



2025 Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Participation Program

Prepared by Skagit County
Planning & Development Services Staff

Table of Contents

03 Introduction

03 Public Participation Program Purpose

03 Periodic Comprehensive Plan Update

04 Public Participation Goals

04 Skagit County 2025 Periodic Update Timeline

06 Legislative Process

06 Engagement

08 How to Learn More

Last Updated February 06, 2024

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan guides the direction for the future of Skagit County and all local planning efforts. Residents of Skagit County choose to live here for many reasons: natural beauty, clean air, good jobs, and an ideal place to create a home and family. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to foster this high quality of life by providing for social, environmental, cultural, economic, resource, recreational, civic, transit, health, and safety needs. The purpose of the County’s Comprehensive Plan and Capital Facilities Plan is to guide policy, financing, and development regulation decisions over a 20-year period.

Public Participation Program Purpose

The Public Participation Program (PPP) is intended to guide the County in reviewing proposed comprehensive plan and development regulation amendments. The PPP is required by state law ([RCW 36.70A.140](#)), which states:

“Comprehensive plans – Ensure public participation. Each county and city that is required or chooses to plan under RCW 36.70A.040 shall establish and broadly disseminate to the public a public participation program identifying procedures providing for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans. The procedures shall provide for broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives, opportunity for written comments, public meetings after effective notice, provision for open discussion, communication programs, information services, and consideration of and response to public comments...”

The purpose of the PPP is to engage residents, property and business owners, cities, tribes, and other stakeholders on the periodic update process and how they can provide feedback to County decision makers. ~~The goal of the program is to encourage input and collaboration that fosters diverse viewpoints for the County to consider.~~ The program is to be used by staff to guide public engagement and to help the public know how to engage in the planning process. The plan is a living document and will expand as the comprehensive plan update process continues.

2025 Periodic Comprehensive Plan Update

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties planning under the GMA to periodically review and, if needed, revise its 20-year comprehensive plan, capital facility plan, and development regulations. The periodic update occurs every ten years to respond to changes in state law and to address new information about land use, community needs, and population and employment growth. As Skagit County continues to grow and change, the County's

Comprehensive Plan is intended to change to reflect the current needs and vision of the County and into the future.

The next periodic update is required to be completed by June 30th, 2025.

Public Participation Goals

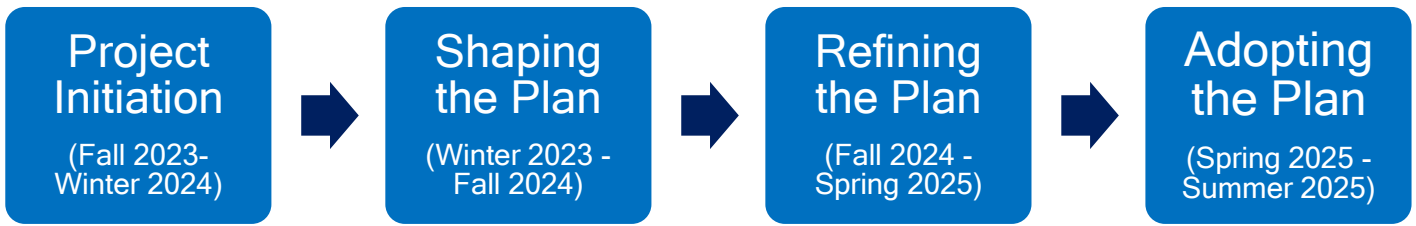
~~Skagit County has established a timeline to help the public understand when engagement opportunities exist. The timeline may be expanded and adapted depending on the nature and scope of the state mandated updates.~~ The goal of the program is to encourage input and collaboration that fosters diverse viewpoints for the County to consider. Cities, tribes, interested parties, and the public will have opportunities for involvement and are encouraged to participate.

Throughout the process, Skagit County will:

- Commit to early and continuous engagement.
- Broadly disseminate proposals and information in accessible formats.
- Provide equitable opportunities for public participation in all areas of Skagit County.
- Provide timely information at key milestones.
- Use concise, plain, and easy to understand language.
- Consult with local tribes.
- Consult with neighboring localities, and federal and state agencies.
- Provide multilingual engagement opportunities and materials.
- Update the project website with current information.
- Utilize a variety of outreach mediums including local media, print, web, social media, emails, community meetings, and open houses.

Skagit County 2025 Periodic Update Timeline

The County has established a timeline for public involvement to help the public understand where engagement opportunities exist. Skagit County will schedule a series of public outreach opportunities to correspond with new available information throughout the update process. Below are the steps and timeframes of the Public Participation Program.



Key Tasks / Engagement Opportunities	Anticipated Date <i>(All dates are estimate and are subject to change)</i>
Project Initiation Phase	
Internal Kick-off Meeting	February 2024
Create and maintain a project webpage	Winter 2024
Create a dedicated email to capture comments throughout the process	Winter 2024
Attend community meetings to build relationships	Winter 2024
Develop Public Participation Program	Winter 2024
Shaping the Plan	
Agency / Partner Meetings	Fall 2023 - Winter 2024
Workshops on each element of the Draft Plan	Spring 2024
Host public Open Houses and stakeholder interviews.	Spring – Fall 2024
Attend community meetings, events, fairs, and/or festivals to share information and encourage participation.	Spring – Summer 2024
Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) Meetings / Work Sessions	Winter – Fall 2024
Planning Commission Meetings / Work Sessions	Winter – Fall 2024
Refining the Plan	
Agency Partner Meetings	Fall 2024
Draft Element Review	Winter 2024-2025
Attend community meetings to encourage comments and participation in upcoming public meetings	Winter 2024-2025
BOCC Meetings / Work Sessions	Fall – Winter 2024, Spring 2025

