraries, community spaces for recreation and gathering, youth-oriented activities, employment that pays a living wage and affordable housing options. In addition, families need safe walking and biking paths to and through the community.

Policies

RE1.1: Maintain existing parks and open spaces, including Carlisle Lake Park, Veteran’s Memorial park and the Onalaska school grounds, for use by the community.

RE1.2: Encourage use of public spaces for community events including music, town picnics, organized sport events, etc.

RE1.3: Add new recreational facilities such as a skate park, arcade, theater or swimming pool.

RE1.4: Provide safe walking, biking and rolling routes and trails in and around Onalaska.

RE1.5: Add accessibility improvements to recreational facilities for the physically challenged and hearing and sight impaired.

RE1.6: Increase information about and wayfinding to facilities and events.



Onalaska Schools, Carlisle Park Forest (Google Earth Image)

Recreation and Environment Goal 2 – Preserve Carlisle Lake, large stands of trees and surrounding rivers, streams and wetlands.

The natural environment in and around Onalaska is part of the town’s character.

Policies

RE2.1: Protected Carlisle Lake water quality.

RE2.2: Maintain and enhance the wildlife habitat surrounding Carlisle Lake.

RE2.3: Maintain and enhance the forested area on the Onalaska school property, known as Carlisle Park.

Public Facilities

Public Facilities Goal 1 – Ensure sufficient infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer) and necessary public services (e.g., EMS) to support anticipated growth.

As Onalaska grows, the essential services and facilities needed to support the growth must expand concurrently.

Policies

PF1.1: Plan for expansion of the municipal water system and wastewater system over the 20-year planning horizon.

PF1.2: Maintain existing transportation infrastructure.

PF1.3: Provide adequate emergency services and facilities to serve existing and new residents and businesses.

PF1.4: Plan for stormwater management associated with new development, including improvements to SR508.

PF1.5: Encourage installation of high-speed internet to all residents and businesses.

Public Facilities Goal 2 – Promote services and facilities that allow residents to age in place.

People have longer, healthier and fuller lives when they are able to live in a community that has well established social networks including family, friends, church, community center, etc. As we age, the types of services and facilities that are needed changes. The ability to access services and facilities can become difficult due to mobility issues.

Policies

PF2.1: Encourage low cost, reliable public transit with stops near community amenities.

PF2.2: Work with private, non-profit and public partners to bring new services including medical, physical therapy, dental, pharmacy and in-home health care to Onalaska.

PF2.3: Enhance social connections building a community center/senior center with the ability to host a wide variety of community events.

PF2.4: Support uses such as adult daycare, adult family homes and hospice care.

Land Use

Land Use Goal 1 – Preserve the small-town character and history.

Onalaska is a small town with a history rooted in the timber industry. The Carlisle Lake Park smokestack is the cornerstone of the town's history. The relatively small size of existing buildings, space between buildings and historic architecture aides in a "small town" feel.

Policies

LU1.1: Support locally owned small-scale businesses that are unique to Onalaska and Lewis County.

LU1.2: Preserve and enhance historic buildings and sites.

LU1.3: Limit the size and scale of new buildings to two stories.

LU1.4 Establish side setbacks to maintain space between buildings along SR508, Carlisle Avenue and Leonard Road.

LU1.5: Consider use of design standards along SR508, Carlisle Avenue and Leonard Road to ensure new structures match the architecture of existing historic structures, exemplified by the images below.



The Justice General Store est. 1914



Onalaska Home built by Carlist Lumber Company est. 1915

Land Use Goal 2 – Protect surrounding rural areas, farms and forest lands.

Onalaska is surrounded by rural areas and farms, which is important to maintaining the character of the town itself. Sprawl occurs when larger lots (5-,10- or 20-acre) are divided into 1- or 2-acre lots. It is expensive to provide urban services, including municipal water and sewer, to larger, widely spaced residential development. Focusing growth in the urban growth area allows the larger lots to be preserved and used for agricultural, forestry or other rural purposes.

