

**2025 Comprehensive Plan**

City of Morton, Washington

June 2025

Adopted by the Morton City Council as Ordinance \_\_\_\_\_

June \_\_\_\_ 2025

***Draft Version 1, June 2024***

*Prepared pursuant to the requirements of the Washington State Growth  
Management Act and other applicable State code.*

Prepared by

Stoney Beach Consulting, LLC

63 SW 10<sup>th</sup> St

Chehalis, Washington 98532

360.219.5720

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Chapter One: Introduction .....5
  - Section 1.1 Statutory state guidelines .....5
  - Section 1.2 Mandatory and recommended elements and principles of local plans .....7
  - Section 1.3 Public Participation Component..... 10
  - Section 1.4 Public Participation Goals and Policies ..... 11
  - Section 1.4 Location..... 13
  - Section 1.5 Note on Areas of Geographic Analysis..... 13
  - Section 1.5 Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan ..... 13
- Chapter Two: Population and Household Characteristics ..... 15
  - Section 2.1 Urban Area Context ..... 15
  - Section 2.2 Local Population Trends..... 15
  - Section 2.3 Population Projections..... 16
  - Section 2.4 Age Characteristics ..... 17
  - Section 2.5 Sex and Race..... 18
  - Section 2.6 Education ..... 18
  - Section 2.7 Income and Poverty ..... 18
- Chapter Three: Land Use Element ..... 19
  - Section 3.1 State Goals and Countywide Planning Policies ..... 19
  - Section 3.2 Existing City Design..... 20
  - Section 3.3 Existing Land Use ..... 21
  - Section 3.4 Environmental..... 21
  - Section 3.5 Land Acreage Summary by Zone..... 26
  - Section 3.6 Land Use Problems and Issues..... 26
  - Section 3.7 Future Land Use ..... 26
  - Section 3.9 Essential Public Facilities ..... 28
  - Section 3.10 Future Land Use Policies and Goals..... 29
- Chapter Four: Housing Element..... 35
  - Section 4.1 Summary of Countywide Housing Policies ..... 35
  - Section 4.2 Housing Profile ..... 36
  - Section 4.3 Overview of Housing Problems ..... 37
  - Section 4.3 Housing Analysis ..... 37
  - Section 4.4 Types of Housing Units..... 40
  - Section 4.5 Occupancy and Tenure ..... 40
  - Section 4.6 Value and Affordability ..... 40

Section 4.7 Age and conditions .....	40
Section 4.8 Barriers To Homeownership .....	41
Section 4.9 Housing Programs .....	42
Section 4.10 Housing Goals, Policies, and Objectives .....	42
Chapter Five: Economic Development Element.....	44
Section 5.1 Jobs-Housing Balance .....	44
Section 5.2 Economic Development Opportunities .....	44
Section 5.3 Economic Development Goals and Policies .....	45
Chapter Six: Climate Change and Resiliency .....	47
Section 6.1 Climate Change Goals, Policies, and Objectives .....	47
Chapter Seven: Transportation .....	51
Section 7.2 Roadway Classifications and Adopted Levels of Service .....	56
Section 7.3 Traffic Counts.....	57
Section 7.4 Transportation Issues .....	57
Section 7.5 Transportation Improvement Plan .....	58
Section 7.6 Recommended Street Design Standards.....	60
Section 7.6 Transportation Goals, Policies, and Objectives.....	61
Chapter Eight: Capital Facilities and Utilities .....	65
Section 8.1 Capital Facilities Plan .....	65
Section 8.2 Water and Sewer Capacity for Future Growth .....	67
Section 8.3 Utilities .....	68
Section 8.4 Capital Facilities and Utilities Goals and Policies.....	68
Appendix.....	72
Public Participation Plan for Morton 2025 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Updates.....	72

Listing of Tables

		Page Number
Table 1.1	Summary of Statutory Goals and Local Planning Requirements with references to Morton’s plan	
Table 1.2	SUMMARY OF MANDATORY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS	
Table 2.1	2020 Population	
Table 2.2	Total Population and Percent Change 2000 to 2020	
Table 2.3	Population Projections 2020 to 2045 City of Morton and Lewis County	
Table 2.4	2020 Population by Age Group Morton and Lewis County	
Table 2.7	2022 Income Statistics Morton and Lewis County	
Table 3.5		
Table 7.2		

DRAFT

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This document represents the comprehensive plan for the City of Morton Washington. It was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the State of Washington Growth Management Act (GMA). The city initially adopted a comprehensive plan in 1997. It was subsequently reviewed and updated in 2023. This process includes four steps.

- 1) Public participation.
- 2) Review of plans and regulations.
- 3) Land use and housing analysis.
- 4) Adoption by resolution or ordinances.

This comprehensive plan is designed to satisfy statutory requirements. The plan draws on the 2005 plan while also responding to GMA amendments and other applicable State regulations. Housing and permit processing regulations have been either expanded or created to address the unprecedented population growth being experienced by the State of Washington in the previous five years.

This chapter provides a summary of the GMA requirements and how/where they are addressed in the plan. It also provides relevant background information on the plan overall.

It is important to note that while the county has final jurisdiction over the urban growth area (UGA), the city does plan for this area. With the exception of housing calculations, all information contained herein reflects land within the city limits and urban growth area.

---

### SECTION 1.1 STATURORY STATE GUIDELINES

The Growth Management Act as established in 36.70A RCW specifies thirteen goals to guide development and adoption of local comprehensive plans and development regulations. These goals are summarized in Table 1.1.

Most of the goals are directly addressed by planning elements in the plan. For instance, affordable housing goals are addressed in Chapter 4, Housing Element. Two of the State goals, property rights and permits, are applicable primarily to development regulations, although the land use element (Chapter 3) is relevant to implementation of these goals.

**Table 1.1**  
**Summary of Statutory Goals and Local Planning Requirements**  
**Washington Growth Management Act (GMA)**  
**With References to Morton's Plan**

<b>Goal Number and Title</b>	<b>Statutory Goal</b>	<b>Location in Morton's Comp Plan</b>
------------------------------	-----------------------	---------------------------------------

1) Urban Growth	Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.	Chapter Three
2) Reduce Sprawl	Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.	Chapter Three
3) Transportation	Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.	Chapter Eight
4) Housing	Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock	Chapter Three
5) Economic Development	Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.	Chapter Five
6) Property Rights	Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.	Chapter Three
7) Permits	Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.	Chapter Three
8) Natural Resources Industries	Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses.	Chapter Six

9) Open Space and Recreation	Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.	Chapter Three, Chapter Six, Chapter Ten
10) Environment	Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.	Chapter Six
11) Citizen Participation	Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.	Chapter One
12) Public Facilities and Services	Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.	Chapter Eight, Chapter Nine, Chapter Ten
13) Historic Preservation	Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, which have historical or archaeological significance.	Chapter Two, Chapter Five
14) Climate Change and Resiliency	Ensure that comprehensive plans, development regulations, and regional policies, plans, and strategies under RCW 36.70A.210 and chapter 47.80 RCW adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.	Chapter Seven
15) Shorelines of the State	For shorelines of the state, the goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020 shall be considered an element of the county's or city's comprehensive plan.	Chapter Three, Chapter Six

---

**SECTION 1.2 MANDATORY AND RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF LOCAL PLANS**

In addition to the statewide goals, GMA specifies certain minimum components for local comprehensive plans. Table 1.2 provides a summary of the administrative regulations relative to local comprehensive plans.

While the administrative rules specify seven mandatory elements, there are several other elements to include. Mandatory requirements that are not formally called ‘elements’ include public participation, tribal participation, amendment procedures, an urban growth designation, and adherence to county wide planning policies.

DRAFT



**TABLE 1.2  
SUMMARY OF MANDATORY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS**

<b>WASHINGTON GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT (GMA) Required Element</b>	<b>Description of Mandatory Provisions</b>
1) Land Use Element	A land use element designating the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of land, where appropriate, for agriculture, timber production, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, open spaces and green spaces, urban and community forests within the urban growth area, general aviation airports, public utilities, public facilities, and other land uses. The land use element shall include population densities, building intensities, and estimates of future population growth. The land use element shall provide for protection of the quality and quantity of groundwater used for public water supplies. The land use element must give special consideration to achieving environmental justice in its goals and policies, including efforts to avoid creating or worsening environmental health disparities.
2) Housing Element	A housing element shall ensure the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods by analyzing existing and projected housing needs.
3) Capital Facilities Plan	A capital facilities plan shall consist of an inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities, proposed expansions, and a capital facility plan that clearly identifies the funding source.
4) Utilities Element	A utilities element shall consist of the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities including but not limited to, electrical, telecommunications, and natural gas systems.
5) Rural Element	The rural element is a requirement of counties and as such does not apply to cities and towns.
6) Transportation	The transportation must be consistent and concurrent with the land use element.
7) Economic Development	The economic development element shall establish goals, policies, objectives, and provisions for economic growth, vitality, and a high quality of life.

8) Park and Recreation	The parks and recreation element shall include estimates of park and recreation demand for at least a ten-year period, an evaluation of existing facilities and services, an evaluation of tree canopy coverage within the urban growth area, and an evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide regional approaches for meeting park and recreational demand.
9) Climate Change and Resiliency	The climate change and resiliency element shall address how the community will reduce greenhouse gases.

---

### SECTION 1.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION COMPONENT

As indicated in the Growth Management Act, early and continuous participation in the comprehensive planning process is required. Morton's public participation strategy was adopted by Resolution #536 on November 27, 2023. This Public Participation Plan is included with this document in the Appendix.

The 1997 Comprehensive Plan was the focus of community surveys, public meetings, and the development of alternatives and priorities with concerned citizens and the Planning Commission. For the 2022 update, the city again conducted a survey to gather feedback on community goals for planning. The vision statements below originate from the 1997 Plan with the addition of Vision Statement VI, which reflects new planning priorities in the 2022 update.

### COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENTS

- I. The City of Morton desires to retain its existing character allowing existing and new forestry and other industrial expansion to occur, such as tourism, education, and health and other services.
- II. The City of Morton desires to provide for the identified housing demand and increase provision for needed elderly housing, for persons of all incomes as well as more two-family households.
- III. The City of Morton desires to have capacity for growth in water, sewer, and other public facilities.
- IV. The City of Morton desires to continue to identify recent economic trends to diversify its economic base of products and services.
- V. The City of Morton desires to provide for diversity in the workforce, improve training opportunities and increase the labor force capacity and incomes in order to help manage cyclical economic patterns.
- VI. The City of Morton desires to be resilient to climate change impacts, such as wildfires and flooding.

### **Electronic Communications**

Electronic communication with the public occurs using the City’s own website to disseminate information. Links to the website are provided on the Facebook page, City of Morton 2025 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Updates.

### **Notice of Meetings**

To provide notice of all meetings, the city posted a written notice on its official notice board or in a conspicuous location. The City’s advertising policy for public hearings includes notification in a newspaper of general circulation in the City. Such notices were provided at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting and indicated the date, time, and location of the meeting.

### **Communication with the Yakima Tribe**

As per 36.70A.040 local governments shall engage the appropriate local tribes during the updates to the comprehensive plan. For the City of Morton that tribe is the Yakima Tribe. The Tribe has been given the opportunity to review and comment on the draft document prior to any decisions by the City Council.

### **Final Public Hearing, Comment Period**

Upon preparation of the final draft of the comprehensive plan, the City scheduled a public meeting to solicit comments, concerns, and questions from the citizens and interested parties. The city kept a written record of all specific revisions suggested for the plan. A written comment period was provided of no less than fourteen (14) days. The consulting planner and City Council considered all recommendations when preparing and adopting the final plan.

### **Update to Comprehensive Plan**

As part of the update process for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, two (2) public meetings were held prior to the City Council meetings. These informal meetings provided the public with an opportunity to ask questions of the consulting planner and discuss any concerns. These concerns were then relayed to the Council at the meeting. In May 2025 the City Council held a public hearing to take public comment on the proposed comprehensive plan. The decision to adopt the plan was made in June 2025 pending final approval by the Washington Department of Commerce.

