



Chapter 1

## Introduction

Policy choices, particularly accompanied by the pace of change Airway Heights is now experiencing, have the potential to dramatically alter the city's character and quality of life. This Comprehensive Plan for Airway Heights is a valuable tool to help evaluate policy options and bring about the change the community desires. This plan rests on the belief that it is wise to look ahead, anticipate change, and manage the future. It covers decisions regarding Airway Heights' growth that are best coordinated with nearly all City services and functions, optimizing the effectiveness and value of its actions. Such decisions include issues such as: overall land use patterns, provision of adequate housing, investments in streets, sewer and water facilities, and protection of natural resources. Because this plan presents policy-level guidance, it provides ample room for discretion as implementation opportunities emerge.

This Comprehensive Plan is designed to satisfy the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), primarily codified under Chapter 36.70A RCW. It is also coordinated with Spokane County's Countywide Planning Policies. The various objectives articulated here were developed through and reflect community input over the course of many years, and are adopted by elected leadership.

This plan is intended to guide future revisions to zoning and subdivision ordinances, identify and help direct necessary capital improvements, inform budgeting, and guide development of all regulations that may shape the physical community. Such legal instruments are required to implement this plan and are required by statute to remain consistent with it. In some cases, additional, more detailed plans may be necessary to implement this document, such as a transportation plan, a parks and recreation plan, capital facilities planning, and plans for specific areas like downtown ("subarea plans").

## Using the Comprehensive Plan

Towns and cities generally employ two types of instruments to guide and enact legislation. Though each is intentionally distinct, they must be well-coordinated and complementary:

- **Policy Documents** – Such as this comprehensive plan, to set direction;
- **Regulatory Documents** – Such as zoning or development regulations, to implement objectives.

As a policy document, this plan does not hold legal sway over City activities or automatically extend into land-use regulation. Instead, it provides a first comprehensive, coordinated step towards a large variety of community goals. Additional steps may be essential, including development of implementing studies, plans, simple inventories, or updates to create consistency between the comprehensive plan and regulatory documents.

Goal and policy statements are typically expressed in written form, but may also exist as maps or diagrams, such as in land use mapping. Other charts and supporting information are provided to show conditions or projections that shaped plan objectives.

For purposes of this plan, the terms “Goal”, “Policy”, and “Action” are defined as:

**Goal** – Broad statements indicating a general aim or purpose to be achieved. A goal is a direction setter, an ideal future end, condition, or state related to the public health, safety, or general welfare toward which planning and implementation measures are directed;

**Policy** – An objective is a topic-specific statement providing guidelines for current and future decision-making. It indicates a clear commitment of the local legislative body. A policy is an extension of a plan’s goals, reflecting topical nuance as well as an assessment of conditions;

**Action** – Actions are budgetable steps envisioned or undertaken to implement plan policies. Actions may include the development of more detailed and localized plans, work to implement policies, formal agreements, regulations or other strategies.

