

Natural Assets & Sustainability



Figure 5.01 - Cheney's setting - between rich agricultural lands and unique wetland habitat - is highly prized by residents. This plan includes policies and programs to help maintain these and other natural assets. (Image source: Camera exercise participant)

Introduction

Natural assets and a sustainable outlook determine a community's character and quality of life for its citizens. A community's natural assets are characterized by the physical geography of the region in which the community is located; these include attributes such as climate, vegetation, local geology, soils, hydrology, topography, wetlands, air quality and water quality. The following pages contain an overview of Cheney's natural asset conditions, as well as a set of goals, policies and programs designed to aid the City's efforts regarding its natural assets.

This chapter also contains a discussion on the topic of "sustainability," generally defined in this plan as a balanced approach meeting

economic, environmental and social needs of today while ensuring needs of future generations are also met.

Though the following pages may effectively sort, introduce, and present those goals and policies related to natural assets and sustainability, the entirety of Cheney's goal and policy framework, presented in Appendix B, should be considered the plan's over-arching source.

In short, this element, together with other relevant policies contained in this plan, provide a type of "road map" for the City in protecting the health, safety and well-being of its citizens including protecting its natural assets and looking to a sustainable future.

Existing Conditions

Climate

Cheney experiences a blend of Continental and Mediterranean climates, with warm and somewhat arid conditions during the summer months and cold and somewhat snowy conditions in the winter.

Summer and winter seasons are predominant, with transitional spring and fall months. On average, July and August are equally warm, and the coolest month is December. Because of Cheney's location on the Columbia Plateau between the Cascade Mountains to the west and Rocky Mountains to the east and north, the region is protected from weather patterns experienced in other parts of the Pacific Northwest. The Cascade Mountains form a barrier to the easterly movement of moist and comparatively mild air from the Pacific Ocean in winter and summer.

Geologic Features

Towards the end of the last Ice Age, a dam of ice blocking the prehistoric Spokane, Columbia, and Clark Fork drainages formed and broke several times - on each occasion sending nearly 500 cubic miles of water across northern Idaho and into eastern Washington. The raging floodwaters swept into the Spokane Valley and out across the loess-covered basalt plateau where Cheney is located. These turbulent, powerful currents eroded the loess and scoured the landscape. Cheney is located near the edge of one such channel; to the north are rolling hills of deep loess, untouched by the great flood, while to the south are large areas of "channeled scablands" - characterized by exposed basalt outcroppings, ponderosa pine groves, and significant wetlands.

This area is characterized by the hilly terrain, exposed basalt outcroppings, southwesterly

trending channels eroded into the basalt plateau, and a large number of small ponds and lakes. Extensive lava flow of the Miocene-Pliocene epoch engulfed a large area of the Columbia Basin, including the Cheney area. This basalt surface eroded into the rolling hills typical of the farmland surrounding Cheney. Wind borne silt deposits (loess) blew up from the Columbia Basin settling out in this region. This created excellent farm land, much of which is cultivated today. The glacial floods that followed these extensive lava flows about 10,000 years ago stripped much of the loess deposits from the lower lying regions, including the area surrounding Meadow Lake and the Minnie Creek Valley. Loess deposits in these areas were reduced to islands, being replaced with the typical gravel deposits the channeled scablands are known for. To the north sit rolling hills of deep loess, untouched by the great flood. Yet to the south, the result of the flood can clearly be seen in the channeled scablands.

These two distinct geologic features impact the Cheney community greatly. European settlers were first attracted to the area in the late 1800s by the fertile, loess-based soil. Then and now, agriculture-especially wheat production - is a big part of Cheney's economy and civic identity. Even though the channeled scablands are generally unsuitable for cultivated crops, they provide excellent cattle grazing. In addition to utilitarian functions, the scablands contain several lakes near Cheney, providing rich wildlife habitat and many opportunities for recreation.

Hydrology / Water Resources

The only water body within the city limits (excluding wetlands) is Minnie Creek. The creek enters Cheney from the north, originating at Meadow Lake near the community of Four Lakes. The creek travels on the east side of First Street, continuing south, behind what are today



Figure 5.02 - The Columbia Plateau regional aquifer system (Grande Ronde and Wanapum) is a large, approximately circular basalt system underlain primarily by basaltic rocks. (Image source: *Ground Water Atlas of the United States: Idaho, Oregon, Washington, USGS, figure 69.*)

Presnell’s Mobile Home Park and Bi- Mart. Behind Bi-Mart, the creek turns east and leaves City limits, continuing in a northeasterly direction towards Queen Lucas Lake, and eventually providing waters for Hangman (also known as Latah) Creek. Cheney is located on the northwest edge of the Hangman watershed, with any expansion to the west occurring in the Palouse Watershed.