Policies

LU2.1: Encourage growth to focus within the existing urban growth area.

LU2.2: Encourage higher density residential development near Downtown Onalaska.

LU2.3: Support farm-direct businesses, such as community supported agriculture (CSA), that connect with the surrounding farmlands.

LU2.4: Maintain rural density of development surrounding the subarea plan boundary.



Farm near Onalaska, with recent timber harvest in background

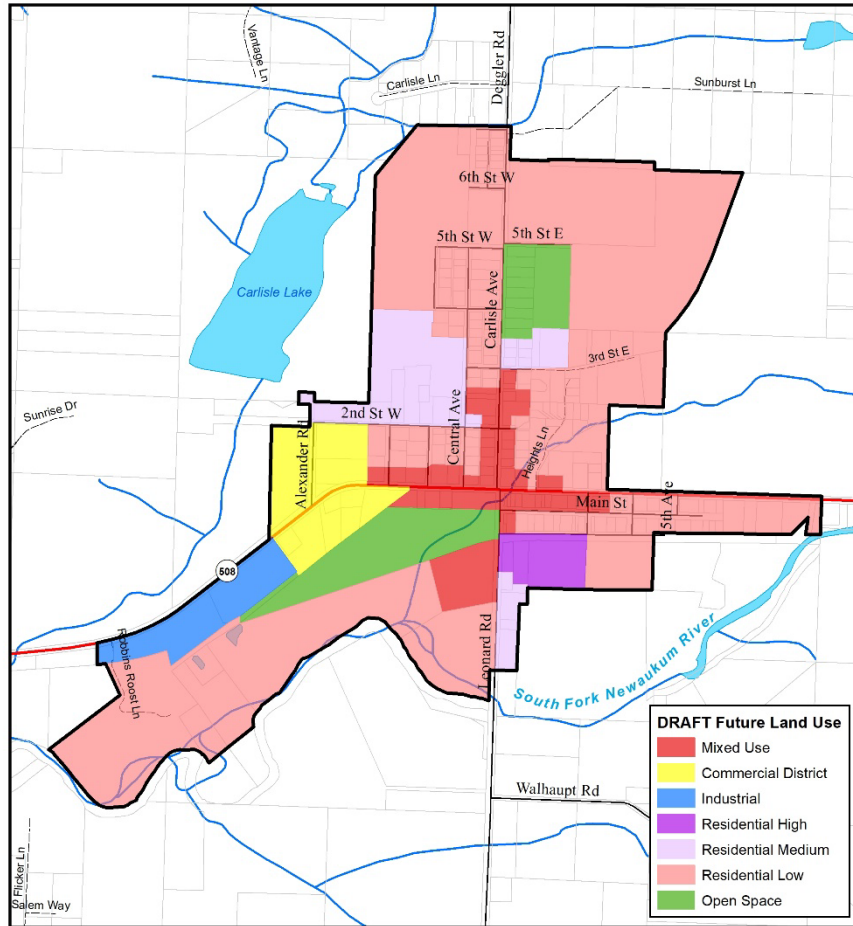
Land Use Concept

The existing zoning designations applied to the Onalaska subarea are Small Town Mixed Use (STMU) and Small Town Industrial (STI), as shown in Map 3. STMU allows most uses throughout the entire subarea, which means commercial uses, such as brewery or pet store, could be allowed within residential neighborhoods. STMU does not have lot size requirements, which has impacts on services, such as water and sewer, and does not support more affordable housing options. STI allows industrial uses and commercial associated with industrial uses but does not allow standalone commercial.

Based on the goals and policies for the next 20-years, the STMU and STI zones should be removed and new zones that are designed for small towns like Onalaska should be applied. The zones should conform to the land use concept shown on Map 9 and 10 and described in Table 3. The land use concept is about future uses, not current uses. If there is a parcel with an existing single family home and that parcel is designated for commercial use, the home can remain, be maintained and repaired, be sold to a new homeowner and be replaced. Only when the property owner chooses to change uses will the new use need to conform to the new use requirements.

