

Chapter 1



INTRODUCTION

The city of Chehalis is located in Lewis County, in southwest Washington. The city is bounded on the north by the city of Centralia, on the west by the Chehalis River, and on the south and east by unincorporated Lewis County. The city lies along the Interstate Five (I-5) corridor, and is located at the mid-point between Seattle to the north and Portland, Oregon to the south, both cities being approximately 87 miles from Chehalis.

The current corporate city limits includes approximately 4.61 square miles of land. The City's Urban Growth Area is 2.946 square miles.

Chehalis is the county seat for Lewis County, and serves as a primary center for government and trade within the county. With a population of 7,460 Chehalis is slightly less than half the size of neighboring Centralia. The population and employment base of the two cities provides the bulk of the county's economic activity.

COMMUNITY HISTORY

In the summer of 1851 Schuyler and Elizabeth (Tynan) Saunders staked a 640-acre claim on what is now downtown Chehalis. On May 8, 1859 Saunders established the first post office in the community he had named Saundersville. Judge Obadiah B. McFadden helped the area grow when in 1863 he went to Olympia and raised \$1,000 to improve the road through Saunders Bottom. In 1870, McFadden renamed the town "Chehalis", an Indian word meaning "shifting and shining sands". However, the name change was not recognized by the territorial legislature until 1879. Chehalis became the county seat in 1873, a few years after William F. West persuaded the Northern Pacific Railroad to build through Chehalis instead of Claquato. A new courthouse built in 1874. The first schoolhouse in Chehalis was built in 1876 at the southwest corner of State and Center Streets; the cost of this building was \$600. A second schoolhouse, the East Side School — also known as "The High School", was opened in 1890.

The institution now known as Green Hill School received its first resident in 1892. At that time it was known as Washington State Reform School. In 1883, Chehalis was incorporated as a city under the

territorial government, which allowed it to elect a mayor and “common council”. In 1890, the city was incorporated under state government. In 1975 Chehalis voters adopted the city's present council/city manager form of government. Chehalis' first downtown was located on West Main Street because of its proximity to railroads. The second city center shifted down West Main Street, from the original area, to the corner of Chehalis Avenue and West Main Street. In 1892 two fires destroyed the second city center. The first fire burned one block of buildings and the second fire, only two months later, destroyed four blocks including thirty buildings.

The third city center was built along Market Boulevard where new buildings had just been completed a couple of years before the fires of 1892. In 1889 the first important commercial structure was built on Market Boulevard, the First National Bank. Between 1880 and 1894 Chehalis Land and Timber Company, with financing from the First National Bank, constructed the St. Helens Hotel at South Market Boulevard and N.E. Cascade. The original structure bought by L.J. Sticklin in 1916 and moved to the corner of Market and Division where it became an apartment complex. The St. Helens Hotel was then rebuilt by owner W.F. West. In 1910 new civic center, consisting of the city hall and public library was built at Market Boulevard between Cascade and Park Streets. The Northern Pacific Railroad built its new depot in 1912 at NW Front Way and West Street. (It now houses the Lewis County Historical Museum.)

Chehalis got its start as an industrial city very early on with logging, sawmills, and the farming of grain, hay, hops and fruit serving as the major commodities. It continued to grow and prosper, becoming the retail center for the surrounding agricultural area. The city's employment base diversified into industry, retail service, agriculture and county government.

During World War II, the community supported the war effort and Boeing temporarily established a plant in Chehalis. The Navy operated the airport during the war, utilizing it as an emergency landing field and training facility after major construction and renovation was completed by the government.

The Industrial Commission, formed by Chehalis businessmen, and the Port of Chehalis were established in 1956 and 1986 respectively to help bring industry, thereby jobs to the Chehalis area. Chehalis' location on Interstate 5, midway between Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington in combination with its nearby link to eastern Washington via Highway 12 over White Pass, has been important in attracting new business and industry to the area.

The city of Chehalis is actively involved in the Lewis County Economic Development Council (formed in 1983). The Chamber (serving Centralia, Chehalis, and greater Lewis County), Tourism Lewis County, the Affordable Housing Network of Lewis County, Chehalis Basin Partnership (watershed planning), Chehalis River Flood Damage Reduction Project, and the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

The Chehalis Historic Preservation Commission was established in 1986 to promote the renovation and conservation of historic building sites and districts, and to provide for identification, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of the city's historic resources. In 1990 the city entered into a sister city relationship with Inasa-cho, Japan. The Chehalis Community Marketing Committee was formed by the city in 1997 and includes members of the city's business and professional community and The Chamber. Its goal is the economic revitalization of the city's downtown and commercial business district.