---

## SECTION 1.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS AND POLICIES

### **GOAL PP-1:**

**INVOLVE THE PUBLIC IN UPDATING AND DEVELOPING THE CITY OF MORTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS.**

<b>PP-1.1</b>	The city should review and track citizen comments through community surveys and oral and written comments received during plan review and development.
<b>PP-1.2</b>	The city should hold public forums identifying community visions expected amendments, and to request the public's active participation throughout the amendment process.
<b>PP-1.3</b>	At all Planning Commission meetings and advertised public hearings, the city should provide the opportunity for public questions and comments.
<b>PP-1.4</b>	The city should maintain an annual process for reviewing and amending the Comprehensive Plan. Plan amendments may be initiated by the Planning Commission, City Council, or by any resident of the City or its UGA via formal application to the City. The process of review for a Plan amendment should include annual public review of a docket of potential amendments, Planning Commission review of applications, environmental review as required by SEPA and other applicable state and local regulations, at least one public hearing with adequate formal public notice, recommendation by the Planning Commission to City Council, final action by the City Council, and proper noticing of public agencies involved in reviewing Plan amendments under the GMA. Additional methods to secure public participation may also be used, including, but not limited to, public forums, open houses, and surveys. The city should limit plan amendments to those that are consistent with GMA and necessary for the preservation of public health, safety, welfare, and the environment.
<b>PP-1.5</b>	The city should maintain a public process for reviewing changes to development regulations and ensure that any changes follow the plan amendment process described in PP-1.4.
<b>PP-1.6</b>	The City should periodically review its procedures for Plan and development regulation amendments to ensure timely and fair processing of applications and changes to ensure predictability for citizens.

**Objectives:**

1. Establish an application form and fee schedule for annual comprehensive plan amendments.
2. Establish an annual docketing schedule for Plan amendments.
3. Establish a docketing procedure for development regulation amendments.
4. Establish a website for public communication about planning and other city issues.

---

## SECTION 1.4 LOCATION

The City of Morton is in southwest Washington and in eastern Lewis County. It is approximately 35 miles west of Interstate 5 and is accessed primarily by State Highway 12. The West Fork of the Tilton River runs through Morton.

Morton's physical location and importance as a regional service center shape its current and future land use. Morton lies in the heart of an active recreation area that includes Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Rainier, and Mt. Adams, as well as a variety of lakes, streams, and public lands that draw tourists from around the state and beyond. The city serves as a regional service and education center for mountain communities of Eastern Lewis County.

The city is located on the north side of U.S. Highway 12, the major east-west route through Lewis County and access route to Mt. St Helens and other recreation areas. Morton is connected to the Puyallup/Tacoma area via State Route 7, and to smaller mountain communities and eventually Napavine on the 1-5 corridor via State Route 508. Tacoma Rail ends its line in Morton, and recently increased services for tourists to the community is set to bring additional visitors to the area.

The city has an elementary school, junior high, high school, and Centralia College East. Morton General Hospital serves the region and has undergone recent expansion. Two lumber mills and a chip mill call Morton home, and much of the surrounding forested lands are owned by major timber companies.

Morton has seen stable population numbers in recent years. The City foresees the potential for future population growth in the near future as a result of trends toward remote working and as housing affordability pressures from urban areas drive growth in rural areas. Population growth could drive continued growth in residential, recreational, and industrial opportunities.

---

## SECTION 1.5 NOTE ON AREAS OF GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

This plan presents and analyzes a variety of data at different units of geographic analysis. At the smallest level is data for the city itself. Some of the land use data are presented at a slightly larger area than the city limits, known commonly as the Morton Urban Growth Area (UGA). Some statistical information is presented at the county and state levels.

---

## SECTION 1.5 PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A comprehensive plan, known by other names such as ‘general’ plan, ‘development’ plan, ‘master’ plan, ‘policy’ plan, and ‘growth management’ plan, has several characteristics. It is a written plan to guide the physical development of the community by describing how, why, when and where to build or preserve the community. The plan also reflects the long-range visions for the community in a way that is realistic to social, economic, and political constraints. The plan is also considered comprehensive because it covers the entire City area, addressing all the functions that make a community work by considering the interrelationship of those functions.

A comprehensive plan is a statement of policy. The purpose of the plan is to guide the local elected officials when making decisions for new development and changing conditions. Plan policies and information provide the essential background perspective for decision making with respect to land use regulations, public investments and capital improvement programs. Policies also provide guidance to business owners, investors, and developers regarding the future direction and intensity of growth. The plan is based on the prospect that if the community knows where it wants to grow and what it wants to be in the future, it possesses much better prospects of getting there.

The comprehensive plan is a continuous process. No single document can pose solutions to all community problems. The plan must therefore be a flexible document. It is a dynamic document that can be updated and changed annually to accommodate shifting resources and changes within the community and state.

## CHAPTER TWO: POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter is devoted to an inventory and analysis of past and present population and household characteristics. An understanding of population growth and general characteristics is an important first step in completing a comprehensive plan. Analyzing where the people are, in what numbers and compositions, and what rates they are expected to increase or decrease helps to determine the location and need for public facilities, capital improvements housing and employment opportunities. Population trends are usually influenced by growth and economic conditions in surrounding areas. It is, therefore, appropriate to place the city in the context of larger development patterns.

---

### SECTION 2.1 URBAN AREA CONTEXT

Table 2.1 indicates Morton’s relationship to surrounding urban areas. Though Morton is a small City and relatively isolated in a rural environment, removed from urban and suburban population centers, it is strategically located approximately equidistant between two major metropolitan centers, Seattle and Portland. Both are within a two-hour drive. Morton is also located within a one-hour drive of other urbanized areas, Olympia, the State capital, to the north and Longview to the south.

**Table 2.1**  
**2020 Population**

	2020 Population
Morton	1,302
Lewis County	82,149
Washington State	7,705,281

While at first blush it may seem pointless to place Morton within the context of distant urban centers, the urban context provides an important perspective for the City’s future. Several trends now under way make Morton closer to urban areas than initially appears. With crime rising in metropolitan areas, many people are ‘fleeing’ urban areas for a smaller City environment. Homelessness has also created a major impact on the desirability of living along the Interstate 5 corridor. Third, many people are tolerating longer commutes to live in a rural area while commuting to urban areas for work and commodities. And finally, as we learned during the COVID outbreak of 2020, due to improvements in internet services, many people are now able to work from home, providing for a better work life balance.

---

### SECTION 2.2 LOCAL POPULATION TRENDS

Table 2.2 provides total population and percent change figures for Morton and Lewis County for 2000 to 2020. According to the Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM), Morton’s population has shown continued growth.

**Table 2.2**  
**Total Population and Percent Change**  
**2000 to 2020**  
**Morton and Lewis County**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change from 2000 to 2010</b>	<b>Change from 2010 to 2020</b>
<b>Morton</b>	<b>1059</b>	<b>1126</b>	<b>1302</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>15.6%</b>
<b>Lewis County</b>	<b>68600</b>	<b>75455</b>	<b>82149</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>

In recent years cities and towns within the State have experienced rapid growth from new arrivals. In the last several years Washington State has seen an influx of 90,000 residents annually. Meanwhile, the City of Morton has experienced more growth by percentage than the county overall in the past ten years.

---

**SECTION 2.3 POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

In 2023, the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners adopted population projections for the County and each city and City based on forecasting data from OFM. OFM projected a 2045 county population with low, medium, and high scenarios.

**Table 2.3**  
**Population Projections 2020 to 2045**  
**City of Morton and Lewis County**

	<b>2022 Total Population</b>	<b>2045 Population Projections</b>	<b>20 Year Population Increase</b>	<b>20 Year Growth Rate</b>
<b>Morton</b>	<b>1302</b>	<b>1351</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>3.75%</b>
<b>Lewis County</b>	<b>83446</b>	<b>104951</b>	<b>21505</b>	<b>25.77%</b>

Ideally the population of a community is projected by age and by separate analysis of natural increase (births minus deaths) and inward migration statistics. However, because Morton is



a small city, vital statistics are generally unavailable. Detailed migration statistics are lacking as well. It is difficult to provide a statistical justification for the city population projects for these reasons. However, given that the City’s 2045 estimate and county projections are from OFM, these projections are viewed as realistic and are the official population projections for the city.

---

**SECTION 2.4 AGE CHARACTERISTICS**

Table 2.4 provides a classification of Morton’s 2020 population by age groups, along with comparable figures for Lewis County.

**Table 2.4**  
**2020 Population by Age Group**  
**Morton and Lewis County**

Source: US Census 2022 Table S0101

	<b>Morton</b>	<b>Lewis County</b>
<b>Under 5 years</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4721</b>
<b>5 to 9 years</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>4805</b>
<b>10 to 14 years</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>5177</b>
<b>15 to 19 years</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>4901</b>
<b>20 to 24 years</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4327</b>
<b>25 to 29 years</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4879</b>
<b>30 to 34 years</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>5105</b>
<b>35 to 39 years</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>5346</b>
<b>40 to 44 years</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>4474</b>
<b>45 to 49 years</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>4602</b>
<b>50 to 54 years</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>4971</b>
<b>55 to 59 years</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>5575</b>
<b>60 to 64 years</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>6443</b>
<b>65 to 69 years</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>5719</b>
<b>70 to 74 years</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>4789</b>
<b>75 to 79 years</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>3135</b>
<b>80 to 84 years</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1878</b>
<b>85 years and over</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>1816</b>

---

## SECTION 2.5 SEX AND RACE

In 2020, Morton consisted of 50.8% female and 49.2% male. With a population of 1302 in 2022, 70.1% are white and 29.9% are people of color.

---

## SECTION 2.6 EDUCATION

As of 2020, the educational background of Morton residents is as follows:

- Bachelor's or Higher: 12.5%
- Associated degree: 11.1%
- Some college but no degree: 32.2%
- High school diploma or equivalent: 32.0%

Of the students residing in Morton, 83.9% attend the local school district, Morton School District #214. The remaining 16.1 % of enrolled students were attending college.

---

## SECTION 2.7 INCOME AND POVERTY

Table 2.7 provides a comparison of income characteristics between Morton's residents and Lewis County's residents in 2022. As can be seen in this chart, Morton is slightly higher in median income than Lewis County however, Lewis County has a significantly higher median income for single people than Morton.

With the exception of residents over 65, Morton has a lower poverty rate than Lewis County. Residents over 65 have a higher rate of poverty.

The poverty threshold in 2022 was \$15,060 for single households and \$25,820 for a family of three. The average household size in Morton during 2022 was 2.8 persons.

**Table 2.7**  
**2022 Income Statistics**  
**Morton and Lewis County**

	<b>Median Income</b>	<b>Families</b>	<b>Married Couples</b>	<b>Single</b>	<b>At or below poverty level</b>	<b>&lt;18 years</b>	<b>18 to 64 years</b>	<b>&gt;65 years</b>
<b>Morton</b>	<b>\$55,156</b>	<b>\$64,417</b>	<b>\$59,858</b>	<b>\$18,750</b>	<b>13.50 %</b>	<b>9.40%</b>	<b>15.30%</b>	<b>12.00 %</b>
<b>Lewis County</b>	<b>\$52,281</b>	<b>\$78,438</b>	<b>\$78,125</b>	<b>\$41,563</b>	<b>15.00 %</b>	<b>15.60 %</b>	<b>17.60%</b>	<b>8.30%</b>

## CHAPTER THREE: LAND USE ELEMENT

Information on Morton's population and how its land is currently being utilized form the foundation for evaluating future land use needs, a primary function of this Plan. The city is dominated by single-family residential development, with up to 10% of its housing stock as vacation homes. In addition, a large percentage of the UGA is still in resource use, with approximately 20% of lands enrolled in the County's open space tax program for agriculture or forestry use. The city serves as a regional service center, with schools, a hospital, a municipal airport, and home to major industries (medical waste processing and lumber mills).

Restaurants, hotels, and small-scale commercial services round out the major land uses. Critical areas associated with the Tilton River and additional wetland and floodplain areas overlay much of the City and UGA's west side, as well as impact the UGA east of the city. Adjustments to future land use designations and the UGA boundary were made in 2005 to account for critical areas that limited the developability of some of these areas.

---

### SECTION 3.1 STATE GOALS AND COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES

The Growth Management Act specifies eight statewide goals that are relevant to this element in the plan (see also Table 1.1) They are:

- ❖ **Urban Growth.** Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- ❖ **Reduce Sprawl.** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
- ❖ **Property Rights.** Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
- ❖ **Permits.** Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
- ❖ **Natural Resources Industries.** Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses.

- ❖ **Open Space and Recreation.** Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.
- ❖ **Environment.** Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
- ❖ **Shorelines of the State.** For shorelines of the state, the goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020 shall be considered an element of the county's or city's comprehensive plan.