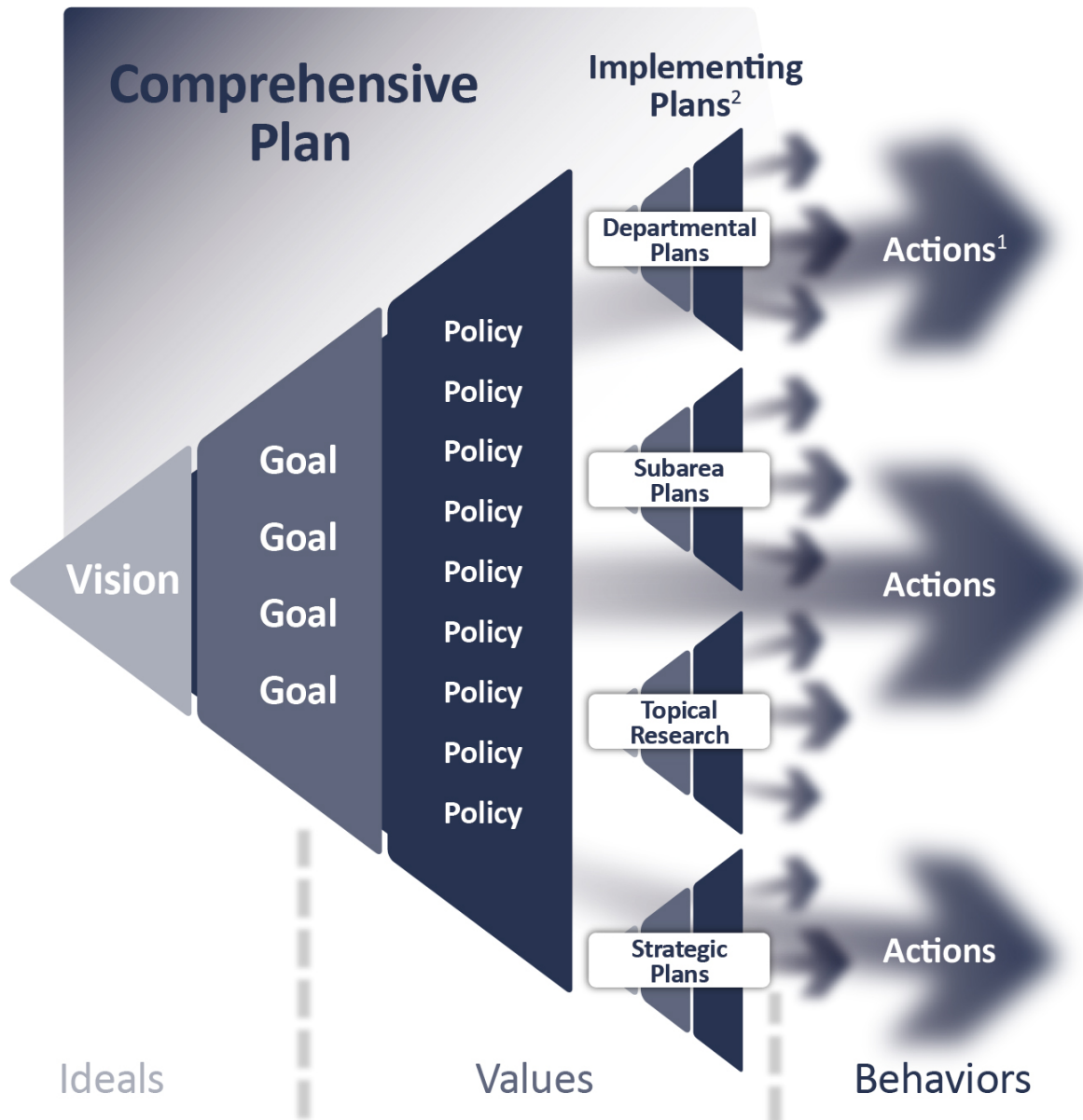
Figure 1.1 illustrates how the above features are related, flowing from vision through increasingly defined goals, policies and various types of implementing plans and actions the City may undertake.

## Organization

The following is a list of the elements (chapters) included in the Airway Heights Comprehensive Plan. Each features a topical focus; articulates conditions and key objectives the community intends to address and references related goals and policies from the full policy framework. In this plan, action items are not copied into related elements. Instead, these exist only in the Goal and Policy Framework (Appendix A).

- 1 • Vision & User Guide** – Providing an overview of the plan, its intent, and the community’s long-term vision.
- 2 • Community Profile** – Summarizing physical and demographic conditions to which the plan relates.
- 3 • Land Use** – Summarizing existing and forecast land use conditions, and expressing goals and policies including the Future Land Use Map.
- 4 • Transportation** – Expressing existing and forecast transportation conditions, and providing goals and policies including level of service standards.
- 5 • Housing**– Summarizing existing housing conditions, future needs and providing housing-related goals and policies.
- 6 • Parks & Recreation** – Summarizing existing parks, recreation and associated conditions, plus related goals and policies.
- 7 • Economic Development** – Outlining the City’s economic development conditions and objectives, followed by related goals and policies from the comprehensive framework.
- 8 • Capital Facilities** – Providing an overview of city infrastructure, followed by a listing of related goals and policies.
- 9 • Utilities** – Presenting a summary of current and expected utilities conditions in Airway Heights, followed by a listing of related policies.

**Appendix A** – Providing a table containing this plan’s entire goal, policy and actions framework.  
**Appendix B** – Providing updated transportation estimates for agency review requirements.



<sup>1</sup> Actions include programs, capital investments, regulations, etc.  
<sup>2</sup> Examples only. Implementing plans may include a wide variety of plan types

Figure 1.1- Conceptual diagram, policy hierarchy and implementation.

# Airway Heights Vision

As is common for plans, a vision statement has been developed for Airway Heights’ comprehensive plan, providing an over-arching theme for the entire policy framework. Just as individuals choose a route of travel toward a specific destination, the vision is the city’s hoped-for “destination” – and the policies in the comprehensive plan establish the route of travel to get it there. If, twenty years from now, visitors were to come to Airway Heights, how would they describe the city to others after they returned home? If the plan is carried out successfully, their answer should resemble very closely the image that Vision 2039 describes.

## Vision 2039

The City of Airway Heights is a proud community that is clean, safe and family oriented. It offers a full range of services while maintaining positive community spirit and small-town character. There are pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods with well-maintained public roads and an attractive central business district. The City’s facilities, parks and services are cost-effective, efficient, well-maintained, and available to all.