The Chehalis Community Renaissance Plan was established in 2009 to “make the Chehalis area a more attractive place in which to live, enhance job opportunities and involvement of youth; grow tourism traffic; and grow the retail base to enhance local shopping. The Chehalis Renaissance Plan is “a citywide plan with projects in community building, economic development, quality design, traffic and parking, and downtown development”. The mission of the Chehalis Community Renaissance Team (CRRT) is: “Driven by voluntary leadership, broad community participation and using disciplined project management, implement the ‘Chehalis City’ Council-approved plan”.

Chehalis has several nicknames - pioneers called it The Friendly City.' Sometimes it is referred to as the 'Mint City' as it is home to one of the worlds largest mint oil factories. Most often it is referred to as the 'City of Roses' because one of the National Rose Society's test gardens is located at city hall. Beautiful roses can also be found in Recreation Park.

POPULATION, HOUSEHOLD AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The growth of Chehalis, in terms of both population and economy, has been relatively steady over time. This steady growth pattern has meant that the city has grown more slowly during economic booms, and has declined only moderately during economic downturns. Such a pattern is common in areas with a diverse economy, such as Chehalis. Historical population trends for the city are shown in *Figure-1*

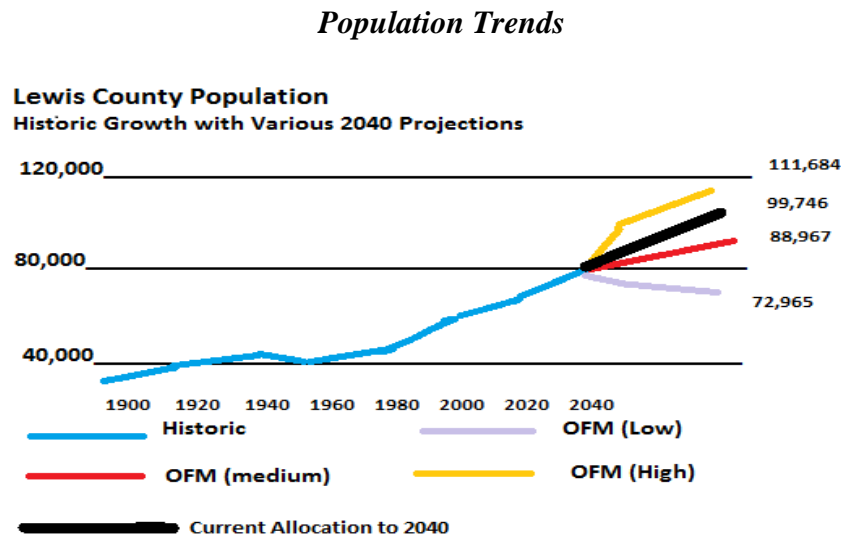


Figure-1
Source: Lewis County Planning/Updated February 2017

Lewis County Population

	1990	1995	2000	2007	2016
Lewis	59,358	65,500	68,600	74,100	76,890
Unincorporated	35,829	40,177	40,821	45,073	45,560
Incorporated	23,529	25,323	27,779	29,027	31,330
Centralia	12,101	12,730	14,742	15,520	16,820
Chehalis	6,527	6,910	7,057	7,045	7,460
Morton	1,130	1,258	1,045	1,140	1,120
Mossyrock	452	535	486	485	745
Napavine	745	960	1,383	1,492	1,870
Pe Ell	547	590	657	670	640
Toledo	586	690	653	685	720
Vader	414	488	590	620	615
Winlock	1,027	1,162	1,166	1,370	1,340

Figure-2

SOURCES: Office of Financial Management – updated February 2017

Within the past decade, the average household size has dropped slightly to 2.41 persons per household (a household is defined as all persons living in a housing unit, whether they are related or not). This household size is lower than both Lewis County (2.57) and the state (2.53) using 2010 data.