According to the Western Regional Climate Center, Cheney received an annual rainfall of 17.5 inches and an average annual snowfall of 42.4 inches (between 3/1/1899 to 10/31/1955). Stormwater generally travels from the northwest to the southeast, supplying many of the scabland wetlands with seasonal water.

Cheney’s potable water is retrieved via eight ground water wells, with a maximum pumping capacity of 4.3 million gallons a day. Ground water is accessed from the Grande Ronde and Wanapum aquifers which cover a substantial portion of southeast Washington. The Wanapum aquifer is a shallow, upper aquifer found about 60 feet below the surface, while the Grande Ronde aquifer is a deep, lower aquifer found about 300 feet below the surface. Basalt formations that make up the Grande Ronde and Wanapum aquifers contain many

pores, formed by trapped air in the cooling basalt lava during volcanic activity. These allow the subsurface formations to hold groundwater. Both aquifers are known for their slow recharge rates, and studies show that many of the communities in the West Plains area are using the water faster than the aquifer is being replenished.

Air Quality

Air quality in the Cheney area has steadily improved over the past few decades, and in August 2005 the Spokane Air Quality Basin was officially declared in attainment of all Federal, health-based air pollution standards by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). While the City of Cheney has relatively good air quality, there will continue to be a number of challenges regionally in achieving stricter air quality standards set by the EPA. One of the solutions may include moving towards more of a livable community lifestyle, with an emphasis on reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Currently, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the EPA are encouraging communities to consider land use and transportation together when making planning decisions in an effort to make communities more livable and less auto dependent. Since Cheney falls under the jurisdiction of the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency, pollution standards will continue to be monitored every five years; however, data specific to Cheney is not readily available. Some of the standards that are measured regionally include: particulate matter, fine particulate matter, carbon monoxide, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and lead.

Critical Areas

Cheney's scablands provide a beautiful backdrop, and are instrumental in the natural water system for the region. The scablands are also inhabited by a large number of animals, which present challenges when making land use decisions. In accordance with State mandates, the City of Cheney takes measures to protect what the State calls "critical areas." By definition, these include:

- Wetlands
- Priority habitats
- Aquifer recharge areas
- Frequently flooded areas
- Geologically hazardous areas

Wetlands

Although not all of Cheney's wetlands are located in the scablands, the majority of its wetlands and wildlife habitat can be found there. At this point in time there have been no comprehensive studies or mapping of natural features within the city or urban growth boundary. There are wetland delineation reports that have been developed for individual project sites.

Wetlands are abundant both in and around Cheney. Situated on the edge of the Channeled Scablands, the city plays host to a large number and wide variety of wetlands. Scattered throughout the UGA and influence area is an abundance of wet meadows, cattail ponds, frequently flooded areas, and marshy areas along lake and stream shorelines. Located directly south of the city is the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge where wetlands are prevalent throughout.

To the southeast within the city's unincorporated urban growth area year-round and seasonal wetlands are present. The Wetlands of the National Wetlands Inventory

Map (Figure 5.03) illustrates the complex system of wetlands bordering the city to the north, south and southeast.

This extensive wetland system serves as wildlife habitat to a host of water fowl, birds of prey, and songbirds, and much of the system to the south and east lies either within the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge Stewardship Area or the Refuge itself. Although it is managed and regulated by the Federal government, development decisions made within the city and the unincorporated urban growth area will have a direct bearing on the wildlife refuge. The refuge serves as a sanctuary for hundreds of birds and animals, a summer tourist destination, and is also an excellent source for educational activities.

Wildlife Habitat

In general, fish and wildlife habitat areas can be divided into priority habitat areas, and non-priority habitat areas. In accordance with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife guidelines for defining fish and wildlife conservation areas, Cheney has both priority and non-priority habitat areas inside its municipal boundaries and unincorporated urban growth area. Impacts that development may potentially have on the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge should be given special consideration. Cheney and its influence area have two of the eight minimum guidelines for designating specific areas as priority habitats. The guidelines that affect land within Cheney's unincorporated urban growth area are:

- Local Importance. Habitats and species of local importance.
- Waters of the State. There are waters of the state inside the influence area.