The countywide planning policies address these goals in greater detail. The land use policies are too numerous to reiterate in their entirety here. The countywide planning policy is included in the Appendix for reference.

---

### SECTION 3.2 EXISTING CITY DESIGN

The design of right of ways, blocks and lots is a major determining factor in overall town design and the subsequent pattern of land use. Piro to discussion of existing land use, this section summarizes the physical pattens that have shaped the land use in Morton.

The original city is laid out in a traditional grid pattern. The streets within the original layout are approximately 60 feet wide. The blocks range in size from 1500 feet square to 150 feet by 200 feet. The area between Adams Avenue and Westlake Avenue, bordered by 7<sup>th</sup> Street on the east and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street on the west consists of two blocks, approximately 4500 feet wide and 500 feet long. Commercial uses are found along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

The remaining portions of the city have been developed by short plat and subdivisions created from 64-acre sections. Lots are accessed by a mix of public right of way, private roads, and easements. East of 7<sup>th</sup> Street, lots are as small as 10,000 sq feet and as large as 38 acres. Development does not follow a traditional grid pattern.

North of Main Street there is a mix of single-family homes and timber resource land. Again, lots vary in size with 10,000 square feet on the lower end and eighteen acres at the upper end. Development does not follow the traditional grid pattern.

West of downtown, along State Route 7 and north of Davis Lake Road there is a mix of residential and timber resource land. Lots of range in size from 10,000 square feet to 32 acres and are not laid out in a traditional grid pattern.

The remaining section of the city, west of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street with Davis Lake Road on the north is primarily owned and used by the school district with some residential and commercial.

Residential lots sizes in this area are approximately 6,000 square feet in size. Lot layout is dictated by use and right of way lay out.

---

### SECTION 3.3 EXISTING LAND USE

Described below are the categories of land use employed in this inventory, along with a general description of the locations of various land uses. A summary of the acreages in each category appears in Table 3.5 at the end of this discussion. A land use map accompanies this document. While the existing land use table is updated to reflect the current land uses based on zoning, analysis of vacant land has not been conducted as part of this process.

---

#### SECTION 3.3.1 RESIDENTIAL

Residential use is primarily single-family homes with a mix of urban size lots and rural size lots. The feel of the community as a whole is rural in nature.

---

#### SECTION 3.3.2 COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL

Morton has an active timber resource industry that harvests and processes within its jurisdiction. There is a mix of commercial uses to support the population of the community. Much of the industrial land on the east side of the city is undevelopable due to critical area constraints and/or industrial ownership.

---

#### SECTION 3.3.3 COMMUNITY

This area is used for lands dedicated to providing public utility services, parks and recreation opportunities, and other public institutional land uses. Morton has parks and city owned buildings to serve the community. There is a primary school, junior high and high school. Centralia College has a west side campus located in Morton. The community is served by several churches. There is a small airport south of US Highway 12.

---

#### SECTION 3.3.4 NATURAL AREAS

Given the rural nature of the community, Morton enjoys many different types of natural areas, the primary being the West Fork of the Tilton River. There are many wetlands to also enhance and support the natural environment.

---

### SECTION 3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL

This section provides an inventory and analysis of natural resources, environmental conditions and open space in the Morton area. Washington state law and administrative rules require that cities and counties designate and regulate "critical areas" such as wetlands, flood areas, recharge zones and wildlife habitats, as well as identify open space corridors within and between urban growth areas. Optional

provisions of the act and rules state that local governments should acquire especially sensitive lands and purchase development rights of critical areas where possible.

In 2005, the City of Morton adopted the Lewis County Critical Areas Ordinance. In 2018, the adopted the Lewis County Shoreline Area Master Plan.

The remainder of this section provides an inventory of the natural resources, environmental qualities and recreational and open space sites in the Morton area and indicates how the comprehensive plan proposes to protect and enhance these resources.

Current land use in the city and UGA are summarized in Table 3.4.

**TABLE 3.4  
CURRENT LAND USE IN ACRES**

<b>2022 Current Land Use (Based on Assessor Codes)</b>	<b>UGA</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Total Zoning</b>	<b>Percent of Total Zoned Land</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	122	0	122	9%
<b>Commercial/Retail</b>	56	37	93	7%
<b>Commercial Industrial</b>	11	15	26	2%
<b>Mining/forestry</b>	136	0	136	10%
<b>Multi-Family Residential</b>	14	6	20	1%
<b>Single-Family Residential</b>	289	204	493	35%
<b>Public/quasi-public</b>	50	83	133	9%

<b>Transportation/Utility</b>	9	34	43	3%
<b>Undeveloped/Vacant</b>	155	67	222	16%
<b>Water</b>	5	1	6	0%
<b>Roads/ROWs</b>	42	68	110	8%
<b>Total</b>	889	515	1404	100%
<b>Critical Areas</b>	319	137	456	32%

*Source: Lewis County GIS Department, January 2022. Based on Assessor use codes. All numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.*

---

#### SECTION 3.4.1 CRITICAL AREAS INVENTORY

Table 1 shows that a large percentage of the city and its UGA are encumbered by critical areas (not including buffers, which are applied through the Critical Areas Ordinance) as mapped by Lewis County's GIS department. These critical areas serve to limit development potential for some parcels, while providing important public services and amenities, including wildlife habitat, stormwater and flood control, scenic views, water quality, and water supply.

Figure B shows the mapped critical areas in Morton and its UGA. This map is for informational and planning purposes only and is intended to alert potential developers and property owners to possible constraints to development or environmental hazards. The presence of a mapped critical area on a potential development site is sufficient information for the City to require an applicant for additional environmental information as part of the permitting process under the City's development regulations.

---

#### SECTION 3.4.2 IN THE CITY

Critical Areas are allowed to transfer development rights such that these areas will be preserved, as will the property rights of the owners if developed under adopted city standards. Critical areas, as defined under GMA, include wetlands, frequently flooded areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, geologically hazardous areas, and fish and wildlife conservation areas. The City of Morton's Critical Areas Ordinance provides protection for these areas using the best available science.

---

#### SECTION 3.4.3 WETLANDS

Wetlands are transitional areas between upland and aquatic environments where water is present long enough to form distinct soils where wetland plants grow. Some wetlands are obvious, with standing water or seasonal wet areas. Others are less easily observed. The National Wetlands Inventory shows significant wetlands and hydric soils in the valley and Davis Lake area located east of City limits. Riparian wetlands associated with the Tilton River and its tributaries bisect the City of Morton. Additional isolated wetlands are found in the northwest portion of the UGA.

---

#### SECTION 3.4.4 GEOLOGICALLY HAZARDOUS AREAS

These areas are not suitable for development due to the risk to public safety from volcano eruptions, earthquakes, landslides, or other geologic events. The city is a participant in the Lewis County Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was adopted in 2016. The 2016 Plan does not show any landslide, or volcanic hazard areas within the City or UGA. Soil types in the Morton area are not particularly vulnerable to erosion, and no seismic hazard due to liquefaction has been identified.<sup>1</sup> However, regional earthquakes and volcano hazards could potentially impact Morton, as identified in the risk assessments of the plan.

---

#### SECTION 3.4.5 ON SLOPES OVER 15%

Engineering may be required to ensure structure safety, and development may be restricted on slopes over 40%. Figure B shows areas of slopes over 40%. Mostly, these slopes are confined to the hilly regions north of the city limits, although some steep slopes are found along the Tilton River in the southwestern portion of the UGA.

---

#### SECTION 3.4.6 FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AREAS

These areas include priority habitats and species areas determined by the Washington State



Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and may include other habitats for species of local importance. Both Tilton River and Lake Creek (which forms the southern boundary of the city and travels along US Highway 12), have anadromous and resident fish identified as priority species. Specific priority habitat and species points are limited within the city and its UGA, but in a regional context the Morton. Associated with Davis Lake and its wetlands, in the far southeast corner of the Morton UGA, cavity nesting wood ducks and hooded mergansers have been identified in the bog wetland habitat, most of which is located outside the UGA. This area is also part of a larger area of Rocky Mountain and Roosevelt Elk winter range, which extends throughout the City of Morton and its UGA. The Davis Lake Unit of the Cowlitz Wildlife Area, managed by WDFW, is 243 acres located east of Morton. The Unit is managed for black-tailed deer forage, riparian forest habitat and both dabbling and diving ducks. The lake provides a rearing habitat for coho and steelhead juveniles. Rainbow trout are stocked for recreational fishing.

---

#### SECTION 3.4.7 FREQUENTLY FLOODED AREAS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) derived 100-year floodplains in order to establish actuarial insurance rates and promote sound floodplain management. The Tilton River and a drainage channel located near the municipal airport have mapped 100-year floodplains. Development is restricted in these floodplains due to potential public safety hazards and the importance of these lands to accommodate floodwaters.

---

#### SECTION 3.4.8 CRITICAL AQUIFER RECHARGE AREAS

These are areas identified as having critical recharge effect for aquifers used for potable water in community water systems. The City of Morton does not rely on groundwater for its primary source of public water supply, but obtains its water from Connelly Creek, a tributary to the Tilton River. However, the city also has three drilled wells, one of which is used as a backup source during turbidity events in Connelly Creek. This well, and the numerous private wells that draw upon groundwater resources, make protection of sensitive groundwater recharge areas an important function of the City's Critical Areas Ordinance.

---

#### SECTION 3.4.9 GREEN BELT AREAS, PARKS, OPEN SPACE CORRIDORS

The floodplain, wetlands, and fish and wildlife habitats along the Tilton River and its tributaries are considered green belt areas and serve as corridors for wildlife through the city. Backstrom Park serves to buffer the city's urban core from the Tilton River, protecting the floodplain and providing for recreational opportunities. Lake Creek to the south, and wetlands and DFW-managed lands to the east of the city and south of its UGA form natural greenbelts to the city and limit urban growth to the south and east. Steep slopes and ownership by major timber companies limit growth to the north of the UGA. Surrounding agriculture and forestry use in

keeping with the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan serve as additional open space areas that serve to buffer the Morton urban area.

---

## SECTION 3.5 LAND ACREAGE SUMMARY BY ZONE

**Table 3.5**  
**Land Use Acreage by Zone**  
**City of Morton**

<b>City limit and UGA</b>	<b>Acres</b>
RSF=	438.82
RMD=	369.38
RMF=	176.05
C=	69.48
I=	267.62
Remove	57.85
SD=	263.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>1642.28</b>

---

## SECTION 3.6 LAND USE PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

---

### SECTION 3.7 FUTURE LAND USE

Most of the capacity for accommodating the new residential growth forecast through 2040 lies northwest of the City in the current UGA, where few critical areas encumber properties. Some of these properties are in large single ownerships and are currently used for agriculture or timber production. As the City grows, these lands represent an important resource for accommodating future growth. Future land use for housing is reviewed in Chapter 4, Housing Element.

---

#### SECTION 3.7.1 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Future land use is designated into different districts, with the purpose of each district as follows:

##### **RSF-Residential Single Family**

This designation is the predominant district in Morton. It is intended to accommodate single-family dwellings, including manufactured homes. However, this zoning district allows for duplexes and accessory dwelling units. These provisions allow for a variety of development

types that can provide housing for a variety of income levels. Densities in this district are two units per acre.

However, since much of the RSF- designated area is not currently served by public water and sewer, provisions should be made to allow building at densities lower than "urban," provided conversion plans require housing to be sited so that future subdivision may occur when public services become available. Home occupations are widely permitted in this district to encourage cottage industries and economic opportunities for Morton residents.

#### **RMD- Residential Medium Density**

This zoning district is intended primarily for multi-family and attached housing. RM designated land should be located close to downtown business services.

Landscaping and other design requirements may be necessary to buffer single-family districts from higher density multi-family districts, which should achieve average densities of five units per acre.

#### **RMF- Residential Multi-Family**

This zoning district is intended primarily for multi-family and attached housing. RM designated land should be located close to downtown business services.

Landscaping and other design requirements may be necessary to buffer single-family districts from higher density multi-family districts, which should achieve average densities of 12 units per acre.

#### **I -Industrial**

Industrial lands are intended to accommodate manufacturing, processing, storage, and other industrial uses that provide large employment opportunities. Industrial areas should be connected to public water and served by public sewers. They should be located on major collector or arterial streets or have direct access to a state route or rail for shipping purposes. New industrial land uses should not be designated for areas encumbered by critical areas, especially hydric soils, critical aquifer areas, and floodplains due to potential contamination of water quality. Environmental performance and design standards should protect neighbors and sensitive areas from noxious odors, dust, excessive light and glare.

