

Parks, Open Space & Recreation

Introduction

This chapter, including its related goals, policies and programs, is a supplemental part of Cheney's comprehensive plan, providing an over-arching and coordinated set of goals and policies regarding parks, open space and recreational assets intended to complement the City's recently-adopted Parks & Recreation Plan.

Developing a comprehensive plan necessarily involves asking residents about vision and values - and as the process to update Cheney's plan progressed, participants repeatedly noted the City's parks, and, especially where land use matters were discussed, the need to preserve open-space areas that typify Cheney and its natural setting.

Due to this, and in spite of the fact that parks and recreation chapters are neither required by the GMA nor was such an element envisioned due to an already-robust departmental plan, a



Figure 10.1 - Parks, open space and recreational assets are so key to life in Cheney that residents wished to include broad- ranging goals and policies in this plan - affirming the recently- completed and separate departmental plan. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

number of goals, policies and supporting programs were developed as part of this update's framework. These are included here, though for any further details on Cheney's existing parks system, readers should refer to that department's 2014-2024 Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Plan.

Though the following pages may effectively sort, introduce, and present those goals and policies related to parks and open-space areas, the entirety of Cheney's goal and policy framework, presented in Appendix B, should be considered the plan's over-arching source. Additional information may be found in section six of Appendix C, and of course, the City of Cheney's existing Parks and Recreation Plan.

Policy Overview

Parks, open space and recreational policies contained in this abbreviated element help extend and coordinate these topics among a wide range of other, often complementary plan issues such as land-use, economic development and environmental considerations. These include:

- Expanding related opportunities associated with EWU
- Boosting City activities that protect and enhance open-space areas
- Ensuring the provision of parks in new neighborhoods
- Improving the walking and cycling opportunities in Cheney for transportation and recreation
- Improved collaboration with Spokane County on parks and recreational amenities
- Promoting emerging and important opportunities with regional trail networks, such as the Fish Lake Trail.

Program listings, while not directly associated with parks, offer opportunities and numerous secondary benefits. For example, the code update listed as PR.01 offers the opportunity to develop requirements and/or revised impact fees supporting park development. Additionally, the downtown and Betz Road plans may provide vital insight or support for projects like the proposed Betz Park, or for future plaza or recreational facilities downtown.

Goal, Policy & Program Listing

Each of the goals, policies and programs contained in the following section have been selected from the entire matrix as closely associated with technology objectives, though



Figure 10.2 - Parks add considerably to the quality of life and value of Cheney neighborhoods. Here, deciduous trees in Sutton Park, near the EWU campus, seem to glow in the afternoon sun. (Image source: Camera exercise participant)

there may be others arguably key to the success of community goals not under this heading. All are presented in the order in which they occur in the overall matrix, and do not necessarily reflect plan or City priorities. Each goal is followed by a brief “discussion” paragraph expanding on the origins, objectives and overall benefits associated with it. Similarly, each policy is followed by discussion text, but also includes a paragraph entitled “direction,” which outlines one or more ways the policy might be implemented. Program listings in this and other elements do not include the estimated timeline or likely agencies to be involved in their completion; for this level of program detail, refer to Table 13.02 in the Implementation element.

Electronic versions of the matrix are hyperlinked to Appendix B for review and cross-referencing purposes.