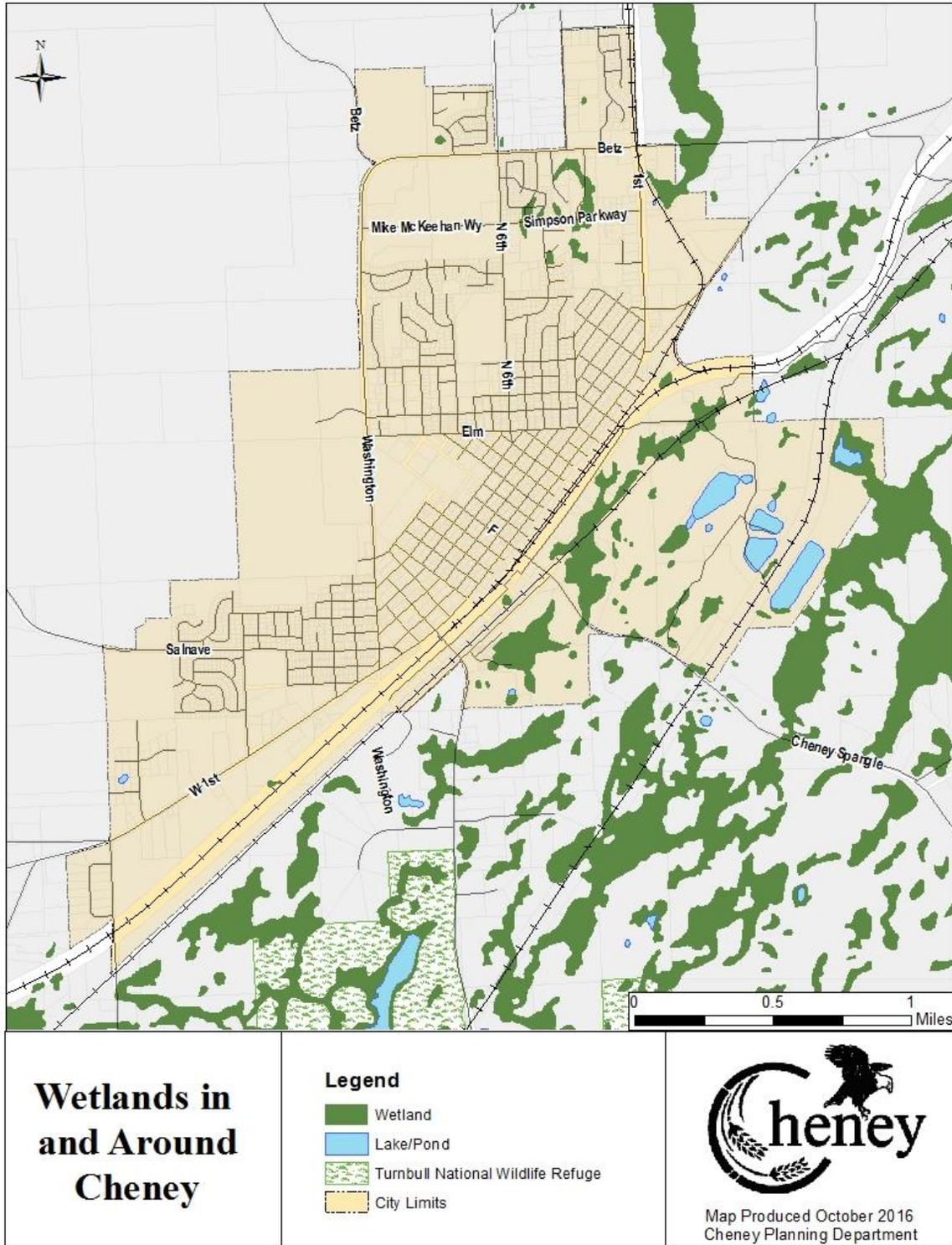


Figure 5.03 - Wetlands as provided by the National Wetlands Inventory. In viewing this map, it is important to keep in mind that wetlands are characterized by soil type, water saturation (either above or below-ground, seasonally or year-round) and vegetation. For this reason, wetlands are often overlooked by those that are not wetland specialists. (Image source: City of Cheney, data from National Wetlands Inventory)

Frequently Flooded Areas

The areas within Cheney’s boundary which have been identified as frequently flooded areas have been identified by the Federal Insurance Administration in a report entitled “The Flood Insurance Rate Map of Cheney,” Panel No. 5301750001A, dated July 6, 2010, which is available at the Cheney Community Development Department. The Cheney Municipal Code Chapter 19.20, regulates construction in Flood Hazard Areas inside the designated flood plains.