#### **C- Commercial**

Restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, gas stations and personal services are just some of the many uses that make up the commercial land use designation. Both small and larger-scale commercial opportunities should be provided for, recognizing Morton's regional importance as a center of commerce for residents and tourists. Commercial services should be concentrated in the downtown core, but new opportunities for commercial business may be found in the urban growth area as Morton's population expands.

#### **CS- Community Services**

This designation is used for lands dedicated to providing public utility services, parks and recreation opportunities, and other public institutional land uses.

---

### SECTION 3.8.3 ESTIMATED PUBLIC FACILITIES REQUIREMENTS

While the City and the UGA have an abundance of residentially zoned land, a limited amount of usable commercial and industrially zoned land exists along 2nd Street and the northeast corner of Morton in what has become the city's commercial core. As of early 2022, the majority of these parcels were either built out or used for non-commercial functions (mostly residential or public/quasi-public functions).

Much of the Industrial land on the east side of town is undevelopable due to critical area constraints (high groundwater and wetlands), and/or institutional ownership. Many areas currently in industrial use or ownership have rezoned to residential uses, limiting their redevelopment potential, and very few vacant parcels exist in commercial or industrial zones. Lewis County Assessor data from 2022 showed that, of the zoned land within the UGA and city limit, 7% is currently used for commercial retail and 2% is commercial industrial.

Commercial and industrial growth capacity is centered around existing industries in the southwest area of the City and the northeast UGA near Tubafor and Hampton Mills, and an area in the northeast corner of the City.

The majority of the parcels zoned for commercial uses are located in the northeast area within the city limit and serviced by water and sewer. Fewer large vacant parcels zoned for commercial uses exist within the UGA; however, most are encumbered by critical areas and not serviced by water or sewer infrastructure. There are vacant and undeveloped areas containing critical areas, such as steep slopes, 100-year floodplains, and fish passages. While these areas may be buildable, they would require further measures according to the City's Critical Areas Ordinance.

---

### SECTION 3.9 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Growth Management Act requires cities to have process for siting essential public facilities, which include those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities, state and local correctional facilities, state or regional transportation facilities, regional transit authority facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and inpatient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, and group homes. The office of financial management maintains a list of those essential state public facilities that are required or likely to be built within the next six years. Facilities may be added to this list at any time. The Comprehensive Plan may not preclude the siting of essential public facilities but may establish a process and criteria to review the proposed siting of such facilities. The siting process is as follows:

1. The City will consult with the County and apply the Countywide Planning Policies to address siting essential public facilities.
2. The facility must be reviewed through an adopted county-wide process and must be affirmatively identified by the city as a critical facility

- needed locally.
3. The facility is considered a conditional use through the development regulations, with required Planning Commission review, public hearing, and City Council review. Mitigations may be applied on a case-by-case basis to address adverse impacts to the community.

---

## SECTION 3.10 FUTURE LAND USE POLICIES AND GOALS

Below are the land use policies, goals and objectives identified by the city.

### **GOAL LU-1: SUPPORT AND MAINTAIN EXISTING INDUSTRIES WHILE PROVIDING AREAS FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION.**

#### **Policies**

- LU-1.1** Maintain an adequate commercial and industrial land base for job creation and new development opportunities.
- LU-1.2** Commercial and industrial use designations should be located adjacent or with direct access to arterial or collector streets provided sewer and water services for fire protection are adequate or can be made to be adequate by the date of occupancy.
- LU1.3** The city should work with the Lewis County Economic Development Council, existing and new industries on programs to increase opportunities for employment and training and to diversify and stabilize the local economy. (See also: Economic Development Chapter.)
- LU-1.4** The City should establish development regulations that discourage the siting of incompatible uses adjacent to Strom Field Airport.

### **GOAL LU-2: PROVIDE FOR EXPANSION OF TOURISM, EDUCATIONAL, AND HEALTH CARE SERVICES.**

#### **Policies**

- LU-2.1** The City shall consider community services a compatible use in all plan designations.

- LU-2.2** The City shall encourage educational and health facilities expansion to service regional community needs such as East County Center of Centralia College.

**Objectives:**

- 2.1.1: Expand the allowable uses in appropriate zones to include community uses, such as community centers, tourism and educational facilities, and health care clinics.

**GOAL LU-3: RETAIN AND REINFORCE THE CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY'S SENSE OF HISTORY PROVIDED BY ATTRACTIVE PUBLIC PARKS, DISTINCTIVE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS, AND SAFE AND CONVENIENT INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN HOMES, PARKS, AND SCHOOLS.**

**Policies**

- LU-3.1** The City shall identify and maintain areas suitable for public parks and community spaces.
- LU-3.2** Sustain registered historic structures and encourage design that complements them.
- LU-3.3** The City shall promote physical activity through provision of public spaces and connections to schools.

**Objectives:**

- 3.3.1 Investigate and apply for Safe Routes to School Grants to foster physically active connections between Morton School District and Morton Elementary School.

**GOAL LU-4: ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH IN THE URBAN AREAS WHILE PRESERVING ESSENTIAL FOREST AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS**

**Policies**

- LU-4.1** The city should explore partnership and inter-local agreement opportunities with the County to ensure consistent standards for growth and development.
- LU-4.2** The City should work with Lewis County for management of growth within the Morton Urban Area according to the adopted Urban Area Policies of Lewis County.

- LU-4.3** The City shall exclude forest resource areas from the Morton urban area where possible and shall rely on the Lewis County and its natural resource policies to maintain and protect the natural resource base industries such as forestry and agriculture upon which the regional economy is based.

**GOAL LU-5: PROVIDE FOR PROTECTION OF CRITICAL AREAS USING BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE.**

**Policies:**

- LU-5.1** The city should periodically review and amend its critical areas regulations to ensure adequate protection is provided to identified critical areas using best available science.
- LU-5.2** The city should require landscaping and landscaped drainage swales for erosion control as required elements in multifamily, commercial and industrial development.
- LU-5.3** New residential, commercial, or industrial development within a 100-year floodplain mapped by FEMA should be prohibited. Other types of temporary uses (e.g., passive recreation, parks) may be permitted, subject to standards that protect the flood control functions of the floodplain.
- LU-5.4** Applicants should be responsible for providing accurate and detailed information on critical areas affecting their development proposals and mitigating adverse impacts.

**Objectives:**

- 5.1.1. Adopt an updated Critical Areas Ordinance in compliance with the GMA and consistent with Best Available Science.
- 5.1.2 Develop a program for the transfer of development rights for agricultural and forest lands within the urban growth area.

**GOAL LU-6: ALLOW DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS THAT SUPPORT CO-LOCATION OF JOBS, SERVICES, AND HOUSING TO REDUCE VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED.**

**Policies:**

- LU-6.1** Encourage compact development patterns by allowing more residential density near jobs, businesses, schools, and downtown Morton.

- LU-6.2** Support transfers of development rights that place more development near services and protect undeveloped lands.
- LU-6.3** Limit future development in areas known to be at high risk for natural hazards as identified in the 2016 Lewis County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- LU-6.4** Use SEPA the review process to evaluate the potential climate impacts of new development to earth, air, other areas of the environment.

**Objectives:**

- 6.1.1 Revise zoning code to allow more residential density near downtown.
- 6.2.1 Develop a program for the transfer of development rights that establishes sending areas on the outskirts of Morton and receiving areas where adequate infrastructure and services exist.
- 6.3.1 Use zoning and transfer of development rights to limit development in areas prone to natural hazards.
- 6.4.1 Revise SEPA checklist to add questions related to climate impacts.



**GOAL LU-7: ESTABLISH PREPAREDNESS MEASURES FOR POOR AIR QUALITY AND EXCESSIVE HEAT CAUSED BY WILDFIRES AND DROUGHT.**

**Policies:**

- LU-7.1** Because of climate change, more frequent and intense wildfires are likely to become the new normal. More droughts and drier forests create conditions that are more conducive to ignite and spread severe wildfires. The City of Morton should protect the health of their community members from smoke and prepare for these changes. The city should assess the risk level of wildfires and smoke in the community; identify evacuation routes or locations where air-conditioned spaces are available to shelter from smoke during the summer months.
- LU-7.2** City development regulations should require retention and preservation of trees to aid in natural air filtration.
- LU-7.3** The City should adopt residential building regulations that mitigate wildfire damage and spread, including requiring defensible “buffer” space adjacent to residential buildings and fire and drought-resistant vegetation.

**Objectives:**

- 7.1.1. Incorporate tree retention and/or tree planting requirements in the zoning code, by possibly adding these requirements to the performance standards for development in all zones.
- 7.2.1. Establish or identify air-conditioned ‘cooling centers’ for residents to access during heatwaves, which can be particularly difficult for seniors.
- 7.3.1. Integrate topics of wildfire hazard risk reduction and buffers around homes into fire education and outreach campaigns.
- 7.4.3 Incorporate vegetation standards in the code that provides specifications and identifies best practices for fire resistant planting buffers.

## **GOAL LU-8: REDUCE FLOOD HAZARDS AROUND MORTON'S RIVERS, STREAMS, AND LAKES**

### **Policies:**

- LU-8.1** Restore eroded riverbanks and wetlands along the Tilton River.
- LU-8.2** Require tree plantings, landscaping, and green storm- water infrastructure to offset development with large amounts of impervious surface. Encourage pervious paving wherever possible.
- LU-8.3** For properties adjacent to floodways, preserve natural floodplain functions by encouraging setbacks and vegetative buffers to mitigate and absorb flood impacts.
- LU-8.4** Increase awareness of flood impacts among residents and business owners living and working in 100- and 500-year floodplains.

### **Objectives:**

- 8.1.1 Integrate or provide best practices and standards for riverbank restoration and flood-resilient vegetation in the code or during the permit application review process.
- 8.4.1 Increase awareness of flood impacts and hazards through City public engagement activities and outreach.

## CHAPTER FOUR: HOUSING ELEMENT

The Lewis County Housing Needs Assessment, done in 1995, provided baseline housing need data for the City of Morton when the Comprehensive Plan was first adopted in 1997. This analysis has been updated using population and land use data available in 2022. This assessment has not been replicated; Data from the most recent U.S. Census and other sources is integrated into this chapter to provide an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs. Planning for housing needs requires an understanding of current housing stock, affordability issues, and forecasting of future housing needs.

This chapter provides an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs for the City of Morton. In recent years, the availability of housing has diminished to such an extent statewide that the state now requires the housing element section of all comprehensive plans to reflect a more precise count of housing and housing availability. The state has also implemented the requirement to analyze code and remove all discriminatory barriers.

Morton and Lewis County are not immune to the impacts of housing on the local population. The Board of County Commissioners adopted a Housing Initiative in 2022. This element relies heavily on this initiative as a framework in discussing need.

---

### SECTION 4.1 SUMMARY OF COUNTYWIDE HOUSING POLICIES

Consistent with the state’s housing goal, Lewis County has adopted an overall housing goal to ‘encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.’”

Policies listed under this housing goal include: public/private partnerships should be encouraged to build affordable housing to meet the housing needs of people with low and moderate incomes and special needs populations; the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations should include innovative land use management and construction techniques to promote affordable housing; the existing affordable housing stock should be maintained where economically viable and efforts to rehabilitate older and substandard housing, which are otherwise consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies, should be encouraged.

NOTE: Lewis County is currently updating the comprehensive plan and these goals and policies will have to be updated later.

SECTION 4.2 HOUSING PROFILE

Housing in the City of Morton and its urban growth area is primarily made up of single-family residences and some mobile and manufactured homes on a variety of lot sizes, from less than 0.25 acres in the city core to more than 40 acres in the Urban Growth Area. The City of Morton maintains a mix of housing stock in good condition and occupied primarily by families. The average household size is 2.33 persons. According to 2020 U.S. Census data, there are 647 total housing units in the City of Morton, which 49% are owner-occupied. There is a 19.9% vacancy rate in the city.