Planning Commission Meetings / Work Sessions	Fall – Winter 2024, Spring 2025
Public Meetings	Spring 2025
Adopting the Plan	
State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination	Spring 2025
Public Hearings for Comp Plan Changes	Spring – Summer 2025
Public Hearings for Code Changes	Spring – Summer 2025
BOCC Meetings / Work Sessions	Spring – Summer 2025
Planning Commission Meetings / Work Sessions	Spring – Summer 2025

Legislative Process

Skagit County residents are encouraged to attend and listen to discussions and make comments at Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioner meetings. These legislative bodies are comprised of appointed or elected officials who hold meetings of record to gather information from County staff and input from the public on a topic. Participants may also submit written comment by emailing pdscomments@co.skagit.wa.us.

The Skagit County Planning Commission advises on comprehensive plan updates. The Planning Commission consists of nine members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to make recommendations on planning related matters including growth and development. The Planning Commission will review and advise on comprehensive plan updates throughout the process.

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners is the County’s legislative authority and holds the decision-making authority on the 2025 Comprehensive Plan process. The Board of County Commissioners includes three commissioners representing geographic districts based on [population](#). The Board of County Commissioners will review the comprehensive plan updates throughout the process and approve the final version at the end of the process.

Engagement

The Comprehensive Plan update is a multi-faceted project spanning multiple years. Communication and engagement plans will be developed at key milestones throughout the process that consider audience, medium, and key messages.

Communication Tools

The communication tools used by Skagit County during the comprehensive plan update process will include:

- **Project Website** – Skagit county Planning and Development Services (PDS) will regularly update the [project website](#) with up-to-date comprehensive plan information. Relevant documents and schedules will be posted on the website along with announcements and notices concerning upcoming meetings, hearings, and public involvement opportunities. The webpage can be found under [Comprehensive Plan](#) on the PDS Services website.
- **Email List** – Interested parties can sign up for email notifications they will be notified of public meetings, outreach events, and new materials for review.
- **Direct Mail** – Postcards or other informational materials may be directly mailed to residents to notify the public about opportunities to participate, key dates or deadlines, and/or public meetings and hearings.
- **News Releases** – For major topics and decisions, Skagit County will prepare press releases and distribute to local media.
- **Social Media** – PDS staff will use Skagit county social media platforms to promote public meetings and opportunities to provide formal public comment during the comprehensive plan update process.
- **Posters** – Staff will provide posters about public events or opportunities to comment in common gathering places such as community centers, libraries, and food banks.

Outreach Methods

Outreach methods used by Skagit County during the comprehensive plan update process will include:

- **Focus Groups and Technical Advisory Groups** – In order to solicit guidance on specific issues or complex technical issues, planning staff may utilize Board of County Commissioners approved focus groups or technical advisory groups. These groups will include members with specific knowledge or interest in certain topics or can effectively represent a subset of the community.
- **Surveys** – Surveys may be utilized to better understand the community's point of view on specific topics.
- **Community Events / Fairs and Festivals** – Planning staff will utilize already established community events to share information about the comprehensive plan process, such as farmers markets, local parades, and annual community events.
- **Open Houses / Workshops** – Open houses are informal public gatherings to solicit feedback on Skagit County's planning efforts. These involve presentations by planning staff, question and answer sessions, and interactive activities.

- **Public Hearings** – Public Hearings are a formal public process conducted and held before the Board of County Commissioners or the Planning Commission.
- **Stakeholder Interviews** - The purpose of stakeholder interviews is to gather input on certain planning issues from a variety of perspectives. Interview results can be published in aggregate with individuals’ input anonymized. County staff will help identify individuals or organizations to invite to interviews.
- **Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG)** – Issues requiring a high level of intergovernmental coordination or decision-making may be forwarded to the Skagit Council of Governments for discussion. SCOG will ~~be leading take lead~~ the coordination of the update to the [Countywide Planning Policies](#).
- **Board of County Commissioners Work Sessions** – Planning staff will frequently attend work sessions to brief Board members on the update process.
- **Planning Commission Work Sessions** – Planning staff will frequently attend work sessions to brief Planning Commission members on the update process.

Key Audiences

Key audiences will be engaged by Skagit County during the comprehensive planning process. All Skagit County residents are invited to participate in the comprehensive plan update process, with an emphasis on vulnerable and historically underserved communities. The list below represents groups that have expressed interest in being involved or are required to be engaged by State law. ~~The plan is a living document and will expand as the comprehensive plan update process continues.~~

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Skagit County Residents | • Advisory Boards |
| • Local Tribal Governments | • Transportation Groups |
| • Cities and Towns | • Utility Providers |
| • Federal Government | • Veteran Groups |
| • State Agencies | • Senior Service Groups |
| • Local Organizations | • Social Service Groups |
| • Agricultural and Forestry Groups | • Youth Service Groups |
| • Environmental Groups | • School Districts |
| • Economic Groups | • Fire Districts |
| • Housing Groups | • Drainage and Irrigation Districts |

For additional information, please contact the Skagit County Planning and Development Services Department.

Visit:

www.skagitcounty.net/2025CPA

Phone: (360) 416-1320

Email: PDS@co.skagit.wa.us