Land in southeast Cheney includes areas of intact shrub-steppe habitat, including groves of ponderosa pines. No studies have yet been completed to establish or verify that these areas should be protected as priority habitat.

Other Assets

Even though the majority of land within the city limits has been developed to urban standards, the City has retained many of the ponderosa pines native to the region. A variety of tree species have also been planted. This abundance of trees creates an urban forest that has value for people and wildlife alike.

In addition to the natural environment, the built environment plays a critical role in the long-term viability of the community. The look and function of the built environment affect the daily lives of Cheney residents and their happiness and health. At this time, Cheney does not regulate such things as air, noise, and light pollution. On the other hand, the city is addressing long-term sustainability by providing opportunity for recycling waste. Both recyclable materials and yard debris can be deposited at the Cheney Recycling Center. The yard debris is chipped and combined with solid waste from the wastewater treatment plant to create compost that is sold each summer.

Sustainability

This Natural Assets and Sustainability Element has been developed as an optional element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, in accordance with Washington’s Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.080). Some of the Plan’s other elements include goals and policies that address how environmental values specifically relate to the topics covered in those elements. For instance, the Transportation Element addresses possible environmental impacts and improvements associated with transportation choices. This element contains broadly defined goals and policies, as it is intended to link the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan so that sustainability is addressed in a holistic manner.

There are many ways in which the City can foster sustainability. For example, the City can lead by example in delivering services, building and operating its facilities, and managing its land in an environmentally sustainable manner. The City, in collaboration with EWU’s sustainability initiative, could support education and awareness efforts that help residents and visitors make sustainable choices.

The City of Cheney further defines a sustainable community as one in which:

- Economic enhancement opportunities, environmental stewardship, and social well-being are balanced, as all three are recognized as being essential to the quality of life
- Residents can meet their basic needs for life, health, and safety
- Quality park and recreation opportunities, and the proximity to the Turnbull Wildlife Refuge are recognized and honored as highly-prized assets of the local community

- Citizens recognize their geographic context, including the arid climate and potential scarcity of water
- Economic sustainability measures are considered when making land use and transportation decisions.

Cheney’s built environment is also critical, as the look and function of the built environment affects residents’ daily lives, overall happiness, and health. The City is addressing sustainability by operating a progressively responsible wastewater treatment plant as well as providing opportunities for citizens to recycle waste.

Policy Overview

Policies in this chapter translate the overall desires for Cheney’s sustainability and good stewardship of natural resources into actions promoting:

- A sustainable economy
- Wise land use
- Diverse transportation options
- Preservation of agriculture and open spaces
- Environmental conservation
- Energy conservation
- Ongoing community involvement in governance
- Increased self-reliance.

This chapter’s policy set touches virtually every aspect of local governance, suggesting City actions regarding air and water quality, wise investment in infrastructure, collaboration with regional agencies towards local goals, and maintenance of all natural assets enjoyed by residents today.

Guided by these policies, the City will review and refine its services to meet changing community needs, act to preserve important

open space areas and revitalize the community’s core, and commit to programming budgets and capital facilities expenditures strategically – assuring they conform to the longer-range perspective of sustainability.

In all, these policies underscore the City’s commitment to understanding, improving and sustaining the natural characteristics that define Cheney’s unique quality of life.

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 natural asset and sustainability objectives, though 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.

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Goals, Policies & Programs

Natural Assets, Sustainability & Related Goals

- Grow and sustain a balanced, resilient economy for Cheney, providing community prosperity and fiscal health. (G.01)

Discussion: In seeking long-term prosperity, residents understand the need to maintain economic diversity - capitalizing on the presence of Eastern Washington University as well as developing a strong business base independent of the school. Reflecting these values, this plan supports strategies that build and sustain a diverse, balanced economic base, retain existing quality of life assets, and help keep Cheney prosperous.

- 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.

- Sustain downtown as the 'heart' of Cheney, enhancing its commercial, service and civic vitality. (G.04)

Background: In preparing this plan, residents made it clear that downtown is still considered the 'heart' of Cheney. Keeping downtown vital requires supporting its numerous and necessary functions, including a strong commercial base, community services, public space access and proximate housing options. This plan provides policies and programs that help foster an environment in which downtown can thrive, in turn aiding the attractiveness, efficiency and value of the entire community.