The population of both the city and the county differ from the state by age and by race. The city and county have a larger percentage of population over 65 years of age than the state, which may incite special challenges in providing needed services to this older population. **Figure-3** compares the percentage of population by age among the city, the county and the state.

Population age 65 and older

	Census			Estimate						% of Population
	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
Lewis County	9,248	10,667	13,076	13,252	13,843	14,098	14,743	15,346	15,944	20.74%

Figure-3

Source: OFM/Updated February 2017

Also according to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Chehalis population includes 11.6% persons of Hispanic origin and 6% other racial minorities. This indicates a need to increase the bilingual services for minorities within the city. These figures are larger than Lewis County (5.4% and 1.6% respectively), but lower than the State of Washington (7.5% and 10.7% respectively).

As population has grown at a steady rate over time, so has the city and the area's economy. The steady rate of growth, avoiding significant economic swings, may be attributed to the diversity of the employment base. The largest sectors of the Chehalis economy are government, wholesale and retail trade, and manufacturing. The largest employers within the city and its UGA include:

- Government: Lewis County; city of Chehalis; Chehalis School District; Public Utility District #1.
- Trade: Fred Meyer Distribution Center; Lewis County Mall stores/staff; Wal-Mart.
- Manufacturing: National Frozen Foods; Moduline Industries.

Economic growth is a priority for the city. Key players in this effort include the Port of Chehalis, the Chamber of Commerce for Centralia, Chehalis and Greater Lewis County, the Lewis County Economic Development Council, and The Industrial Commission. Due to the limited availability of appropriate sites for new industrial businesses within the city, strategies for economic growth include industrial and commercial expansion within the UGA located to the south of the city. This UGA will be discussed in greater detail in the Land Use element of this plan. *Figure-4* illustrates the diversity of the region's workforce.

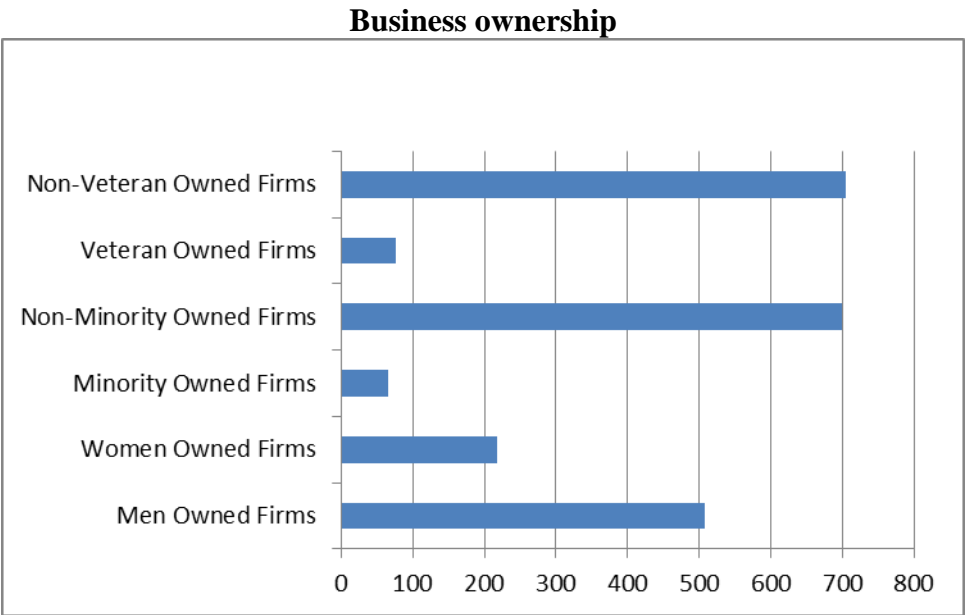


Figure-4
Source: U.S. Census – updated February 2017

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Lewis County and its incorporated cities are required to plan under the Growth Management Act (GMA). Chehalis efforts to plan under the Act began in 1992. This comprehensive plan replaces a plan originally adopted by the city in 1981 and a later versions of the comprehensive plan adopted by the city in 1999 and updated last in 2011.

