



2024 Comprehensive Plan and Map Amendments FAQ

What is the 2024 Comprehensive Plan?

Under the state's Growth Management Act (GMA), fast-growing cities such as Lake Stevens are required to develop a comprehensive plan to guide population growth over the next 20 years. The plan must be updated every 10 years, and must address topics such as housing, land use, transportation, capital facilities, and natural resources as individual chapters. The plan also includes background information, maps, graphics, tables and a series of goals and policies. You can view the draft plan at the link below.

[2024 Comprehensive Plan Update | Lake Stevens, WA - Official Website \(lakestevenswa.gov\)](http://lakestevenswa.gov)

What is a map amendment?

A map amendment changes the land use designation and/or zoning designation of one or more properties. The comprehensive plan includes a land use map that defines broad land use categories. The zoning map adds detailed zoning designations that align with the land use map. For example, a land use designation may be changed to High Density Residential with a rezone to Multifamily Residential (MFR), while some rezones may not require a land use map amendment.

Why are these map amendments being proposed?

The majority of proposed map changes are intended to make sure zoning is consistent with the existing land use or to simplify the city's zoning. This allows for a more streamlined permit process in the event a site expands or redevelops in the future.

- Many rezones in this category are for city owned or other publicly owned sites to reflect the public use.
- The city also proposes to consolidate the two industrial zones for properties in the northeast corner of the city into a single industrial zone. Prior studies of this area were conceptual and have not been adopted. The city will complete additional planning efforts and public engagement for the industrial area in 2025. Other consistency rezones would provide residential zoning designations more in line with existing development. These include the Timbers development (UC 27), which is proposed to be rezoned to a single-family zone of R8-12 and the Glenwood Apartments (UC 7), which is proposed to be rezoned to MFR to match the existing multifamily residential use.

Other proposed rezones would accommodate projected growth for population, housing and job growth. Cities are required to provide sufficient areas for housing and employment needs through the year 2044.

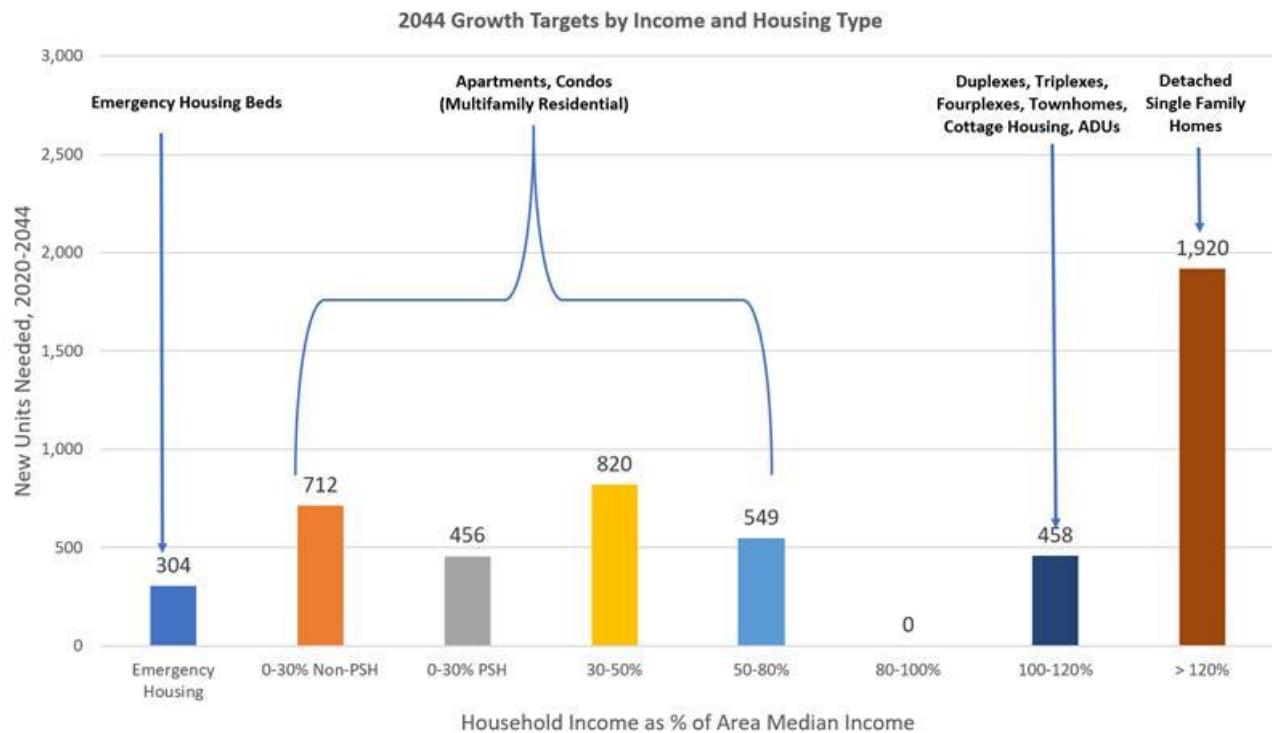
- Between 2020 and 2044, the city is projected to add approximately 9,614 new residents, 3,219 new jobs and 4,915 new housing units.
- As of today, the city will have a deficit of land for employment and multifamily residential uses.
- As such, the proposal includes targeted rezones to increase residential options for different housing types including apartments and townhouses and others to increase commercial areas.
- Changes to the Growth Management Act require cities such as Lake Stevens to plan for different income levels (measure as area median income or AMI) and their housing needs.