**TABLE 4.2.1**  
**City of Morton Housing Occupancy Summary**

Total Housing Units	Owner Occupied	Average Persons per Owner-Occupied household	Renter Occupied	Average Persons Per Renter Household	Vacant Housing Units
506	407	2.8	99	3.46	129
<i>Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Selected Housing Profiles.</i>					

A majority of this housing stock is single-family, detached stick built, or manufactured homes (Table 4.2.2). There are only a few attached and multi-unit structures located in the city, including a few small apartment complexes. According to 2020 Census data in Table 9, 27% of Morton's housing stock was built in 1939 or earlier and a majority was built in the 1960s and 1970s. The city's housing stock has a median value of \$160,900, compared with \$231,900 for Lewis County. Despite a majority of the housing stock being valued at under \$150,000 in 2000, nearly 60% of homes were valued above \$150,000 during the 2020 Census. Very little new construction during this time suggests that trends in the regional real estate market have undoubtedly raised the market value of this housing.

**TABLE 4.2.2**  
**City of Morton Housing Stock Summary**

Single-Family, detached	Mobile homes	Duplex / Single-Family Attached	Multi-Family	Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing
76.9%	11.2%	0%	23.1%	\$160,900
<i>Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles.</i>				

Table 4.2.2, above, includes information on the City of Morton only. In the Urban Growth Area, all residential housing is single-family on mostly large, rural lots. Future development of

duplex and multi-family housing is provided for through zoning in the UGA, but much of this area is encumbered by critical areas and not serviced by water and sewer infrastructure.

---

### SECTION 4.3 OVERVIEW OF HOUSING PROBLEMS

The 2022 Lewis County Housing Initiative identified housing as the second of the five priorities for the county. The first priority of the county is ‘the availability and affordability of housing in the rural and urban areas of the county’.

Data provided by the county shows:

- Single family house prices:
  - 2012-\$150,000
  - 2021-\$350,000
- 2012 to 2021 shows a 69% decrease in the supply of housing for sale.
- 48% of renters pay more than 30% of their income on housing.
- 24% of renters pay more than 50% of their income on housing.

Home values are relatively low in Morton compared to the county as a whole. As Lewis County grows and more economic development occurs, new residents and retirees will likely be attracted to the affordability of the area. 36.3% of home values in Morton are between \$200,000 and \$299,999.

---

### SECTION 4.3 HOUSING ANALYSIS

Beginning in 2024, the state requires that local communities show that they can accommodate all income types within their communities. The income brackets identified by the state are nonpermanent supportive housing, permanent supportive housing (0 to 30% of the county median income), 30% to 50%, 50% to 80%, 80% to 100%, 100% to 120%, and greater than 120%. All these brackets are to be calculated on the county’s median income of \$69,067.

To demonstrate that Morton has sufficient capacity for future development to meet all these needs, a complete analysis is required. This begins with determining zoning densities and total acreage for each of these residential zones. It is important to note that none of these calculations include the Urban Growth Area (UGA). As this area is still located in unincorporated county, Lewis County will be counting those housing estimates in their housing projections.

To provide for a more accurate projection of need the following factors were considered during the analysis.

- Infrastructure is not included in land use calculations.
- Land owned by the federal, state, and local government are zoned Public Community and are not included in other zoning classifications.
- Land within the critical areas is included in the land use calculations. Gross acreage is used to determine density. This is done because, while critical areas will impact development, they do not preclude development. Gross land is used to determine density, but development must occur compliant with any conditions determined during the time of development.
- The Urban Growth Area (UGA) is 993 acres and is not included in the calculations. Lewis County will be calculating the housing allocation for the UGA, and it has been removed from these calculations.

**Table 4.3.1  
City of Morton  
Units per Zone**

<b>City limits</b>	
RSF (20,000: 2u/a)	361.75
RMD (7,500: 5u/a)	789.73
RMF (5,000:12u/a)	891.12
<b>Total u/a=</b>	<b>2042.60</b>

**Residential RSF 20,000: 2 u/a, minimum lot size 20,000 sq ft, 2 units per acre. Calculation for Units per zone= (43560/20000) \*166.10**

**Residential RMD, minimum lot size 7,500 sq ft, 5 units per acre. Calculation for Units per zone= (43560/7500) \*136.00**

**Residential RMF, minimum lot size 5,000 sq ft. 12 units per acre. Calculation for Units per acre= (43560/5000) \*102.29**

The Washington Office of Financial Management determined, based upon the 2020 US Census, that Morton has 506 total housing units. Housing units available based upon the income brackets were then distributed to a total of 284.

In 2022, Lewis County, working through the Lewis County Planned Growth Committee (LCPGC) determined the projected population for jurisdictions and from that, the amount of housing required to support the projected population numbers. Comprised of representatives from each of the incorporated jurisdictions within the county, it was determined that Morton will need an additional 23 units to support future growth. These numbers were then adopted

by the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners based upon positive recommendations from the LCPGC and the Lewis County Planning Commission.

**Table 4.3.1  
2022 Current and Projected Housing  
City of Morton**

		0-30%							Emergency Housing
	Total	Non-PSH	PSH	>30%-50%	>50%-80%	>80%-100%	>100%-120%	>120%	
<b>Estimated Housing Supply (2020)</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Allocation Method C (2020-2045)</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>
									<b>Current residential land use capacity= 2042</b>
									<b>Bulk total housing needed by 2045= 529</b>
									<b>Bulk Surplus Housing Capacity 1513</b>

The units per zone were then applied to the housing allocation by income. Allocation and income dictate the type of housing typically used. For example, wage earners with over 120% of the County’s median income typically seek single family housing on larger lots. Conversely, households with wage earnings at 30% to 50% typically utilize multifamily housing which is developed at a higher density.

Calculations combine current with projected to determine land capacity analysis. This method allows for property owners to change property lines and thereby change available buildable lands as they deem necessary, so long as it complies with the underlying zoning.

<b>RSF</b>	361.75
>120%	32
>100%-120%	9
<b>Surplus capacity</b>	<b>340.42</b>
<b>RMD</b>	789.73

**Table 4.3.2**  
**Current and Projected Housing Allocations**  
**By Zoning Classification**

>80%-100%	72
>50%-80%	224
<b>Surplus capacity</b>	<b>493.73</b>
<b>R1-5</b>	891.12
>30%-50%	171
PSH	1
Non-PSH	21
Emergency Housing	1
<b>Surplus capacity</b>	<b>697.12</b>

As can be seen in this analysis, Morton currently has sufficient land to meet the current and projected needs for population growth.

---

#### SECTION 4.4 TYPES OF HOUSING UNITS

Of the 506 housing units found in the City of Morton, 419 are single family homes. Since 83% of all housing types are single family homes, 17% consist of multifamily homes.

---

#### SECTION 4.5 OCCUPANCY AND TENURE

Morton has occupancy numbers very similar to the overall occupancy found in Lewis County. According to the 2020 Census there were only 1.9% of vacant homes for sale in 2020 and only a 13.3% vacancy rate for rentals.

Ownership of homes is 80.5% of all homes compared to 77.1% in the unincorporated county.

---

#### SECTION 4.6 VALUE AND AFFORDABILITY

As per the 2020 Census, 36.3% of the home values in Morton are between \$200,000 and \$299,999.

Median rent in Morton in 2020 was \$900 compared to \$999 in Lewis County.

This makes Morton one of the more affordable places to own and rent housing in Lewis County.

---

#### SECTION 4.7 AGE AND CONDITIONS

As shown in table 4.2.3, the majority of housing in Morton was constructed prior to 1970. Housing this old can begin to show signs of blight and should be monitored.

**TABLE 4.2.3**



**City of Morton and Lewis County Housing Stock by Decade Built**

<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Morton</b>	<b>Lewis County</b>
1939 or earlier	27%	2%
1940 to 1949	13%	2%
1950 to 1959	18%	13%
1960 to 1969	12%	16%
1970 to 1979	17%	11%
1980 to 1989	4%	20%
1990 to 1999	4%	8%
2000 to 2009	5%	7%
2010 to 2013	2%	5%
2014 or later	0%	18%

---

**SECTION 4.8 BARRIERS TO HOMEOWNERSHIP**

Since the onset of COVID, many workers have found that remote working is a viable option, giving them the work/life balance they seek. In fact, 7.7% of Pe Ell’s population works from home according to the 2020 US Census. While this is great for workers, it presents a problem for communities.

This has become one of the main reasons for home shortages across the state. Home prices are skyrocketing with many homes selling within the first few days on the market and selling for higher than the asking price.

This puts homeownership out of reach for many working families. Hardest hit however in this changing market are the black, indigenous, and people of color (BIOPC) in Washington. The US

Census shows that only 49% of blacks are homeowners in Washington compared to 68% of whites.

In fact, the Urban Institute in a 2019 document titled ‘Explaining the Black White Homeownership Gap’ found that the gap between black and white homeownership is worse today than it was in 1960, when racial discrimination in housing was legal.

It is important as Pe Ell moves into the future that opportunities to participate with state, county, and other local governments and agencies to address this disparity. It is also important that community leaders are aware of this issue and ensure that codes and policies adopted by the town are created in such a way that they do not create new barriers to homeownership by the BLOPC community.

---

#### SECTION 4.9 HOUSING PROGRAMS

The Community Action Council of Lewis/Mason/Thurston County does provide some assistance with the weatherization of older homes. And in some instances, the Federal Emergency Management Agency along with property owners’ insurance company can aid meeting update flood regulations, there simply are not enough resources in Lewis County to address all the need.

---

#### SECTION 4.10 HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

### **Goal H-1: PROVIDE FOR RESIDENTS HOUSING NEEDS INCLUDING ALL INCOME GROUPS.**

#### **Policies**

- H-1.1** The City of Morton should work with private sector providers to implement the Comprehensive plan and development regulations in order to meet housing needs of all income groups.
- H-1.2** The City of Morton will identify and designate sufficient land for low- and moderate-income persons primarily by providing areas for multifamily housing, single family attached housing, and manufactured homes.

- H-1.3** The city should provide for stick built, modular and manufactured homes as well as multi-family units. Manufactured homes and stick built homes may be permitted in any residential area provided modular and manufactured home foundations are built on permanent foundations and may require other design standards to fit within the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- H-1.4** The city should support programs that return federal funds to the community and support community members as priority housing program participants.
- H-1.5** The city should consider housing opportunities provided by community organizations where those opportunities are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The city should work with Federal, state, and local organizations to provide government-assisted housing, low-income housing, and housing resources for low-income residents

**Objectives:**

- Work with other cities and Lewis County to develop a joint housing authority.
- Work with regional real estate professionals to identify and improve burdensome standards within Morton's zoning ordinance to encourage low-cost housing construction.

## CHAPTER FIVE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

The Land Use Chapter highlights moderate new population growth expected for the City of Morton and its UGA over the next 20 years. With that growth, economic development will be necessary to provide local job opportunities. The unemployment rate for Lewis County is 3.6%, and for the City of Morton it is 6.8% (2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles). However, 13.3% of Morton residents are below the poverty line. In 2021, 48.2% of students in the Morton School District enrolled for free or reduced lunches (Washington Office of the Superintendent).

Morton has several major employers, including a hospital, lumber mills, Centralia East community college and public schools, and other local industries. However, there is a need for new opportunities that capitalize on recreational visitors to the area, encourage new small business development in the downtown commercial core, and attract new and innovative industries to the area.

---

### SECTION 5.1 JOBS-HOUSING BALANCE

Loss of jobs related to the timber industry has contributed to low population growth in recent decades. The current jobs/housing balance is 0.67 (based on number of employed persons versus number of housing units estimated in the 2020 ACS 5-Year Data Profiles), meaning for each housing unit, there is less than one job in Morton. A general balance would be closer to 1.5: 1, meaning there are slightly more jobs available as there are housing units.

---

### SECTION 5.2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The City of Morton is a tourism, recreation, and regional service center, as well as an area of active industrial uses, including lumber mills, a medical waste processing facility, and a number of smaller industries. In 2005, the Comprehensive Plan and zoning were amended to allow for additional industrial and commercial growth capacity in the city and its UGA. In addition, relocation of the historic train depot to downtown, and the addition of tourist trips on a railroad line from Elbe, Washington brought additional visitors to Morton. The seasonal railroad line was discontinued during the COVID-19 pandemic and, as of mid-2022, had not yet resumed operations. There may be a need to restart or replace the train service or find other ways to attract tourism visitors. Efforts by the East Lewis County Chamber of Commerce to attract new development to the area is also anticipated. Morton may also serve as a center for telecommuters who may work remotely via computer and internet.

Economic development opportunities also exist at the City's airport, Strom Field. The Capital Facilities chapter discusses planned improvements to the airport.

