

**Onalaska Subarea Plan  
Community Advisory Committee  
Meeting 4 Notes**

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.**

1. 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
2. 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
  3. 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
  4. 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.