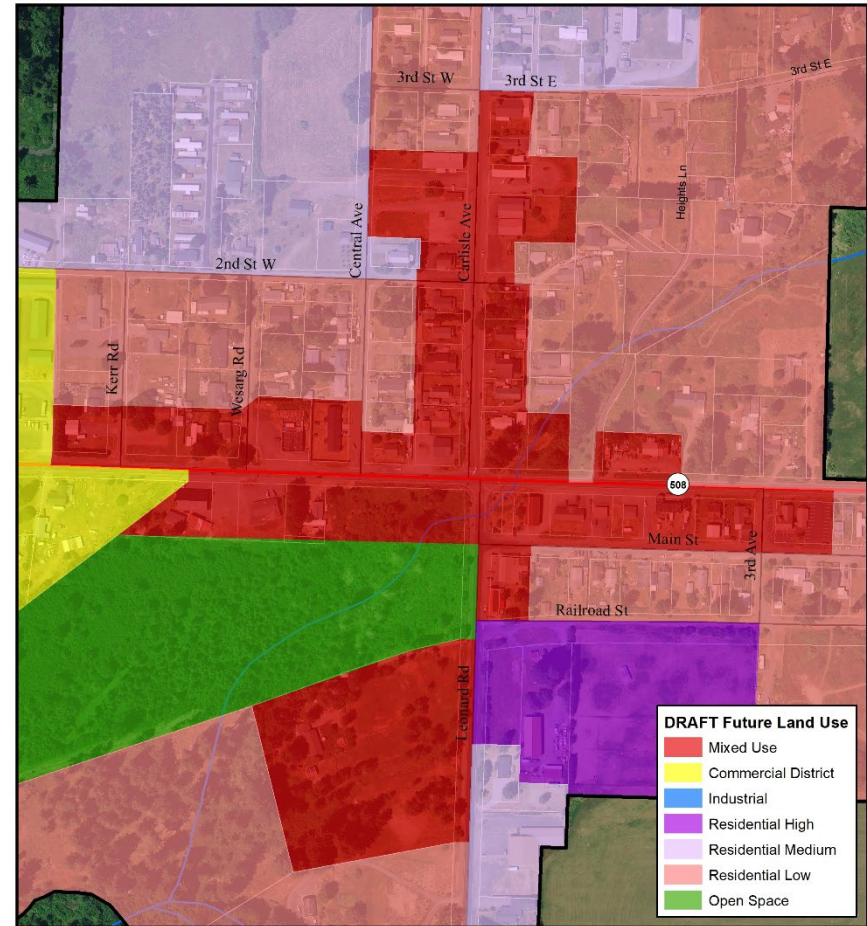
One of the primary ways to preserve rural areas, including farms and forest lands, is to contain development within an urban growth area (UGA). The Onalaska subarea is within a UGA and it is recommend to not expand the UGA boundary into the rural lands. Instead, vacant and underutilized land within the existing UGA should be developed and supported by urban services. Lands surrounding the UGA should be maintained at five (5) acres or larger and with rural uses.

In the UGA, the primary commercial retail core should center around SR508 and Carlisle Avenue, with small-scale ground floor commercial and second story apartments and condos. A new retail area should be located on the west side of Leonard Road to encourage new businesses that support the local economy. Larger retail uses should be located at the west end of town along SR508. High density residential areas, which encourage more affordable housing options than single family residences, should be located near the center of town, within close proximity of the commercial uses to encourage less trips by automobile. Lower density residential areas make up most of the town; however, a significant portion of those areas are owned by the school district and are anticipated to remain in institutional use. Areas with significant environmental resources, such as lakes, wetlands and larger stands of trees, should be maintained as open spaces for the community.