Additional capacity for airport-related business could also be added. The Washington State Department of Transportation, Aviation Division cites significant positive impacts to local economy from airport-related industries.

Through public engagement, the community identified a list of priority economic development needs:

1. Need more business/redevelopment downtown
2. Need more local employment opportunities.
3. Encourage more local recreational opportunities/businesses.
4. Attract more industrial development.
5. Attract high tech industry.
6. Need more local shopping opportunities.
7. Need more local job training or education.
8. Encourage home-based cottage industry growth.
9. Encourage tourism growth.

---

## SECTION 5.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

### **GOAL ED-1: ENCOURAGE EXPANSION OF EXISTING INDUSTRIES SUCH AS FORESTRY, TOURISM, EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES.**

#### **Policies:**

- ED-1.1** Identify and designate areas for the expansion of industrial and commercial facilities where arterial transportation access, water and sewer services exist or may reasonably be provided.
- ED-1.2** Work with Lewis County Economic Development Council to develop regional diversification plan for tourism, natural resource-based industries, service and health care industries.

### **GOAL ED-2: PROVIDE FOR FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COTTAGE AND HOME-BASED INDUSTRIES.**

#### **Policies:**

- ED-2.1** Periodically review and update development regulations to improve reliability of development process for home-based industries and small business.
- ED-2.2** Encourage expansion of internet service options, including wireless service, to encourage home-based work and telecommuting.

### **GOAL ED-3: PROVIDE FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY EXPANSION.**

#### **Policies:**

- ED-3.1** Consider expansion needs of tourist-related facilities near access points to U.S. 12.
- ED-3.2** Work with Tacoma Rail and WSDOT to continue improvements to the railroad and state routes serving Morton and bringing tourists to the city.
- ED-3.3** Preserve natural areas for recreational enjoyment of fish and wildlife resources for visitors and residents

**GOAL ED-4: ENCOURAGE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT IN THE DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL CORE.**

**Policies:**

- ED-4.1** Encourage the development of recreation-based opportunities such as birdwatching, trail development, and other opportunities that capitalize on the city's natural beauty and wildlife habitat

**Objectives:**

- Continue work with the Cowlitz Historical Society to support historic restoration projects in the city.
- Identify and prioritize water and sewer service area needs for new industrial development.

## CHAPTER SIX: CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCY

Climate change is a global challenge. The impacts of greenhouse gases, no matter where they are emitted, affect us all. This Comprehensive Plan addresses the period between 2022 and 2041. Studies prepared by national and international organizations indicate that developed countries must reduce greenhouse gases by as much as 80 percent in carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e) below 1990 levels by 2050 in order to achieve climate stabilization. Morton is committed to finding ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in its own governmental operations, as well as creating policies that would encourage community growth and development patterns that emit fewer greenhouse gasses.

The impacts of climate change are already experienced by Morton and the surrounding region through more extreme heat and rain events and by increased wildfire risk. The Lewis County 2016 Hazard Mitigate Plan maps wildland-urban interface wildfire hazards adjacent to Morton to the west and south. This Comprehensive Plan includes policies that would mitigate these climate impacts and increase climate change resiliency.

The biggest climate-related impacts to Morton and the surrounding region are:

- Global temperature increase
- Climate variability: flooding, drought
- Wildfire and smoke impacts

What can Morton do to mitigate these threats?

- Reduce GHG emissions from city operations.
- Adopt city policies that will help reduce GHG emissions.
- Focus on reducing wildfire risk at the urban/wildland interface.
- Plan land use patterns that minimize risks to fire and flood hazard areas.

---

### SECTION 6.1 CLIMATE CHANGE GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

#### **GOAL LU-7: ESTABLISH PREPAREDNESS MEASURES FOR POOR AIR QUALITY AND EXCESSIVE HEAT CAUSED BY WILDFIRES AND DROUGHT.**

**Policies:**

- LU-7.1** Because of climate change, more frequent and intense wildfires are likely to become the new normal. More droughts and drier forests create conditions that are more conducive to ignite and spread severe wildfires. The City of Morton should protect the health of their community members from smoke and prepare for these changes. The city should assess the risk level of wildfires and smoke in the community; identify evacuation routes or locations where air-conditioned spaces are available to shelter from smoke during the summer months.
- LU-7.2** City development regulations should require retention and preservation of trees to aid in natural air filtration.
- LU-7.3** The City should adopt residential building regulations that mitigate wildfire damage and spread, including requiring defensible “buffer” space adjacent to residential buildings and fire and drought-resistant vegetation.

**Objectives:**

- 7.1.1. Incorporate tree retention and/or tree planting requirements in the zoning code, possibly by adding these requirements to the performance standards for development in all zones.
- 7.2.1. Establish or identify air-conditioned ‘cooling centers’ for residents to access during heatwaves, which can be particularly difficult for seniors.
- 7.3.1. Integrate topics of wildfire hazard risk reduction and buffers around homes into fire education and outreach campaigns.
- 7.4.3 Incorporate vegetation standards in the code that provides specifications and identifies best practices for fire resistant planting buffers.

**GOAL CF-4: REDUCE OVERALL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS CAUSED BY CITY ACTIVITIES**

**Policies:**

- CF-4.1** Enable more energy efficient City operations through climate-cognizant resource use and purchasing decisions.



- CF-4.2** Establish carbon reduction or carbon offset goals for all city facilities.
- CF-4.3** All amendments to this Chapter or the Capital Improvement Plan, adopted by reference, should be coordinated with the land use element

**Objectives:**

- Perform an assessment of city GHG emissions and identify ways to reduce overall emissions.
- Explore adding renewable energy sources to the power supply.

**GOAL H-2: PROVIDE CLIMATE RESILIENT HOUSING**

**Policies:**

- H-2.1** Explore zoning solutions that add more housing to downtown.
- H-2.2** Change zoning to reduce housing densities in areas with known natural vulnerabilities
- H-2.3** Change zoning to reduce housing densities in areas susceptible to wildfires or where evacuation routes are poor

**Objectives:**

- Amend the Morton Municipal Code to allow and encourage small-lot single-family dwellings, duplexes, and small multi-family buildings within the established downtown core.
- Amend the Morton Municipal Code to disallow residential development of any type within and adjacent to known critical areas and wildfire zones.

**GOAL H-3: SERVE HOUSING WITH CLIMATE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Policies**

- H-3.1** Require development patterns that support connections between neighborhoods and to services and job opportunities.

- H-3.2** Require housing developments to provide sidewalks, bike trails, or other paths for non-motorized uses.
- H-3.3** Incentivize construction methods or housing types that are less carbon intensive.

**Objectives:**

- Improve existing pedestrian and bicycle circulations facilities to provide better access and livability.
- Decrease carbon output, while expanding infrastructure to meet future community needs.

DRAFT

## CHAPTER SEVEN: TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Element provides an inventory of Morton's transportation network and contains Morton's plan to maintain and provide specified levels of transportation service concurrently with new development as it occurs. The Lewis County Countywide Planning Policies require that the Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Element serves to:

- 1) facilitate the flow of people, goods and services so as to strengthen the local and regional economy; and
- 2) conform with the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Policies also call for an inventory of the transportation system and coordination with the Regional Transportation Plan.

During the 2005 update of the Comprehensive Plan, no major transportation congestion issues were identified, and all roadways were well within current and forecast capacity needs.

---

### SECTION 7.1 INVENTORY OF TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

GMA requires that the Comprehensive Plan include an inventory of its transportation facilities. See Figure E for the location of roads and transportation facilities.

---

#### SECTION 7.1.1 STATE HIGHWAYS

U.S. 12 is a Highway of Statewide Significance providing the major east-west route through Lewis County. Morton is located directly on this highway. The city has four access points on the north side of the highway- 7th Street, 2nd Street/SR 7 (main intersection), Temple Road, and Priest Road (east end of the UGA). U.S. 12 is a limited-access highway. U.S. Highway 12 is also a designated Scenic Byway.

State Route 7 (SR 7) provides a north-south transportation corridor through downtown Morton, connecting the greater Tacoma area through the mountain communities of Mineral and Elbe to U.S. Highway 12. This is also a major recreation/tourist transportation route for visitors traveling to Mt. Rainier from U.S. Highway 12. In addition, SR 7 serves as an industrial transportation corridor for lumber mills located in the city and its UGA.

State Route 508 is an east-west route connecting Morton with 1-5 at Napavine. State Route 7 and US 12, Davis Lake Road (east to Skaggs Road), and Temple Road are designated truck routes, from the city's lumber mills to U.S. 12.

SR 508, Meinars Road, and Davis Lake Road from Skaggs Road easterly to Priest Road are also truck routes.

Transportation to, from, and within the City of Morton is limited to roads, streets, and sidewalks. US Highway 12 bisects the southern part of the city from east to west, State Route 7 joins US 12 from the north, State Route 508 (Main Avenue) joins with State Route 7 from the West, and Davis Lake Road east of the city is a well-traveled county road from State Route 7 joining US 12 about 4 miles east of the city limits.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) traffic counts for 2020 from the intersection of US 12 and SR 7 (Milepost 97.69) westbound shows 4,200 average daily trips (ADT) and eastbound shows 4,500 ADT. The intersection of US 12 and SR 7 has seen a slight decrease in ADTs since the early 2000s. WSDOT estimates that truck traffic makes up 16% of all vehicles on US. From Mossyrock to milepost 97.69, counts showed 4,200 ADTs. From Morton to milepost 104.80, counts showed 4,200 ADTs.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) traffic counts for 2020 from the intersection of SR 7 and US 12 (milepost 0.00) shows 4,300 ADTs. The intersection of SR 7 and US 12 has seen a slight decrease in ADTs since the early 2000s. WSDOT estimates that truck traffic makes up approximately 19% of all vehicles along this stretch of highway. From the intersection of SR 7 and SR 508 (milepost 0.45) southbound shows 4,200 ADTs. From milepost 0.45 to milepost 0.49, counts showed 3,600. SR 7 at this intersection has not seen appreciable growth in ADTs since the early 2000s. WSDOT does not provide an estimated percentage of truck traffic for the 2020 year.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) traffic counts for 2020 from the intersection of SR 508 and SR 7 (milepost 32.84) shows 2000 ADTs. SR 508 at this intersection has seen a slight decrease in ADTs since the early 2000s. WSDOT estimates that truck traffic makes up approximately 7% of all vehicles along this stretch of highway. From milepost 32.84 to milepost 32.21, counts show 1,800.

According to WSDOT Collision Data, the intersection of U.S. Highway 12 and State Route 7 has been the site of 11 collisions in six years (2015-2021). Of these accidents, 4 were no injury, 2 possible injury, 2 minor injuries, and 3 serious injury collisions. There are approximately 10.6 miles of city streets. State Route 508, Main Avenue, 7th Avenue, and Davis Lake Road are designated collector streets. State Route 7 is classified as an arterial. The street pattern north of U.S. 12 and south of SR 508 is generally a classic grid pattern from 7th Avenue to Kittles Way.

There is a sidewalk starting at the intersection of State Route 7 and Westlake Avenue. A detached sidewalk runs along the east side of SR 7, until approximately milepost 0.17 where the sidewalk jogs back and becomes attached. Sidewalk is present on both the east and west side of SR 7 starting at its intersection with Adams Avenue; however, the sidewalk on the east side alternates from an asphalt walking path to a sidewalk past the intersection with Main Avenue. The sidewalk on the west and east side of SR 7 is present until shortly before Fairhart Way.

Roadway reconstruction, regular maintenance, and surfacing should keep the existing street system in good order. It is very important for the city to coordinate street projects with sewer and water improvements.

Safety is another issue for consideration. Vehicles traveling through the city along State Route 7 and State Route 508 present a danger to pedestrians and bicyclist. State Route 7 divides a large portion of residential zoning from the local high school. State Route 508 divides the

DRAFT

elementary school and Gust Backstrom City Park from a large portion of residential zoning. Increased development will contribute to the problem of conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles along all city streets. Solving this problem may require extension/addition of sidewalk or walking paths and placing caution signals at locations near the schools and park. In addition, future improvements should stress safe pedestrian crossing, especially if the community becomes involved in any overall design plan for the market district. Careful attention to new streets that serve multiple functions of vehicle traffic, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and stormwater management will be required for the future safety of residents and visitors to the City of Morton.

---

#### SECTION 7.1.2 ATERIALS AND COLLECTORS (NOT STATE ROUTES)

Main Street connects Davis Lake Road and State Route 508 through the downtown core, forming the major east-west collector route through the city.