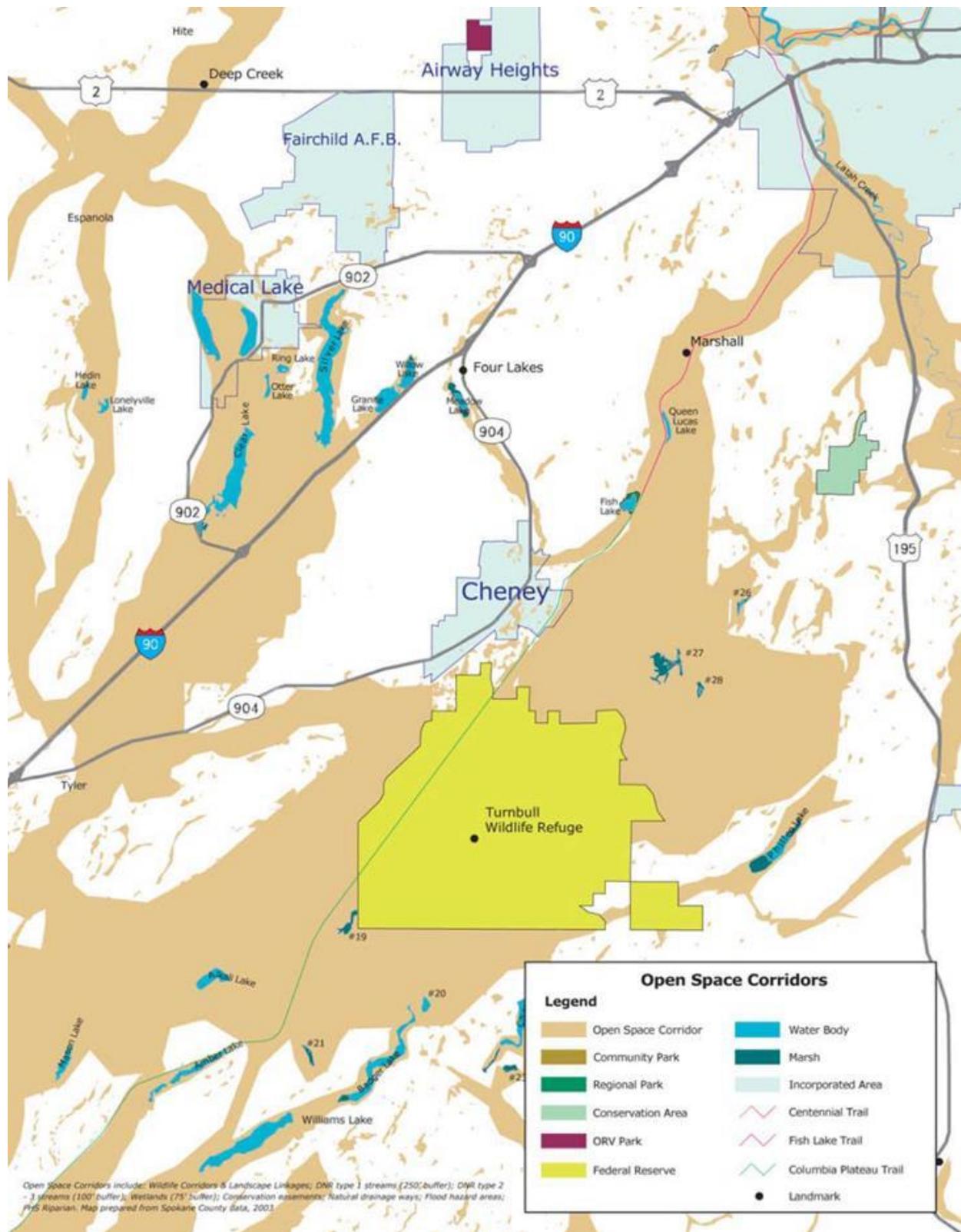


Figure 10.3 - Cheney's proximity to large swaths of scabland, drainage, wildlife refuge and farm-country areas is made clear in this open space corridor map prepared by Spokane County in 2003. (Image source: Spokane County)

Goals, Policies & Programs

Recreation & Parks Related Goals

- Continue Cheney's relationship with Eastern Washington University, improving economic, educational, facility and cultural opportunities for all. (G.02)

Background: Cheney owes much of its success to the presence of Eastern Washington University, but residents sense that greater opportunities exist for both City and school, given greater collaboration. Throughout the process, participants noted the need to coordinate curricula with economic initiatives, to plan infrastructure and facilities in ways that achieve broader goals, and to help integrate educational and cultural offerings into what residents perceive as part of Cheney life. As a result, this plan includes goals, policies and programs to help the City and the EWU establish and maintain a more dynamic partnership.

- Keep Cheney's neighborhoods safe, vital, and attractive. (G.05)

Background: Residents prize the overall scale and small-town feel of Cheney neighborhoods, and wish to ensure their neighborhoods are kept safe, active and aesthetically pleasing. Supporting this goal, a diverse set of policies have been provided, including encouraging pedestrian-friendly development, diversity in housing types, and possible future mixed use or activity centers.

- Plan for and establish types and quantities of land uses in Cheney supporting community needs and the City's long-term sustainability. (G.07)

Background: Towns and cities exercise considerable influence over land use, in turn influencing the type and character of development, patterns of growth, and even the net financial impact of growth on municipal coffers. Consequently, this plan supports the allocation of land use types and areas sufficient to achieve overall plan objectives.