- 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 agricultural economy, sustaining the utility and function of surrounding farmlands. (G.08)

Background: Along with the university, Cheney has long been associated with agriculture and the shipping of agricultural products. Today, residents prize Cheney’s proximity to agricultural lands, and hope to retain the economic and aesthetic benefits of agricultural lands surrounding the City.

- 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 the City of Cheney’s long-term fiscal health. (G.12)

Background: Essential services cities provide cannot be sustained without fiscal balance and accountability. This goal, though obvious, serves to anchor the City of Cheney’s obligation to sustain its fiscal health - achieved through the gathering of income in responsible, equitable ways, and through decisions, investments and actions that provide rate-payers with efficient, effective services.

- 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.

- **Maintain, update, coordinate and implement Cheney’s policy and regulatory documents. (G.14)**

Background: Cheney’s greatest successes have come when united under a shared vision, leaders and citizens have come together to address objectives. This goal serves to recognize and continue Cheney’s tradition of community planning and implementation, carrying it beyond more immediate, reactive efforts to the establishment and regular re-evaluation of long-range civic objectives. This plan is configured to aid periodic updates, and encourages future planning work for specific City departments, topical needs or neighborhoods. Cheney exists in a far more dynamic, diverse environment than at any time in the past, and this trend is likely to continue. Good planning – and just as important, implementation – is key to maintaining Cheney’s essential qualities over time.

- **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.

Natural Assets, Sustainability & Related Policies

- (P.01) Designate and service a steady and reliable supply of land within the City’s UGA, supporting overall plan objectives.

Discussion: Land use determinations exercise considerable influence over the health, quality and safety of cities, influencing the type and character of development, patterns of growth, even the net financial impact of growth on municipal budgets. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including maintaining land use areas matching plan objectives and community need; coordinating with Spokane County and neighboring municipalities on UGA expansion, if required.

- (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.04) Position Cheney’s quality of life and assets on regional, state, and national levels through lobbying and collaboration.

Discussion: Cheney’s natural setting, quality of life and university are primary assets in attracting businesses and maintaining a healthy economy. Important regional assets, such as those found in neighboring communities, are important factors as well, and should be considered in Cheney’s economic development strategy. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including efforts to define, recognize and strategically market Cheney’s unique qualities through collaborative lobbying efforts with local and regional partners.

- (P.07) Support Cheney’s agricultural economy for its role in sustaining local lifestyles, community character, and improving community self-reliance.

Discussion: Much of Cheney’s economic and cultural heritage involves agriculture, and in support of numerous other economic and qualitative goals, the continuation of a strong agricultural component is seen as desirable. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including efforts to identify and pursue opportunities supporting local and regional agriculture - helping create jobs, improve the quality of food supplies, conserve resources and improve the value of rural farmland.

- (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.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.27) Facilitate the provision of housing affordable to local wage-earners, and compatible with Cheney’s existing neighborhoods.

Discussion: Cheney’s economic vision includes residents living and working in the city, and the provision of affordable housing is an essential part of that objective. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including developing and maintaining land use and code provisions allowing a variety of housing types; consideration of tax credit or other incentives to spur low-income through moderate-income housing construction; consideration of land bank or other solutions reducing owner cost.

- (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.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.32) Develop a complete transportation system for Cheney, supporting efficient movement of goods and materials including multi-modal options.

Discussion: Transportation in all forms is critical to the economic, civic and cultural health of communities. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including the development and maintenance of long-range, full-featured transportation planning; implementation of indicated measures; collaboration with regional transportation providers and agencies.

- (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.34) Improve public transportation opportunities in Cheney.

Discussion: While Cheney is currently served by transit, the City should seek and capture opportunities to improve public transportation, serving goals related to economic development, housing, and others. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways such as collaboration with the Spokane Transit Authority, EWU and local employers; work with WSDOT and other agencies in consideration of public transit and parking reduction incentives; revised parking regulations; integration of public transit into further transportation planning.

- (P.38) Maintain land use strategies favoring growth within the existing urbanized area over development on the perimeter, 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 supporting land use actions; collaboration with Spokane County helping reduce development pressures within and near Cheney’s UGA.

- (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.40) Work with neighboring municipalities, Spokane County, State and regional agencies to reduce encroachment and development pressures on agricultural lands.

Discussion: Agricultural 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 and neighboring jurisdictions to coordinate supporting infrastructure and land use polices; coordinating with the SRTC on supporting transportation policies.