7th Street connects Main Avenue to State Route 12, forming a major north-south collector route through the city.

Davis Lake Road connects Main Avenue to State Route 12, forming a major east-west collector route. Davis Lake Road acts as a frontage road for the city, providing access to private driveways, houses, industries, and farms.

---

#### SECTION 7.1.3 RAILROAD AND DEPOT

The city is no longer served by Tacoma Rail. Tacoma Rail ceased freight operations around 2008. The tracks and right-of-way are owned by the City of Tacoma Public Works Department. The rail line stops at Fairhart Street, but the ROW extends further east, paralleling Davis Lake Road to the Hampton Mills log scaling yard at Priest Road. The City of Tacoma Public Works Department maintains the ROW and as of 2021 has no plans of either improving or selling this section of the line.

Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad is no longer in operation. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other complications, American Heritage Railways Inc. ceased operations for the foreseeable future. The Cowlitz River Valley Historical Society relocated the historic rail depot from Tubafor Mill to a location closer to the downtown core. The depot serves as a visitor information center and historic site.

Continued rail service restoration and improvements would provide community and regional employment and is an important element of the transportation plan for the city.

From Memorial Day through Labor Day and weekends in September, Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad operates weekly excursion weekly trips between Elbe and Morton. However, operations were put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Cowlitz River Valley Historical Society relocated the historic rail depot from Tubafor Mill to a location closer to the downtown core. The depot serves as a visitor information center, historic site, and depot for

the excursion train passengers.

---

#### SECTION 7.1.4 AIRPORT-STORM FIELD

Strom Field is a city-owned public use airport located in the southeast portion of the city. Strom Field had a total of 12,000 annual operations (take-offs and landings). Runway 7-25, the Airport's only runway is 1,810 feet long, 40 feet wide, and has visual approaches to both ends. This runway has an asphalt surface and is equipped with pilot controlled medium

DRAFT

intensity runway lights. The threshold of the runway is displaced 200 feet.

Currently, there are no aviation-related businesses located at Strom Field. General aviation operational activity at the Airport accounted for nearly 2,800 passengers and visitors. The economic impacts of the airport are discussed in Chapter VI, Economic Development.

---

#### SECTION 7.1.5 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Morton is served by Lewis Mountain Transit, a regional bus service traveling Highway 12 and operated with grant funds by the White Pass Community Services Coalition. According to the U.S. Census, approximately 5% of all commuters from Morton utilize public transportation as their means to work.

---

#### SECTION 7.1.6 PEDESTRIANS, BICYCLES, AND SIDEWALKS

Pedestrian safety is a key issue for this transportation plan. Improvements to pedestrian crossing at SR 7 and SR 508 are highlighted in the goals and policies section, below. Sidewalk improvements are incorporated with roadway reconstruction and are included in the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Additional sidewalk improvements have been identified as needed in the future down 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in the city's core.

---

#### SECTION 7.2 ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS AND ADOPTED LEVELS OF SERVICE

For each collector, arterial, and state highway, the city has adopted Levels of Service that correspond to acceptable levels of congestion for each route.

**TABLE 7.2**  
**Roadway Classifications**  
**City of Morton**

Route	Class	Adopted Level of Service
U.S. Highway 12	State Highway	C/D
SR 7	Minor Arterial	C
SR 508	Collector	B
Davis Lake Road	Major Collector	C
Main Avenue	Major Collector	C
Priest Road	Local Access	N/A
Temple Road	Local Access	N/A
7th Avenue	Major Collector	B

Level of service (LOS) standards are established to measure the adequacy of roadway service for collectors, arterials, and highways. A LOS is not typically established a local access road. As the City grows, impacts to established LOS must be evaluated. The city has adopted a LOS of "B" or "C" for its collectors and arterials, which means fairly free flowing traffic with limited



congestion during peak hours. New developments that cause a street to fall below its designated LOS must mitigate for these traffic impacts. Impacts to LOS will be based on a calculation of how much traffic volume the route is carrying, or is projected to carry, versus how much the route is actually carrying. This is known as the volume-to-capacity ration or "V/C".

The capacity of the existing collectors and arterials is sufficient to accommodate current and expected demand for many years, and no widening or improvement projects are designed to increase the capacity of these roadways. All roads are well within their adopted levels of service based on traffic count data provided below, and all have excess capacity to handle population increases. However, roads may be impacted by individual developments such that further analysis as development occurs {transportation impact studies} should be required.

---

**SECTION 7.3 TRAFFIC COUNTS**

Traffic counts are regularly taken by the Lewis County Road Department and the Washington State Department of Transportation. The following tables list traffic counts, forecast traffic counts, and forecast levels of service.

**Table 7.3  
State Highway Traffic Counts (Average Daily Traffic)**

<b>Highway Portion</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Level of Service in 2021<sup>10</sup></b>
US 12 (east of Morton)	5456	4570	4635	4300	C
SR 7 (north of US 12)	5397	3519	3513	3600	C
SR 508 (west of SR 7)	2670	2389	2135	2000	B

<sup>10</sup>Lewis County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation chapter, 2021

All state routes in the City have adequate capacity to serve the forecast traffic volumes through 2020 within the adopted level of service. WSDOT traffic count data from 2005 showed a decline in the number of vehicles on SR 508, which could be attributable to local population decline over the past decade (SR 508 is more of a local route). Local declines in traffic volume are further explored in the table below.

Of particular concern in the 2005 update of the Plan was the capacity of SR 508 traveling NW out of downtown Morton. The NW area of the UGA is an area designated under by the Future Land Use map as an area of significant future residential development capacity. However, this roadway has a current LOS of A (no congestion, free flow), and is not forecasted to reach adopted LOS B even through 2020.

---

**SECTION 7.4 TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

The City recognizes a need to provide for safe traffic flow through the downtown core. Second Street is not only the major entryway to the City from U.S. 12 but serves as a truck

route for two lumber mills and the recreation route for tourists headed to Mt. Rainier. Parking downtown for area visitors and local shoppers is also an issue, with possible need for a centrally located public parking area in the future.

**SECTION 7.5 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The city maintains approximately 7.5 miles of asphalt roadways and 2,600 feet of gravel roadways. Routine street maintenance is the responsibility of the city. The City relies on two funds for maintaining and improving city streets. An arterial street fund, supported by fuel tax dollars is used to repair arterials. A second fund available for local roads and streets uses the fuel tax, sales taxes, and liquor taxes. Major transportation improvements are largely grant-dependent.

The city periodically updates its Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and submits projects for funding to the County and regional transportation agency. Morton participates in the Southwest Washington Regional - Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO) and submits projects for consideration for funding. The SWRTPO covers Lewis and four other southwest Washington Counties, conducting long range planning for the region. The SWRTPO meets quarterly and invites participation from local cities. Projects must be included in the Regional Transportation Plan if they are to be funded from federal funds.

The current list of projects and funding sources are listed below.

**TABLE 7.5  
CITY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AND FINANCIAL PLAN**

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>EST. COST</b>	<b>PROJECT PRIORITY</b>	<b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>
Temple Avenue Reconstruction	7th St. to 3rd St.	\$1,456,807	1	TIB, PWTF, City
Cotters Lane Reconstruction	Temple Ave. to 3rd St.	\$570,899	2	TIB, PWTF, City
Division Avenue Reconstruction	6th St. to 1st St.	\$1,214,424	3	TIB, PWTF, City
6th Street Reconstruction	Division Ave. to Main Ave.	\$90,041	4	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
3rd Street Reconstruction	Main Ave. to Alder Ave.	\$908,048	5	TIB, PWTF, City
3rd Street Reconstruction	Division Ave. to Main Ave.	\$306,138	6	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
1st Street Reconstruction	Division Ave. to Davis Lake Rd.	\$284,754	7	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
1st Street Reconstruction	Fairhart St. to Main Ave.	\$78,786	8	TIB, PWTF, STP, City

Fairhart Way Reconstruction	2nd St. to Main Ave.	\$122,680	9	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Bingaman Drive Reconstruction	1st St. to Knittles Way	\$87,790	10	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Collar Avenue Reconstruction	1st St. to Knittles Way	\$106,923	11	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Main Avenue Reconstruction	8th St. to 7th St.	\$903,294	12	TIB, PWTF, City
Division Avenue Reconstruction	8th St. to 7th St.	\$146,316	13	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Allen Drive Reconstruction	Adams Ave. to Division Ave.	\$66,405	14	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
4th Street Reconstruction	Adams Ave. to Division Ave.	\$245,361	15	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
4th Street Reconstruction	Division Ave. to Main Ave.	\$259,993	16	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
5th Street Reconstruction	Adams Ave. to Division Ave.	\$237,482	17	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
5th Street Reconstruction	Division Ave. to Main Ave.	\$198,090	18	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Lester Drive Reconstruction	3rd St. to 2nd St.	\$82,162	19	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Longmire Drive Reconstruction	3rd St. to 2nd St.	\$82,162	20	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Alder Avenue Reconstruction	3rd St. to End of Road	\$73,158	21	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Jastad Drive Reconstruction	4th St. to 2nd St.	\$130,559	22	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Bingaman Drive Reconstruction	6th St. to Allen Dr.	\$255,490	23	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
8th Street Reconstruction	Division Ave. to Main Ave.	\$133,936	24	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Pleasant View Drive Reconstruction	Main Ave. to Oneil Rd. (Both Sides)	\$207,094	25	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Cherry Lane Reconstruction	Main Ave. to South End	\$959,865	26	TIB, PWTF, City
Tilton Way Reconstruction	Kosmos Ln. to Cherry Ln.	\$66,405	27	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Westlake Avenue Reconstruction	7th St. to City Limits	\$343,280	28	TIB, PWTF, STP, City

Winsberg Drive Reconstruction	Hobbs Dr. to Division Ave.	\$41,644	29	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Hobbs Drive Reconstruction	7th St. to Winsberg Dr.	\$131,685	30	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Backstrom Park Walking Trail	Parking Lot to River	\$283,628	31	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Airport Way Culvert and Road Repair	860 Airport Way to 875 Airport Way	\$49,522	32	TIB, PWTF, STP, City
Main Ave. sidewalk improvements	Elementary school to Backstrom Park	\$427,693	33	TIB, PWTF, City
Strom Field runway Reconstruction	Strom Field runway	\$585,265	34	TIB, PWTF, City
Strom Field Helipad	Strom Field Helipad	\$119,700	35	TIB, PWTF, STP, City

This list of projects will change as projects are completed and/or added to the Six-Year TIP.

Other major transportation projects that will rely on federal and state funding, and are being conducted by other agencies, include improvements to Tacoma Rail, improvements to U.S. 12 scenic byway, including possible "gateway" enhancements at the City's entry point, and improvements to the SR 7 corridor.

---

SECTION 7.6 RECOMMENDED STREET DESIGN STANDARDS

**TABLE 7.6**  
**Street Design Standards**

Element	Arterial (feet)	Collector	Local Access	Residential	Feeder	Alley
Right of Way	80'	80'	44'	44'	25'	20'
Lane Width <sup>12</sup>	12'	11'	11'	10' (one-way)	10'	10'
Parking Width	10'	9'	3'	7'	N/A	N/A
Middle/Turn Lanes	12'	11'	11'	10'	10'	0'
Shoulder Width <sup>13</sup>	10'	10'	10'	1.5'	1.5'	0'
Sidewalks	4'	4'	4'	4' (one side)	4'	0'

<sup>12</sup> May be reduced by city engineer.

<sup>13</sup> Inclusive of sidewalks and utilities.

Side slopes and base of roadways to be determined by WSDOT standards and engineering design. The grade of any road should be no greater than 12%. All roadways must allow Fire

Department turnaround or secondary access.

---

SECTION 7.6 TRANSPORTATION GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL T-1: INCREASE THE SHARE OF NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION.**

**Policies:**

- T-1.1** Track the use and demand of sidewalks, trails, bike facilities, and other multi-modal facilities and identify gaps that could help improve the overall transportation network.
- T-1.2** Plan for safety improvements needed to make non-motorized transportation an option for more community members.
- T-1.3** Develop performance standards for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

**Objectives:**

- Prioritize non-motorized modes and multi-modal facilities, especially along the mapped Bike/Pedestrian Corridor.
- Obtain a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding to establish a Bike and Pedestrian Corridor, connecting Morton Elementary School and Morton School District with the rest of the City.