- Protect and enhance Cheney's open space areas for present and future generations. (G.09)

Background: A hallmark of Cheney is its natural setting, seen in undeveloped wetland areas, open grazing, or agricultural lands. In concert with other plan goals and policies directing growth away from such lands, this goal works to preserve open space areas, urging creative employment of tools such as land trusts, rights-purchasing or exchanges, or other appropriate strategies.

- Maintain and improve Cheney's parks and recreational opportunities on-pace with growth. (G.10)

Background: Cheney residents value current parks and recreational services, and wish to retain the same or higher levels of service as the community grows. This goal directs the City to consider parks and recreational needs in all related plans and actions, including land use decisions, regulatory requirements and budgeting.

- **Grow and maintain Cheney as a self-reliant community, aiding the provision of necessary health, retail and service needs for citizens. (G.13)**

Background: Cheney's history and small-town nature is rooted in its independence and self-reliance. Essential goods and services, employment, social activities, and primary and secondary education have always been available within City boundaries. In recent years, transportation and other factors have enabled residents to seek specialized services and establish residence well outside the City, to the point where concern now exists that Cheney is becoming a 'bedroom community.' This goal urges the City to develop and enact strategies that help maintain the provision of essential health, retail and service needs within Cheney.

- **Sustain and improve Cheney's natural resources through sound planning, operational and implementation practices. (G.15)**

Background: Cities cannot exist without the availability and provision of clean water and air, access to healthy food supplies, clean energy and facilities to dispose of waste in ways that protect basic resources. But Cheney enjoys more than basic resources - the region is home to rich agricultural areas, exceptional wetlands, forests and waterways. This goal anchors policies and program objectives that promote the conservation and improvement of Cheney's natural resources, serving current and future needs.

- **Maintain and improve Cheney's small-town scale, charm and aesthetic beauty. (G.16)**

Background: Whether newly-arrived or long-term, residents of Cheney frequently cite the community's 'small-town charm,' its modest size, and its setting between rich agricultural lands and unique lake and channeled scabland areas as highly attractive features. Due to this, many of the goals, policies and programs contained in this plan help retain the City's overall scale while providing for ample growth; support the development of cultural features and activities, and direct land use decisions reducing development pressures in undeveloped or highly rural areas.

- **Involve the community of Cheney in all local government planning and decision- making. (G.17)**

Background: By intent, the development of this plan update has been community- driven, involving scores of residents and participants representing many hundreds more. For plans to succeed, community buy-in and support is critical. Future conditions will certainly require the creation of new objectives and strategies directing Cheney efforts, and this goal supports keeping residents highly involved in such work.

- **Maintain and improve the provision of affordable, efficient community services in Cheney. (G.18)**

Background: Municipalities exist to provide infrastructure and services that would be unfeasible for individuals to provide. While pooled resources make essential services achievable, they also require strong levels of coordination and management to assure accountability and efficiency. Many actions have clear and immediate effects on resources. Other actions may be more difficult to associate with fiscal impact, but over time, may profoundly affect the costs of services. This goal anchors the need for the City of Cheney to consider the long-term cost implications of choices including land use, investments in transportation, and provision of service infrastructure - maintaining efficiency and accountability for the community it serves.

Recreation & Parks Related Policies

- (P.03) Build Cheney’s economic base on those geographic, environmental, civic and recreational qualities that make the town unique and desirable.

Discussion: Cheney is a community established and maintained around a few key assets, including Eastern Washington University, regional agriculture, natural open space areas, and recreation. Many participants in the planning process felt the City’s quality of life and economic development policies should be coordinated, benefitting both needs at once. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including efforts to define, recognize and sustain Cheney’s essential qualities; developing strategies to incorporate those with economic development efforts.

- (P.12) Coordinate all long-range planning efforts between the City and Eastern Washington University.

Discussion: Community and work groups emphasized the need for the City and EWU to cooperate to position Cheney among the best places to live and do business in the Inland Northwest. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including City and EWU efforts to continue a strong partnership.

- (P.15) Improve communication and public access to all City services, deliberations and activities.

Discussion: Community success relies on the active involvement and support of residents, in part dependent on transparency and strong communications. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including improving the use of existing and/or using new and innovative technologies to optimize communication and improve public access to various City services, deliberations and activities.

- (P.21) Support the preservation, restoration, and adaptive reuse of historic homes, buildings, and properties in Cheney.