What is Area Median Income (AMI)?

Based on a household size of four, the Area Median Income (AMI) for Snohomish County is **\$150,700**. Under state guidance, the city has identified the greatest need for additional housing needs are for people making 0-30% AMI, 30-50% AMI, and 50-80% AMI. For a single income household, below are examples of professions that may correspond to each income bracket and may have the hardest time finding housing. Data shows that young adults with less work experience, seniors with fixed incomes, and people of color are more likely to be included in the <80% AMI bands than other demographics.

0-30% AMI	30-50% AMI	50-80% AMI
Retail employees	Waiters/Waitresses	Nurses
Fast food employees	Home Healthcare Aides	Teachers
Daycare employees, nannies	Paramedics	Machinists
Seasonal Maintenance Workers	Office Assistants	Police Officers

How Many Units of Each Housing Type is Lake Stevens Required to Plan For?



- Over half of the city's housing need is for households with incomes lower than 80% of the county average. At this income level, per state guidelines, the city needs to identify additional land suitable for apartments, condos or similar housing choices.
- The city has adequate land available for single-family neighborhoods to meet the needs of higher income households.

- The proposed rezones would provide additional capacity for multi-family housing and maintain adequate land for single-family neighborhoods to help meet housing needs at all income levels.

Where can I find out more information about proposed rezones near me, and what uses are allowed?

The city has developed an interactive “[storymap](#)” that identifies proposed zoning map amendments. A link is also provided on the 2024 Comprehensive Plan website. Users can click on the pins on the map to see specific information about each rezone, including a brief explanation of the existing zone, proposed zone, and the allowed uses. The full list of allowed uses can be found in the [chapter 14.40](#) of the municipal code. Table 14.40-I covers residential uses while Tables 14.40-II and -III cover commercial and special uses. Areas within the city’s three subareas are also subject to the use regulations in [Chapter 14.38](#).

Is there a specific development proposal tied to the proposed rezones?

No, there is no specific development proposal associated with these rezones. The state requires that the city provide adequate zoned capacity, not that it be built out within a specific timeframe. Any future commercial, industrial or residential projects would undergo site specific review.

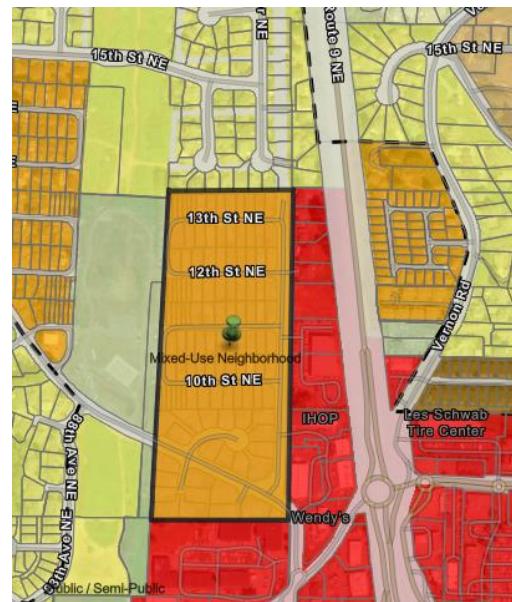
Will I have to move?