**GOAL T-2: IDENTIFY AND PROVIDE FOR ROADS, TRAILS, AND ACCESSES THAT IMPROVE SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE FOR ALL USERS.**

**Policies:**

- T-2.1** Increase pedestrian safety at major intersections through the use of traffic calming devices and well-designed pedestrian crossings
- T-2.2** The city should require traffic generation reports for all major commercial, industrial, institutional and residential developments to ensure adopted levels of service will be maintained, and/or road improvements are made concurrently with the development.

- T-2.3** Maintain traffic flow through downtown Morton while emphasizing pedestrian safety.
- T-2.4** The city should strive to provide adequate access to the transportation system for persons with disabilities.
- T-2.5** The city should continue to coordinate solid waste management with Lewis County and other jurisdictions
- T-2.6** The city should work with state agencies to construct safer and more convenient bicycle facilities in all future improvement projects that are constructed within a designated regional bicycle system.
- T-2.7** Coordinate with Lewis County on implementing trail facilities in Morton, as identified in the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Chapter.

**GOAL T-3: ENSURE THAT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING EFFORTS COORDINATE WITH AND ENHANCE MORTON'S TRANSPORTATION NETWORK WITH SAFETY AND DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS.**

**Policies:**

- T-3.1** The city should participate in regional transportation planning efforts that impact State Routes 7 and 508 and U.S. Highway 12.
- T-3.2** The city should encourage the inclusion of pedestrian and rail crossing improvements on SR 7 through downtown Morton.
- T-3.3** The city should encourage improvements to the "gateway" area at the interchange of SR 7 and U.S. 12, enhancing the entryway to Morton through landscaping, road safety improvements, signage, and support of themes related to the natural beauty and recreation of the Morton area.
- T-3.4** The city should coordinate plans, programs, and projects with regional, state, and federal agencies to ensure consistency between land use development and transportation facilities.
- T-3.5** The city and state agencies should investigate a full range of actions when improving regional transportation facilities, including transportation system and demand management programs to improve efficiency and lessen environmental impacts.

**T-3.6** The City and state agencies should investigate a full range of actions when improving regional transportation facilities, including transportation system and demand management programs to improve efficiency and lessen environmental impacts.

**T-3.7** The city should work with rail operators and the state to reduce conflicts between rail and vehicular traffic.

**GOAL T-4: IDENTIFY ECONOMIC TRENDS TOWARD MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AT THE AIRPORT AND A RESTORED TRAIN STATION THAT SERVES TOURISTS, COMMUTERS, AND FREIGHT SERVICES WHILE MAINTAINING THE COMMUNITY'S CHARACTER.**

**Policies:**

**T-4.1** Encourage the establishment of air-related businesses at Strom Field.

**T-4.2** Provide for new commercial opportunities and pedestrian facilities located near the historic rail depot to capture tourism dollars and maintain pedestrian accessibility to downtown businesses.

**T-4.3** The city should support enhancement of passenger rail and freight rail planning efforts in the region.

**Objectives:**

- Develop a downtown revitalization plan that includes a parking plan to ensure adequate parking for visitors and shoppers at local businesses, enhanced pedestrian facilities especially across SR 7 and near the location of the new train depot, and improved flow through the downtown business core.
- Develop an airport plan to attract new businesses and facilities to Strom Field, including a possible heliport to stage mountain rescue operations. Consider lengthening the airport runway to increase capacity. The plan will also inform development regulations to ensure incompatible uses are not sited nearby.
- Designate, through signage, the major truck route through town as 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, not 7<sup>th</sup> Street, and encourage trucks to use alternate routes to U.S. Highway 12 including Temple Road and Priest Road.
- Improve the connection of Davis Lake Road to Fairhardt north of the railroad tracks to SR 7.

- Consider developing a couplet of one-way streets through the downtown core to smooth traffic flow from SR 7 to U.S. Highway 12 and allow for on street parking along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in the downtown core area.

DRAFT



## CHAPTER EIGHT: CAPITAL FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

The purpose of this Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is to establish goals and policies for maintaining and improving capital facilities and utilities, and to provide a framework for planning of essential public facilities.

### SECTION 8.1 CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN

The Growth Management Act, RCW 36.70A.070, requires jurisdictions to maintain an inventory of public and private capital facilities and utilities that serve City and UGA residents, and to provide information about how these facilities will accommodate future growth. The Act also requires the city to adopt Levels of Service for each facility to guide improvements over time.

A detailed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was adopted in August 2004 to implement the inventory, LOS, and financing requirements of the GMA. The CIP details planned facility improvements and financing of capital facilities in the City of Morton and surrounding UGA. This CIP is incorporated by reference as an element of this Comprehensive Plan. The projects detailed in the CIP are summarized in Table 8.1, below.

**TABLE 8.2**  
**6-Year Capital Improvement Plan Summary (2022-2028)**  
**and 20-year Capital Facilities Plan (2022-2042)**

Project Name	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	6-year CIP	20-year CIP
<b>Sewer/Wastewater System Projects</b>				
Comprehensive General Sewer and Wastewater Facility Plan	\$100,000	City, Dept. of Ecology, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)		X
SR 12 Crossing Sewer Main Installation	\$78,800	Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF), City	X	
Main Ave to Lift Station Sewer Main Installation	\$146,100	PWTF, City	X	
Third Street, Lester Drive, and Alter Ave Sewer Main Installation	\$287,700	PWTF, City	X	
Alley between SR 7 and Sixth St Sewer Main Installation	\$127,600	PWTF, City	X	

Sewer Construction-UGA	Unknown	Impact fees, PWTF		X
------------------------	---------	-------------------	--	---

Water Projects				
Connelly Creek headworks intake rehabilitation	\$400,000	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City	X	
12" creek intake to water treatment plant replacement of failing transmission line	\$4,200,000	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City	X	
12" underground Tilton River transmission line replacement from creek to plant	\$562,754	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City	X	
Rehabilitation of water treatment facility, upgrading membrane filters, piping, electrical and automation	\$3,500,000	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City		X
Rehabilitation of well including pump, piping, electrical, and automation	\$150,000	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City	X	
Install of iron and manganese filtration system meeting requirement of Department of Health	\$1,300,000	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City		X
Replacement of Tilton River Bridge 8" transmission line	\$598,771	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City		X
14" main arterial transmission line replacement from water plant to the city	\$850,00	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City		X
4" Davis Lake water main line replacement of 2.3 miles	\$2,614,557	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City		X
8" steel transmission line replacement from the backup well to reservoir #2	\$1,520,000	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City		X

6" Chapman steel water main replacement	\$275,000	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City	X	
4" steel water main replacement on Sather Dr.	\$216,098	CDBG, DOE, SRF, LID, USDA RD, City	X	

<b>Roads and Streets</b>				
<i>See Chapter V – Transportation Element</i>				
<b>Parks</b>				
Backstrom Park Phase I trail and recreation improvements	\$336,000	IAC, TIB, RCO, City, LWCF, NRPA	X	
Backstrom and Jubilee Park Phase II improvements (trails, restroom remodeling, parking lot)	\$214,200	IAC, RCO, City, LWCF, NRPA	X	
Backstrom and Jubilee Park Phase III trail extension, restroom replacement, and swimming pool	\$5,817,000	IAC, RCO, City, LWCF, NRPA		X
<b>Airport Projects</b>				
Heliport	\$18,000	WSDOT, AIP, City	X	
Rewire runway lights	\$23,000	WSDOT, AIP, City	X	
Resurface runway	\$20,000	WSDOT, AIP, City		X
Security fencing	\$120,000	WSDOT, AIP, City		X

A variety of grants, loan, and local funds are available to the city for funding capital facility improvement projects. These sources are discussed in detail in the Capital Improvement Plan. See the Capital Improvement Plan for a more detailed summary of projects.

---

## SECTION 8.2 WATER AND SEWER CAPACITY FOR FUTURE GROWTH

The City's water supply and wastewater treatment capacity are both adequate for the additional lands being proposed for the UGA. In 2005, the City completed building its new water reservoir, doubling its storage capacity to 1 million gallons. This well exceeds the anticipated water service and supply storage requirements for the 2025 population. The City's wastewater treatment system has the capacity to handle an additional population of 2,200, well above the anticipated 2040 population of 1,147.

However, the city's sewer collection system is still in need of improvement. Improvements to the City's sewer system may be necessary concurrent with new user connections. The City's Capital Improvement Plan (August 2004) includes a project for developing a Comprehensive Sewer and Wastewater Facility Plan to address these issues.

---

### SECTION 8.3 UTILITIES

The city owns and operates utilities for the following services:

- Wastewater treatment
- Drinking water
- Roads and streets
- Stormwater management
- Parks
- Airport
- Police
- Fire Protection (with Lewis County)

Improvements to these facilities and levels of service are adopted through the Capital Improvement Plan.

The City of Morton has modern utilities with no current capacity problems. Private utility companies provide the following services:

- Solid Waste
- Telephone
- Cellular
- Electricity
- Satellite and Cable TV
- Internet

---

### SECTION 8.4 CAPITAL FACILITIES AND UTILITIES GOALS AND POLICIES

**GOAL CF 1: PROVIDE PUBLIC FACILITIES NEEDED FOR THE CITIZENS OF MORTON'S PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE, AND PROVIDE ADEQUATE CAPACITY FOR GROWTH.**

**Policies:**

- CF 1.1** (Concurrency) New development should be permitted only when and where such development can be adequately served by public facilities without reducing the level of service.
- CF 1.2** The city should give priority to water and sewer needs within the city limits but maintain and repair wherever facility maintenance is needed.
- CF 1.3** The City should endeavor to fix water and sewer facilities prior to paving new roads.
- CF 1.4** The City should endeavor to loop water lines where possible to improve water availability and fire flow.
- CF 1.5** The city should work with the Department of Ecology to meet water quality standards.
- CF 1.6** All new utilities should be underground unless special approval is provided by the city for above ground utilities.

**GOAL CF-2: FUND CAPITAL FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AND EXPANSIONS IN A FAIR AND EQUITABLE MANNER.**

**Policies:**

- CF 2.1** The City should endeavor to use resources available for public facilities including grants and loans before local improvement districts.
- CF 2.2** City water and sewer funds and general revenues should only be used to fund capital facility projects that provide a general benefit to the entire community.
- CF 2.3** The City should allow the use of user and latecomer fees, and should consider using local improvement districts where necessary, and as provided by other policies in this section.
- CF 2.4** If adequate facilities are currently unavailable and public funds are not committed to provide such facilities, developers should provide such facilities at their own expense in order to develop.

- CF 2.5** The City should ensure that expansions or improvements to City infrastructure required to serve new development is paid for by the project developer or through establishment of a special assessment district on properties benefiting from the new or improved infrastructure or service.
- CF 2.6** Impacts of new development on existing city infrastructure should be mitigated through impact fees and/or developer-funding in order to ensure that current residents are not obligated to pay increased utility rates to cover the costs of growth.
- CF 2.7** Capital Projects not included in the six-year CIP should be evaluated for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and reviewed through the Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

## **GOAL CF-3: PLAN FOR CAPITAL FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS IN A COORDINATED MANNER.**

### **Policies:**

- CF-3.1** Coordinate updates to the CIP, the CFP and Utilities Chapter, and the City's budget annually.
- CF-3.2** The city should periodically review levels of service standards to ensure they continue to meet the needs of its citizens.
- CF-3.3** All amendments to this Chapter or the Capital Improvement Plan, adopted by reference, should be coordinated with the land use element
- CF-3.4** The city should reassess its land use designations if probable funding for capital facilities falls short of meeting community needs.
- CF-3.5** The city should continue to coordinate solid waste management with Lewis County and other jurisdictions
- CF-3.6** The City should work with regional agencies to review essential public facility proposals and, except where preempted by state law, should require conditions to ensure the protection of public health and safety and the environment through appropriate buffers to ensure compatibility for adjacent uses
- CF-3.7** The City should require consent to annexation in order to receive city utilities in the urban growth area.

### **Objectives:**

- Update the Capital Improvement Plan at least every 2 years.
- Revise impact fee schedule for new development.
- Consider having Lewis County take over fire and paramedic services to improve service to the city.
- Evaluate current city facilities and city-owned lands (e.g., the old sewer plant site) and create a plan for potential redevelopment or sale.

---

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR MORTON 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND  
ZONING UPDATES

---

LEWIS COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES

DRAFT