Discussion: As a city that is over 125 years old, Cheney has a diverse collection of buildings that enhance its identity and add to its overall attractiveness. Such properties boost visitor impressions, provide cultural backdrop, and in the case of adaptive reuse, conserve resources. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including working to preserve properties associated with historic events or individuals, or are fine examples of a particular style; City support, where possible, toward the adaptive re-use of landmarks like the flour mills, Fisher High School, and the Northern Pacific Depot.

- (P.29) Coordinate land uses, transportation access, and civic amenities between new and existing neighboring development.

Discussion: As the community grows and develops, it is essential that the city remain cohesive and well-connected - designed with enough foresight to support overall community value, service efficiencies, and ensure viable transportation options. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including review and update of applicable codes; maintenance and coordination of transportation and land use objectives; investment in civic amenities that support interconnected efficient development patterns.

- (P.30) Ensure that new building and renovation efforts in Cheney are compatible with the City's overall scale, architectural, transportation and public space objectives.

Discussion: New development, whether infill, greenfield or renovation, needs to occur respecting community objectives as well as private ones, respecting the surrounding community while allowing new development to be successful and profitable. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including maintenance and implementation of related transportation, service and parks plans; updates to codes respecting local character, building scale, size and form; exploring what makes neighborhoods "great places" and adopting appropriate standards that are flexible, consistent and straightforward, yet achieve quality design.

- (P.31) Promote land use and growth patterns that ensure all residences are within walking distance of civic and service amenities.

Discussion: Cheney's vision includes growth patterns that are more interconnected and walkable, providing multiple advantages including resident convenience, greater mobility and service efficiencies. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including enacting land use and transportation policies that encourage the provision of services within walking distance of residents; working to identify and locate areas well-suited for neighborhood-scale services; working to improve existing proximate service areas.

- (P.33) Provide appropriate infrastructure to make walking or bicycling in Cheney a more convenient and safe transportation alternative.

Discussion: Increasingly, communities are looking to alternative modes of transportation, fostering efficient land use patterns, increasing neighborhood vitality - and especially in college towns - improving low-cost mobility options. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including the development of features making non-motorized transportation more viable; consideration of "complete streets" criteria for new construction; shared-lane markings; walking paths; parking reduction incentives; increased provision of bicycle parking.

- (P.39) Direct public investment in transportation and other infrastructure within the existing urbanized area, promoting infill, limiting sprawl and helping the City provide affordable services.

Discussion: Growth patterns have significant implications in terms of community character, mobility, land use, livability, and the cost of service provision. Through the planning process, participants urged the City to promote growth and infill within existing urbanized areas. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including maintaining supportive transportation and service improvement plans; minimizing public investment outside the urbanized area.

- (P.41) Collaborate with Spokane County, land trusts and others on effective land use strategies conserving natural and open space areas.

Discussion: Natural and open space lands surrounding Cheney are important economic and aesthetic features, underpin much of Cheney's regional image, and are highly prized by residents. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including collaborating with Spokane County, neighboring jurisdictions, and Turnbull Wildlife Refuge officials to coordinate supporting infrastructure and land use polices; collaborating with agencies and land trusts to consider preservation and/or acquisition of areas; identification of wildlife corridors throughout the City.

- (P.43) Improve the clarity of night-time skies, reducing upward light transmission in new and existing development.

Discussion: Cheney's residents prize the setting and the many rural characteristics of the city, including the relative lack of light pollution at night. This policy is provided in support of the aesthetic, economic and resource-conservation benefits of reduced light pollution. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including supporting revisions to development codes; capital facilities investments that minimize upward light transmission.

- (P.45) Maintain and improve Cheney's urban forest.

Discussion: Cheney's urban forest is an important part the quality of life that residents enjoy, improving property values, aiding in energy conservation and reducing stormwater infiltration. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including incorporating trees into improved stormwater runoff management strategies; public awareness programs; improvements to code requirements on planter strips and tree placement; tree-planting programs encouraging native and desirable species.

- (P.46) Maintain, expand and improve parks, greenway and open space areas, in concert with LOS needs and comprehensive plan objectives.

Discussion: Cheney residents care deeply about the City's natural setting, but also prize their parks, greenway and open space areas, seeing these as integral to the quality of life and value of life in Cheney. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including consideration of park dedication fees for acquisition; consideration of new development requirements for park land development; working with land trusts and others in acquisition or securing of development rights for key properties; continued updates and implementation of parks planning.