PUBLIC INVOLVMENT

Goal 11 of GMA is: *'Encourage involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.'* The city of Chehalis has worked diligently to meet both the letter and spirit of this goal through outreach efforts to citizens, organizations and community groups. Public involvement efforts include:

- Interviews with individuals and agency representatives, including federal, state and county. agencies and special purpose districts;
- Planning Commission and City Council workshops;
- Community meetings before the Planning Commission to review plan recommendations;
- Presentations to community and business groups;
- Official public hearings before the Planning Commission and adoption process by the City Council;
- Review by affected agencies and groups of a summary of the recommended plan with supplemental analysis on the physical environment and transportation; and

COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Development of this plan could not have occurred without the cooperation and assistance of a variety of local, regional, state and federal agencies. Key contributors and their roles are listed below.

Lewis County provided countywide Planning Policies and made the final determination of the city's UGA. It also coordinated in planning for unincorporated areas around the city.

The City of Napavine provided information regarding utility capacity and locations, related to its planned IUGA. The two cities have reached an agreement regarding the provision of water and sewer utility services within each other's preferred UGA, for specific development projects.

The Port of Chehalis provided information on their plan to develop and enhance economic diversity in Lewis County.

The Chehalis School District provided information on student enrollment projections.

The Chamber of Commerce for Centralia, Chehalis and Greater Lewis County provides: information on employment and economic development trends in the area.

The Chehalis Historic Preservation Commission provided information on the city's history, and also on sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Pennsylvania Avenue - West Side National Historic District, the Hillside Historic District, and the Downtown Historic District.

The Lewis County Economic Development Council provided information on local and area-wide economic conditions.

The Washington Department of Transportation provided information on traffic in the 1-5 corridor, and also consultation and comments on the Transportation element of the plan.

The Washington Department of Ecology provided information on wetlands and shoreline protection programs available to the city, and also reviewed the draft plan.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife provided information on sensitive, threatened and endangered species (both flora and fauna) that may live in the area, and also on critical areas that should be protected by the plan. They also reviewed the draft document.

The Washington Office of Financial Management provided population and demographic information and projections. The Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development provided information on approaches used by other communities to meet the requirements of GMA. They also assisted in locating information and reviewed the draft plan. More importantly, they provided technical guidance and financial assistance.

The Washington Department of Natural Resources provided information related to geologic conditions in the area.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census provided population and demographic data, as well as historical population statistics and trends.

The U.S. Soil Conservation Service provided information and maps on soils and soil types.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency provided information on flood hazards flood-prone areas in and around the city, including maps which detail the 100- and 500-year flood elevations.

RELATIONSHIP OF THIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO OTHER PLANS

The following describes other plans and documents relating to developing and implementing the revised comprehensive plan.

Airport Master Plan/Chehalis-Centralia. This plan for the approximately 425 acres of land located at the airport was originally prepared in 1973 and last updated and approved by the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) in 2001. It contains a description of existing facilities, plans for upgrading the airport through 2027 and recommendations related to improving its safety and operations.

Port of Chehalis Comprehensive Plan. This plan was updated January 2017 and includes information regarding infrastructure expansion and capital facilities planning. The Port of Chehalis comprises an area of approximately 95 square miles and is located in the Chehalis UGA. The city is the provider of water and sewer services to the Port's development.

Chehalis Fire Services Master Plan. This plan was prepared in June 1993 and includes an inventory, identification of available funding, and recommended needs for fire services, personnel, equipment and facilities. The plan has not been updated since then. This plan will need to be updated in the near future.

Chehalis Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The most recent update of this plan prepared in 2010. The last year of the capital improvement program found in that plan was in 2015. The plan is now out-of-date.

Chehalis Draft General Sewer Plan (2001). This plan describes and discusses conditions, context, coordination, future needs, alternatives, and implementation programs. Additional documents related to this plan are in the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Reuse Facilities last updated in January 2003.

Shoreline Master Program (SMP). This plan dated June 1980 was adopted in October 1981 through Chehalis Resolution 19-81. The SMP applies to areas within 200 feet of defined water bodies and

designated floodways, including associated wetlands. The SMP establishes shoreline designations including natural, conservancy, rural, and urban. Both urban and rural environment were established for Chehalis in the adopted SMP. The urban environment is an area of high intensity land use including residential, commercial, recreational, and industrial development. The urban environment is designated to ensure optimum utilization of shorelines within urbanized areas by permitting intensive use and by managing development to enhance and maintain the shorelines for a multiplicity of uses. An updated draft from late 2016 is currently under review by Washington State Department of Ecology.

