



SKAGIT COUNTY 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

July Planning Commission to Discuss Preliminary Draft Policies

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Agenda

- Project overview
 - Project schedule overview and update
 - Community engagement overview
- Policy revision approach introduction
- Preliminary draft policy amendments for the Rural Element
- Preliminary draft policy amendments for Natural Resource Lands Element
- Questions and early feedback from the Planning Commission

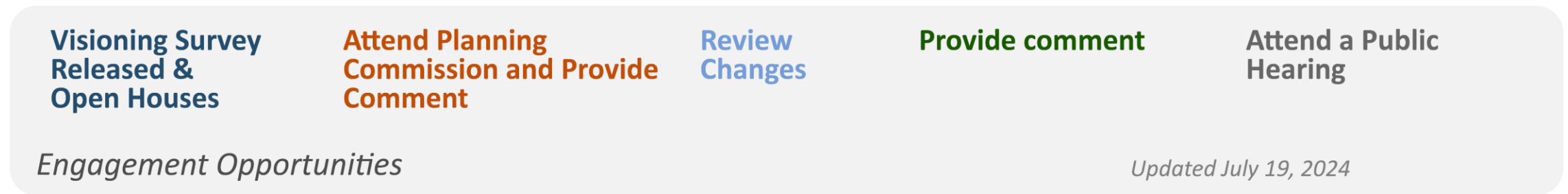
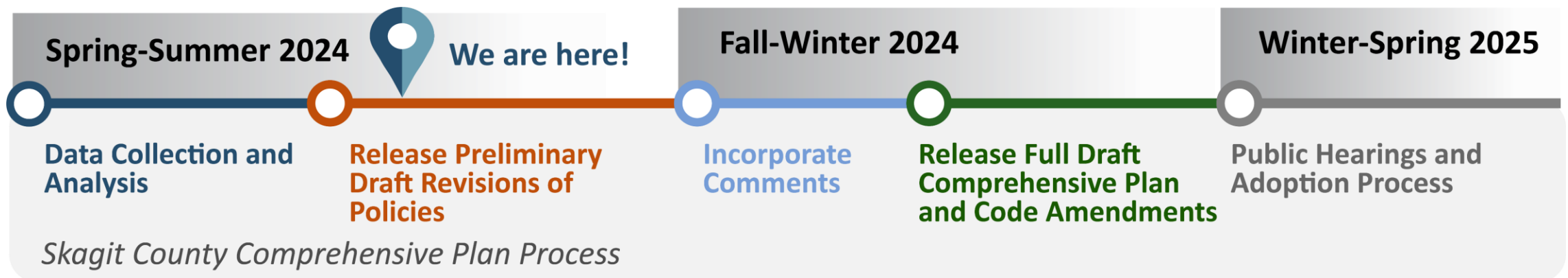
An aerial photograph of a large, multi-arched bridge spanning a wide river. The bridge has a reddish-brown metal structure. In the background, there are rolling green hills and mountains, some with snow-capped peaks under a clear blue sky. The foreground shows a rocky shoreline with a house and a dock.

Project Overview



Project and Schedule Overview

- Project is nearing completion of data collection and analysis and moving on to policy drafting.



Updated July 19, 2024



Preliminary Policy Drafting Schedule

- Visit <https://skagitcounty.net/2025cpa> to learn about how to provide public comment.

Topic	Planning Commission – Preliminary Review	Comment Period	Planning Commission Second Review
Rural Natural Resource Lands	July 23, 2024	7/23/2024 to 08/22/2024 4:30 p.m.	Early 2025
Land Use Housing Economic Development	August 13, 2024	8/13/2024 to 09/12/2024 4:30 p.m.	Early 2025
Transportation Capital Facilities, and Utilities	September 24, 2024	9/24/2024 to 10/24/2024 4:30 p.m.	Early 2025
Climate & Resiliency Environment	October 22, 2024	10/22/2024 to 11/14/2024 4:30 p.m.	Early 2025



Community Engagement Summary

- Visit <https://skagitcounty.net/2025cpa> to download the public participation program and community engagement reports.

Engagement	Completed On	Summary
First Community Survey	May 14, 2024	The first survey collected over strengths, weaknesses, and future focus areas for the County. Download the report online.
Pop-Ups	Ongoing	County staff participated in multiple community events to advertise the first survey, educate the public on the comprehensive plan process. Download the report online.
Stakeholder Interviews	July 10, 2024	The County hosted eight stakeholder interviews with groups focusing on agriculture, environment, housing, and economic development. Engagement report coming soon.
Open Houses	June 27, 2024	Open houses were completed at the end of June to educate the public and collect early feedback on specific topics. Engagement report coming soon.
Public Comment Periods	In Process	30-Day public comment periods will be included with every draft release of policies.
Climate Open House	Upcoming	Details will be provided at a later date.
Climate Survey	Upcoming	Details will be provided at a later date.

Policy Revision





Approach

- Consistency with the Growth Management Act (GMA) and state law changes since last Comprehensive Plan update
- Consistency with Countywide Planning Policies
- Streamlining of policy language
- Use of active verbs to enhance readability and engagement
- Focus on creating “action” policies to provide direction for the future

A scenic landscape featuring a wide river or lake in the foreground, a wooden bridge crossing it, and a small house on a rocky shore. In the background, there are rolling green hills, a small town, and a range of mountains under a clear blue sky with some light clouds.

Rural Element Preliminary Draft Policy Amendments

Rural Policies

- The rural lands are designated for land uses that are compatible with the rural character of such lands and provide for a variety of rural densities and uses, but are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest, or mineral resources.

Key Recommendations

- SB 5275 on Public Services. This allows more options for development and redevelopment inside the boundary of a LAMIRD, which is an isolated pocket of more intense development in rural areas.
- SB 6140. This allows new or redeveloped retail or food service use in a mixed-use LAMIRD.
- Recommendations are also made to move detailed language from policies to development regulations.





Natural Resource Lands Element Preliminary Draft Policy Amendments



Natural Resource Lands Policies

- The natural resource lands designation indicates areas intended to promote long-term, commercially significant resource use, particularly agricultural lands, forest lands, and mineral lands.

Key Recommendations

- Countywide evaluation of potential de-designation requests for agriculture and forestry to understand cumulative effects, as well as for mineral lands (some leeway for lands under reclamation).
- Evaluate designation criteria to consider farmlands of statewide importance as well as prime and unique lands per recent state rule amendments.
- Address Wildlife Urban Interface (WUI) in rural densities or Urban Growth Area (UGA) changes.