- (P.47) Collaborate with Spokane County and others to develop access and improvements to trails and facilities near Cheney, improving community enjoyment of Cheney’s natural and open space areas.

Discussion: Trails and access to open space in and around Cheney add greatly to the quality of life residents enjoy, and present opportunities to attract compatible businesses to the community.

Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including aiding the development of new trails in and outside the city limits, including potential trail connections to Turnbull Wildlife Refuge, the Columbia Plateau Trail, the completion of the Fish Lake Trail, and the future 50-acre park.

- (P.48) Acquire, develop and maintain neighborhood parks in new and existing neighborhoods in accordance with adopted LOS standards.

Discussion: As new neighborhoods emerge, residents want neighborhood parks to be included, and want existing parks to be at least as well- maintained as they are today. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including consideration of park dedication fees for acquisition; consideration of new development requirements for park land development; continued updates and implementation of parks planning.

- (P.49) Balance the provision of passive parks with activity centered-park facilities.

Discussion: Residents deeply value the city’s parks, including the diversity in park type, balanced between activity-centered parks and more passive, naturalistic parks. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including maintaining park type inventories and continuing to balancing passive parks (e.g. nature trails, open space, gardens, etc.) with more active-use parks such as the one proposed along Betz Road.

- (P.52) Establish budget and funding methods for City facility and service needs, matching costs with available revenues.

Discussion: As required by State Law, the City of Cheney is required to have a balanced budget. This Comprehensive Plan provides the overarching framework to develop a strategy to prioritize a variety City facility and service needs. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including adopting and maintaining a comprehensive plan; prioritizing facility and service needs; maintaining a reasonable and logical courses for facility and service implementation; consideration of applicable impact fees per RCW 82.02.050.

- (P.53) Budget to implement plans and implementing programs adopted or supported by the City.

Discussion: Many participants felt the City has a poor track record with long-range planning, often neglecting to implement or budget for planned recommendations. This policy establishes the basis for Cheney to implement plans and programs developed, adopted or supported by the City. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including ongoing work and collaboration by department heads, the City Administrator and City Council to appropriate necessary funds to invest in supported programs.

- (P.54) Develop and maintain Cheney’s capital facilities, matching adopted LOS standards and overall plan objectives.

Discussion: Development and maintenance of capital facilities is a critical role for city government, matching projected community need and plan objectives with service resources. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including annual review and amendments to capital facilities element and six-year improvement and transportation programs; water system planning; technology plan/investments.

- (P.55) Coordinate with local and regional agencies in developing capital facilities, seeking cost-efficiencies and shared resource opportunities for Cheney.

Discussion: Many residents expressed concern that growth pay for itself whenever possible, keeping utility rates low and reducing effective subsidies for unwanted growth. This urges the City to balance the costs of service and infrastructure provision with community desire and ability to absorb new development, ensuring service investments are either strategically desirable or self-sustaining. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including consideration of related impact fees; strategic land use decision making; financial cost analysis evaluating long-term costs of development versus likely income.

- (P.56) Ensure that costs of providing services to new development are borne by such development, except where cost sharing is determined to aid service efficiencies and overall community objectives.

Discussion: Many residents expressed concern that growth pay for itself whenever possible, keeping utility rates economical and reducing effective subsidies for unwanted growth. This urges the City to balance the costs of service and infrastructure provision with community desire and ability to absorb new development, ensuring service investments are either strategically desirable or self-sustaining. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including consideration of related impact fees; strategic land use decision making; financial cost analysis evaluating long-term costs of development versus likely income.

- (P.57) Provide or accept the provision of public facilities and services only if the City or other entities are able to pay for subsequent operation and maintenance costs.

Discussion: Many residents expressed concern that growth pay for itself whenever possible, keeping utility rates economical and reducing effective subsidies for unwanted growth. This urges the City to balance the costs of service and infrastructure provision with community desire and ability to absorb new development, ensuring service investments are either strategically desirable or self-sustaining. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including financial cost analysis evaluating long-term costs of development versus likely income.

- (P.59) Encourage and support citizen involvement with City boards, commissions, and civic organizations.

Discussion: Community success begins with community involvement and investment of time and energies towards long-term objectives, and plan participants expressed the desire for the City to improve outreach and involvement of residents in decision-making. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including using improved tools and communication regarding City actions and volunteer needs; outreach to under-represented demographic and group representatives for roles in City and civic organizational matters.