- (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.44) Discourage growth in sensitive and critical areas, including wetlands, habitat areas, steep slopes and lands with unstable soils.

Discussion: Wetlands and critical habitat areas are an important part of Cheney’s ecosystem, and are considered highly important aesthetic, educational and recreational assets by residents. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including the maintenance of supporting land use actions; development of wetland and critical habitat inventories; fostering improved education, protection and enhancement programs.

- (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.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: Spokane County’s Countywide Planning policies provide the over-arching framework of how development should occur in Spokane County. This policy establishes the basis for inter-jurisdictional cooperation for large capital facilities, particularly when cost-efficiencies can be achieved. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including adoption and update to capital facilities planning; identification of need and collaboration on potential shared facilities.

- (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.58) Maintain consistency between City planning and code documents.

Discussion: Comprehensive plans establish policy supporting long-range community vision. As essential tools to implement policy, development regulations and other municipal codes must be reviewed and updated to support plan policy. In addition, cross-consistency helps streamline development permitting and ensures community support for proposals. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including updating and maintaining consistency between City plan documents and applicable codes.

- (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.60) Protect, conserve and improve the quality of Cheney's water resources.

Discussion: Water is critical to sustaining life in Cheney. The City must continually look at ways (including technological tools) to provide, conserve and improve the quality of water in Cheney. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including protecting the groundwater resource; carefully considering any groundwater extensions; implementing water conservation measures; maintaining a water system plan.

- (P.61) Protect and improve Cheney’s air quality.

Discussion: Good air quality is critical to the quality of life that Cheney residents enjoy, to resident health, and to the ability to sustain a healthy economy. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including ongoing work with Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency (in collaboration with EWU and others) to improve air quality through energy conservation, alternative energy opportunities, reductions in VMT’s; support of public transit as an alternative mode of travel.

- (P.62) Improve City and community management and treatment of stormwater runoff.

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. Improved treatment, including natural soil filtration techniques, can help improve water quality while keeping service costs low. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including improving the City’s structural means of managing and treating stormwater; reducing the amount of pollutants entering area groundwater; consideration of opportunities to provide combined amenities to public ROWs; utilization of best management practices.

- (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.64) Encourage City and community energy conservation.

Discussion: Energy conservation helps reduce immediate costs and the need for long- term upgrades to system capacity, aids City sustainability goals, encourages compact development patterns, and offers opportunity for technological innovation. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including consideration of conservation incentives; economic development strategies supporting energy-conservative businesses; enactment of City-specific conservation goals.

- (P.65) Consider incentives for sustainable or ‘green’ building design, practices and construction.

Discussion: Wise and conservative use of resources, regardless of supply, is an important way communities can improve their own long-term health and ensure the availability of resources in the future. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including the promotion of “green” building design and construction, possibly including LEED standards or certification; consideration of economic development strategies attracting green businesses; enactment of City-specific conservation goals.

- (P.66) Increase recycling of household and construction waste in Cheney.

Discussion: The reduction and recycling of household and construction waste is important to community sustainability, service cost and health-related goals. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including the City, primarily through its Solid Waste Division, seeking and implementing strategies to increase the amount of household, commercial, and construction waste recycled in Cheney.

- (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.72) Sustain the provision of affordable, reliable energy resources for residents and businesses in Cheney.

Discussion: Providing affordable and reliable energy is a key deliverable of Cheney’s municipally-owned utility, and also plays a significant role in economic growth strategies. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including consideration of a blend of conservation, incentives, and technological advancements to ensure affordability and reliability.

- (P.73) Provide affordable, reliable water and wastewater services for residents and businesses in Cheney.

Discussion: High-quality water and wastewater services are vitally important to the residents of Cheney, and are critical functions of City government. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including maintaining a water system plan consistent with anticipated population growth and plan objectives; a water plan discouraging extension of service resulting in decreases to existing levels of service; adoption of the City’s Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP); consideration for the location and capacity of existing and planned sewer facilities when determining the intensity of land use designations.

- (P.74) Provide affordable, reliable solid waste disposal services for residents and businesses in Cheney.

Discussion: Reliable solid waste collection and disposal services are vitally important to the residents of Cheney, and are one of the critical functions of City government. Direction: This policy may be acted upon in ways including ongoing identification of ways to reduce the costs of solid waste collection and disposal services; implementation of measures improving recycling opportunities and coordination of efforts with existing solid waste collection.

- (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.

Natural Assets, Sustainability & 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, including: the streamlining and simplification of permitting.
- (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.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.