Onalaska Subarea Plan
DRAFT Future Land Use
 Updated 6/20/2024
 Planning Division, Community Development

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Onalaska Subarea Plan
DRAFT Future Land Use Downtown
 Updated 6/20/2024
 Planning Division, Community Development

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Map 9: Future Land Use Map

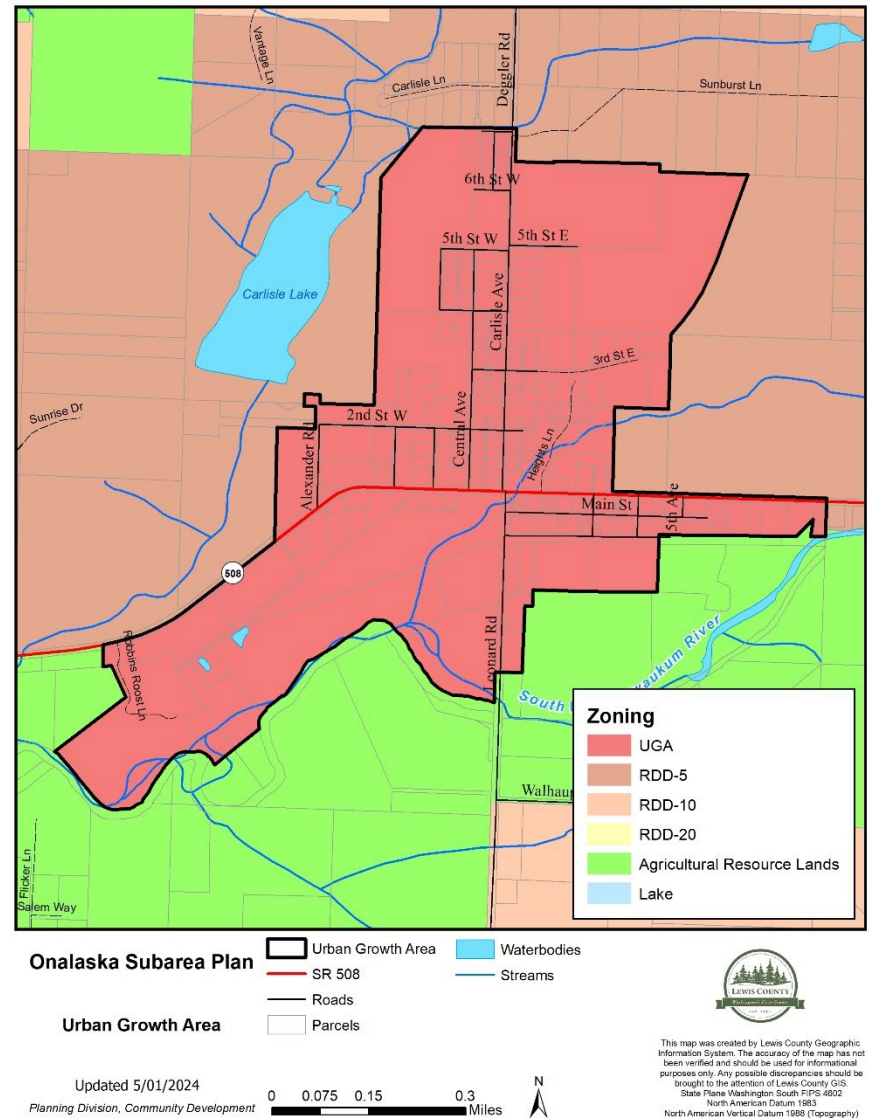
Map 10: Future Land Use Map - Downtown Onalaska

Lands with no future land use designation on the maps are proposed to maintain the existing zoning as shown on Map 5, as well as the existing development regulations. Only those areas with future land use designations are proposed for new zoning designations and development regulations in Phase 2.