- (P.63) Encourage the reduction of impervious surfaces in new development and site work.

Discussion: Stormwater runoff typically carries pollutants collected on non-permeable surfaces such as parking lots and building roofs into storm sewers or site-specific treatment features. Site development reducing impervious surfaces can employ natural soil filtration techniques, reducing the need for point-source treatment. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including improvements to building codes; public education/ outreach; technological advancement.

- (P.67) Encourage the use of native plants and those typical of the regional landscape.

Discussion: Being compatible with the regional landscape is important to many Cheney residents, and native species can help achieve water conservation goals, ultimately reducing aquifer depletion and resource development costs. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including code review and updates encouraging native plant usage; community education; collaborative programs with regional agencies; consideration of development incentives.

- (P.71) Maintain Cheney's municipal offices and worker facilities, improving efficiency and access to City services wherever possible.

Discussion: In support of resident desires for improved services and access to ongoing City functions, and expanded off-hours opportunities for civic activities, the maintenance of and improvements to City facilities are needed. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including research and review of opportunities for greater efficiencies in operations; long-range facilities planning; development of multiple-use facilities; public access improvements.

- (P.77) Promote improved maintenance of both public and private property across the city.

Discussion: Safe, healthy and sanitary housing is a right everyone should enjoy. When owners of properties fail to provide preventative maintenance, the City is obligated to act to protect neighborhoods and surrounding property owners. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including development of strong approaches to deal with properties found in poor condition, possibly through building codes, property maintenance codes or other means; increase in staff resources for enforcement.

Recreation & Parks Related Programs

- (PR.01) Code Update – Review and update the City’s zoning and development regulations as necessary to support the objectives of the comprehensive plan.
- (PR.02) 904 Corridor Plan/Design – City officials should work with WSDOT to study the SR 904 corridor (between I-90 and Mullinix Road) using least cost planning and practical design approaches. The emphasis of this corridor analysis should be on sustainable safety and practical mobility solutions while fostering the local economy. Based on the findings of this study and WSDOT concurrence on the identified practical solutions, the City could pursue design and funding of the improvements. This is in support of the City’s comprehensive plan goals and SRTC Horizon 2040.
- (PR.05) Transportation Plan – Prepare a city-wide transportation plan, including: Evaluating and mitigating impacts of rail crossings within the City of Cheney; developing a street design matrix identifying suitable and desired local street-section types providing criteria regarding width, pedestrian, cycling, and motorized vehicle needs, developed to guide updates to Cheney’s roadway design standards; developing plans and strategies promoting the development of a multi-modal network in Cheney; exploring and articulating funding and implementation strategies; developing a bicycle and pedestrian trails plan, including identification and mapping of existing and future trail routes, incorporation of in-city resources with regional opportunities, the creation of standards for construction and improvements to trails, funding source data and implementation strategies; developing a city-wide approach to wayfinding, addressing all means of transportation.
- (PR.07) Economic Development Report – Focus on specific initiatives such as a “Sales Tax Leakage” analysis, which [provides the city with an understanding of served and under-served sectors on the business/retail economy. This would allow the city to be strategic in business recruitment and retention, through targeted marketing.
- (PR.08) Annexation Policy – Draft and adopt an annexation policy to provide clear criteria and performance measures for considering and approving annexation requests.
- (PR.09) Citizen Involvement Strategy – Draft and adopt a process that ensures early and continuing citizen and neighborhood participation in land use planning.
- (PR.10) Historic Preservation Incentives – Establish strategies and incentives as appropriate to encourage the preservation of the community’s historic structures and spaces.
- (PR.11) Interlocal Agreements – Prepare and adopt agreements with Spokane County and other jurisdictions as appropriate to ensure collaborative planning and development of the City’s UGA.
- (PR.12) Progress Measures - Develop community benchmarks, indicators or performance measures to evaluate the comprehensive plan’s success in goal achievement and policy implementation, and to guide its adaptation to new circumstances as conditions change.
- (PR.13) Planning Budget – Establish and budget for a seven-year review cycle for Cheney’s comprehensive plan.

- (PR.14) Impact Fees – Consideration of an Impact Fee ordinance modification, ensuring fees and dedications are based on system improvements necessary to support proposed development, will not exceed the costs of necessary system improvements, and will be used for system improvements to benefit the new development. Review impact fees as allowed through GMA.