The SMP identifies a number of water bodies, portions of which are located within the corporate city limits. This includes a section of the Chehalis River which forms a portion of the corporate city limits to the west; a portion of the Newaukum River, parallel to 1-5, just south of Stan Hedwall Park; a portion of Salzer Creek; a portion of Dillenbaugh Creek; and a portion of Coal Creek.

Chehalis Water System Plan This plan consists of three documents (listed below) which collectively describe and discuss existing conditions, service areas, coordination, future need alternatives and implementation programs.

- Comprehensive Plan for the Municipal Water System (November 1976)
- Water System Plan (February 1980, updated April 1997, updated January 2012)
- Fire Services Master Plan (June 1993)

Chehalis Capital Improvement Plan (1995-1999). This plan scheduled the acquisition, repair and replacement of essential capital facilities. A new CIP is proposed within this Plan amendment. The CIP will also be reviewed and possibly revised each year as the city addresses the annual changes to the Development Regulations.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS

This plan is intended to guide the growth and development within the city of Chehalis and its UGA over the next twenty years. The plan must not conflict with applicable laws and regulations promulgated by the State of Washington or the federal government. Key laws that apply to the development of this plan are shown below.

THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT

The Growth Management Act of 1990 (GMA) was enacted to “reduce the inappropriate conversion of land to sprawling, low density development”. The protection of finite resources such as land, air, potable water, and sensitive natural resources was mandated by this legislation. The GMA has been amended from time to time, including a 1991 amendment requiring designation of interim and final UGA's around each city. The key features of GMA reflected in this plan are:

- An extensive public involvement process that took a 'bottom up' approach in developing vision for the community, and the tools to achieve it;
- Designation and protection of critical natural resource areas within the city;
- Consistency with the plans of Lewis County and other local jurisdictions;
- A groundwork for future amendments to zoning and other development regulations that will conform to this plan; and
- The ability to ensure the concurrent provision of infrastructure and public services at adequate levels of service as future development occurs.

THE SHORELINE MANAGEMENT ACT

The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) was adopted in 1971 to protect “shorelines of the state” from inappropriate development. The SMA applies to approximately 230 cities and counties having such shorelines within their jurisdictions. The Chehalis River is a shoreline of statewide significance. Because shorelines of rivers cross political boundaries, regional cooperation and coordination is required to comply with the intent of this legislation.

THE STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

The State Environmental Policy Act of 1971 (SEPA) is Washington's fundamental environmental law. SEPA requires local jurisdictions to analyze the potential consequences of proposed actions prior to making a decision. SEPA does not directly affect government decisions; it simply ensures that environmental issues are considered in making those decisions. Because many of the issues addressed in SEPA are also the subject of the GMA, it makes sense to combine the analysis required under the two laws into one document, as has been done in this plan.

THE REGULATORY REFORM ACT

The Regulatory Reform Act of 1995 (ESHB 1724) requires local governments planning under GMA to make environmental review a key element of land use planning, and it encourages combining regulatory review under SEPA, SMA and plans adopted under GMA into one, streamlined process. The comprehensive plan is intended to serve as the integrating framework for all other land use laws and regulations. GMA provides the means to effectively combine predictability for development decisions, reasonable environmental protection, long-range planning for cost-effective infrastructure, and orderly growth and development.

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

This federal law is intended to protect certain species of flora and fauna that have declined significantly in population, or are threatened with extinction. No local plan, ordinance or regulation may conflict with this law.

THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ACT

The city of Chehalis has adopted flood management strategies and regulations pursuant to this federal law. The requirements of this law are reflected in this plan.

THE CLEAN WATER ACT OF 1972, AS AMENDED, AND THE SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT

These federal laws establish standards for the quality of surface and ground waters.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

This comprehensive plan is divided into several elements in separate chapters, most of which are required by GMA. Those elements are: Natural Environment, Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Utilities, Capital Facilities and Economic. The environmental analysis for each element is included at the end of each chapter.

The order in which these elements appear in the plan is not random. They are intended to build upon one another. While the Land Use element is generally considered to be the foundation upon which other elements are built, the inventory and analysis of existing conditions found in the Natural Environment element is a necessary precursor to understanding the context in which land use decisions have been historically made in Chehalis.