Table 3: Future Land Use Designations		
Designation	Code	Description
Open Space	OS	The focus of these areas is recreation for the general public. Areas should be programmed for community gathering and outdoor play. Play structures, sports fields and courts, picnic tables, benches, gazebos and walking trails are encouraged. Streams, wetlands, trees and native vegetation should be protected and enhanced.
Commercial Business District	CBZ	The focus of these areas is commercial, office space and small scale manufacturing uses. Larger commercial buildings, 5,000 to 10,000 sq. ft., may be located here. Highest density residential uses, 18-30 units per acre, should be allowed if buffered from manufacturing uses. Connectivity and pedestrian access should be prioritized. New residential single family development should be discouraged.
Mixed Use	MU	The focus of these areas is small scale (<5,000 sq. ft.) commercial and highest density residential uses, 18-30 units per acre. Lots facing SR508 should include ground floor commercial or office space and second story apartments or condos, with entrances facing SR508 and surface parking placed behind buildings to increase pedestrian access. Connectivity and pedestrian safety should be prioritized. Space between buildings is encouraged and building heights capped to preserve small town feel and views of surrounding rural areas. New residential single family development should be discouraged.
Residential High Density	RH	High density residential uses, 10-16 units per acre, should be located near main streets. Apartments and condos should be in a courtyard style around a common open space. Row houses, fourplexes, triplexes and duplexes should be encouraged. Dormitories or hostels should also be encouraged. Commercial uses should be allowed. Building heights should be capped to preserve small town feel and views of surrounding rural areas.
Residential Medium Density	RM	Medium density residential uses, 6-10 units per acre, should be located in these areas. Rowhouses, fourplexes, triplexes, duplexes and ADUs, as well as tiny home villages should be allowed. Single family residential uses should also be allowed. Institutional uses (e.g., churches, libraries, schools) and home-based commercial uses should be allowed. Lot sizes should range from 5,000 to 7,500 sq. ft.
Residential Low Density	RL	The focus of these areas is traditional single family residential uses at 4-6 units per acre. Duplexes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) should be encouraged to increase affordable housing options. Clustered tiny home villages should also be allowed. Institutional uses (e.g., churches, libraries, schools) and home-based commercial uses should be allowed. Lot sizes should range from 7,500 to 12,500 sq. ft.
Industrial	IND	The focus of these areas is manufacturing and production of goods. Retail and commercial uses should be allowed if accessory to and in support of the industrial use. No new residential uses should be allowed. Lot sizes should not be limited in size.

Map 11 shows the **existing** Lewis County Comprehensive Plan map designations. The subarea plan is the urban growth area. The Future Land Use Maps (Map 9 and Map 10 on the previous page) are intended to show how zoning should change over the 20-year planning horizon to achieve the Land Use goals and policies stated in this section. The maps depict the future development types and densities described in Table 3. The goal is to concentrate development in Onalaska and near SR508, Carlisle Avenue and Leonard Road. The 100-year floodplain and wetlands are taken into consideration with the intent of not increasing residential development beyond what is currently allowed in these critical areas. New zoning rules, created during Phase 2, would impact **new** development or redevelopment. **Existing legal nonconforming development and uses may stay, be maintained and be replaced in the current footprint.**

The future land uses shown in Map 9 and 10 and described in Table 2 are consistent with the urban growth area designation. Therefore, for those areas the Future Land Use Map is consistent with the existing Lewis County Comprehensive Plan and Countywide Planning Policies.



Map 11: Urban Growth Area

5: NEXT STEPS

Phase 2 of the Onalaska Subarea Plan will coincide with the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan periodic update, which will be completed in June 2025. Implementation is expected to include amendments to the Comprehensive Plan policies and maps, new zoning designations and new and updated development regulations, all of which must be consistent with the vision, goals and policies of this document.

Community engagement will continue to be a primary focus of the Phase 2 process. The Onalaska Subarea Plan Public Participation Plan (Attachment A) will be updated to include Phase 2. The existing Community Advisory Committee members will be invited to participate and membership will be opened to allow new members from the community.

Note – Implementation of the Onalaska Subarea Plan will also include actions that will be lead by other groups and agencies.

Onalaska Subarea Plan

Staff Contact

Mindy Brooks, 360-740-2610

mindy.brooks@lewiscountywa.gov