No, the proposed map changes do not require any resident to move or sell their properties. The city is not a developer, and it does not intend to acquire properties and does not have development plans for the private properties covered by the proposed map amendments. Existing uses that were legally built can remain even if an area is rezoned.

Has the city considered displacement of existing residents?

Yes, the GMA requires cities to consider displacement risks from land use actions, including proposed map amendments. In fact, several of these rezones were designed to avoid displacement pressures on existing neighborhoods.

- For example, the Frontier Heights Rezone (labelled as UC 6 on the map) is proposed to be rezoned to the single-family zone of R8-12. The current Mixed-Use Neighborhood zone allows multifamily and small-scale commercial uses.
- As most of the homes in this area are single-family homes on small lots, city staff believes that the R8-12 zone is the best fit to preserve the character of the existing neighborhood, which provides a supply of more affordable homes.
- The city also considered rezoning three existing manufactured home parks from single-family residential zones to Multi-family Residential but ultimately decided against it due to the risk of displacing residents, as these sites are typically not owned by the residents in common.



Will my property taxes go up if I am rezoned?

Property taxes are determined by the Snohomish County Assessor and are typically based on property use codes of the existing development, not the zoning designation. Assessed values consider the land and structure values. Taxes typically increase when changes are made to the property, such as when the property is redeveloped. Please contact the Snohomish County Assessor directly if you have specific questions on tax assessments.

Why haven't I heard about this before?

The city has been engaged in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan for approximately 18 months and has held multiple public engagement opportunities, including two open houses in October 2023, 10 planning commission meetings, and three city council meetings. Potential map amendments were introduced to the Planning Commission on February 7, 2024 and to City Council on June 25, 2024, and were discussed at several subsequent meetings, including an [August 19 Planning Commission meeting](#) and [September 3 City Council meeting](#).

Notice of the proposed map amendments were mailed to affected property owners and those within 300 feet of a proposed change in advance of the October public hearings, as required by city code (LSMC 14.16B.630). In addition to the required on-site posters, newspaper publication, and mailed notices, the city has circulated links to this information via its social media pages.

How will the city guarantee there will be adequate road improvements, sidewalks, and other infrastructure and services in place to accommodate projected growth?

As part of the Comprehensive Plan, the city is required to address transportation needs, identify necessary infrastructure improvements, and consider the ability of utilities and public services to accommodate projected growth.

- This information can be found in Chapters 7, 8, and 9 of the [draft plan](#).
- The GMA requires that public facilities and services either be in place, or improvements identified, to accommodate growth within planning period. The 2024 comprehensive plan assesses the ability of the city and its partner agencies/districts to provide utilities and services to meet projected growth.

Most medium to large developments submits a formal traffic analysis at the time of application that identifies vehicle trips and potential street impacts to maintain an acceptable level of service during rush hour. Development impact fees are required to be paid to offset the cost of future capital improvements such as roads, sidewalks, schools, and parks when new residential and commercial projects are constructed.

How will the city protect the lake and other natural resources in the city?

The city has adopted a Critical Areas Ordinance (Chapter 14.88 LSMC), Shoreline Master Program (SMP), stormwater regulations, and other regulations to protect natural resources. The city is subject to following numerous other state and federal regulations that protect the environment. These regulations remain in place following approval of any map amendments, and individual development projects.

Chapter 4 of the comprehensive plan includes a high-level level inventory map of critical areas that identifies potential location of critical areas using widely published map data. These maps are not treated as definitive but help identify when individual development proposals must provide site-specific critical areas studies to document the full extent of critical areas.

The city will be updating its Critical Areas Ordinance in 2025 to reflect the most current best available science.

How can I provide feedback on the plan and proposed map amendments?

Written comments may be submitted via email to dlevitan@lakestevenswa.gov or by mail to City of Lake Stevens, Attn: David Levitan, PO Box 257, Lake Stevens, WA 98258.

Oral testimony may be provided at the Planning Commission and City Council public hearings. More information on the upcoming public hearings can be found on the [project website](#).