

## Clark County Comprehensive Plan 2025 Periodic Update Public Participation Plan

### Introduction

Clark County is conducting a periodic review of its [Comprehensive Plan](#) (Plan) as required by the Washington State [Growth Management Act](#) (GMA). The county is required to complete its update by June 30, 2025. The Plan, originally adopted in 1994 and last updated in 2016, is a long-range policy guide for how the county plans to manage growth and development over a twenty-year period. The GMA requires jurisdictions to periodically update their Plan and development regulations to bring them up to date with:

- changes to state law,
- land use changes, if any,
- population and employment growth projections, and
- housing projections.

The Comprehensive Plan guides county decisions related to land use; housing; capital facilities and utilities; rural and natural resources; transportation; economic development; parks, open space and recreation; schools; historic preservation; environment; community design; shoreline; and annexation.

The focal point of the county's long-range planning is the County's Comprehensive Plan and its Capital Facilities Plan which help with policy, financing and development regulation decisions over the 20-year period.

### Public Participation Program Purpose

To ensure compliance, the Washington State Department of Commerce recommends local governments begin the periodic update process by adopting a Public Participation Plan. It would clearly identify the scope of the proposed update, when legislative action is expected, and how the public can participate or comment.

This Public Participation Plan provides members of the public opportunities for early and continuing participation and access to key decision making processes with the Clark County Planning Commission and Clark County Council. [\[RCW 36.70A.035\]](#). The plan describes the steps Clark County will take to provide opportunities for public engagement, as well as Clark County contact information and web addresses. This plan is in addition to the public participation required by Clark County Code Sections [40.510.040](#) and [40.560.010](#).

### Public Participation Plan Goals

1. **Accessible participation:** Accessible participation seeks to provide low-barrier opportunities for all who wish to participate to have a say in the decision-making process. Depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic, events will be hosted either online and/or at community locations throughout the county. For online activities, both computer and phone options will be made available. The county will publish as much project information and communications in English, Spanish, Russian and Chinese, as resources allow. Upon request, staff will coordinate

translators for these languages, and the hearing impaired at key project engagement events. These languages have been identified for this project as the most commonly spoken languages in the county, per census data. Translation into additional languages may be possible upon request and within county resource constraints. Project communication could include social media, print, email and online communication methods.

2. **Inclusive participation:** Community Planning recognizes that policy and planning decisions about land use, transportation, environmental resources and capital facilities do not impact us all in the same way. Community Planning wants to prioritize engagement with community members who have historically been left out of public planning processes, such as renters, people living with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, and BIPOC-led organizations, with the hope that the resulting Plan is well-grounded in the experiences and knowledge of a wider range of public perspectives than has historically been achieved. While county staff does not have the power to enact policies or development regulations, by incorporating a more diverse range of public voices, staff can provide a richer and fuller context to elected officials as they make decisions.
3. **Meaningful participation:** Meaningful participation means the county will provide enough background and educational opportunities about the update project, so that public participants have the information and tools they need to feel knowledgeable and informed about county processes, policies and regulations. Meaningful participation means the county will provide opportunities to listen to its constituents and hear about their lived experiences. Meaningful participation means engagement opportunities will take place early in the project process, so there is time for discussion and learning to take place and have an impact on recommendations and decisions. Meaningful participation means that public feedback will be shared with the Planning Commission and County Council for their discussions on specific topics.
4. **Transparency and accountability:** Public engagement opportunities will distinguish between opportunities designed to provide information versus those that seek input and feedback on decision-making. Opportunities will be clearly defined and advertised where the public can provide timely input so that there is an opportunity to affect decisions. Staff will keep the project website updated with current information and use concise, plain, and easy to understand language. There will be an ongoing record of comments, along with an online mechanism to make this information available to the public. Being transparent and clear means the public can hold the county accountable in its process and decision making.

## Community Partners and Interested Parties (Audience)

The 2025 update will be a countywide effort that endeavors to engage with a broad and inclusive range of stakeholders and communities, including the cities, tribes, residents, neighborhood and community groups, cultural organizations, business stakeholders, advocacy organizations, and other public and private agencies.

Clark County will engage multiple stakeholder groups, including the following:

- **Property owners, residents, renters**
- **Community groups, service organizations**
- **People living with disabilities**
- **Immigrants and refugees**
- **BIPOC-led organizations**

- Local governments
- Regional tribal governments
- County advisory boards and commissions
- Neighborhood associations
- State agencies
- Development community
- Economic community
- Environmental community
- Housing agencies
- Faith-based communities
- Transportation agencies
- Utility providers
- Private property rights groups
- Public safety
- Clark County departments/divisions
- School districts
- Media
- Food banks
- Youth
- Veterans

All parties will be informed and invited to participate throughout the process. Notification will be accomplished via the methods outlined in the *Public Participation Tools* section of this document.

## Public Participation Tools

Clark County Community Planning will use a variety of outreach and engagement tools, tailored to the needs and opportunities during each phase of the update.

### *Outreach Tools:*

#### **Project webpage**

Community Planning will maintain a webpage dedicated to the Plan update that includes draft documents; maps, scope of work/schedule; meeting information; contact information; links to Clark County cities' comprehensive plan webpages; information on how to stay involved and provide comments; and contact information for requesting materials in other languages: <https://clark.wa.gov/community-planning/2025-update>. Please note that the county's website can translate website text into a variety of languages via Google translate.

#### **Social media**

Submit posts on the county's social media accounts to provide information about open houses, public work sessions/hearings times and location, and other key messages and notices. Information will be shared in multiple languages.

#### **Other media**

Staff will seek to engage with ethnic media sources, such as language specific radio stations, to continue to reach the diverse communities of Clark County.

## **News releases**

Issue news releases and advertise public meetings in the newspaper of record. Encourage coverage of the update via a variety of media outlets, including *The Columbian*, *The Camas-Post Record*, *The Reflector*, *Clark County Today*, and *The Senior Messenger*. Clark County will prepare news releases and distribute them to general news media, specialized media, and neighborhood associations and other local information providers throughout the update process. News releases also are available through online requests for RSS feeds and by following the county on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.

## **Email notifications to interested parties**

Maintain a list of interested members of the public and stakeholders who will be notified of meetings and other information related to the update process via email. The list currently includes over one thousand subscribers.

## **Legal notices**

Publish legal notices in paper of record and other local newspapers including *The Columbian*, *The Camas-Post Record*, and *The Reflector*, identifying public hearing times, locations, and information on how to provide comment.

## *Engagement Tools:*

### **Public meetings and open houses**

Community Planning will hold public meetings and open houses to provide background information and receive comments and feedback from interested members of the public. Community Planning commits to hold both in-person, online, and/or hybrid meetings at convenient times. Information will be shared either through presentations by technical staff (public meeting) or through display exhibits (open house). Staff will present material online to create an alternative “open house” for residents unable to attend in person. Notice of these meetings could be provided through methods such as a news release, email notification, project webpage, social media, and legal notices, as appropriate.

Within available resources, the county will publish project information and communications for events in English, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese, and upon request, coordinate translators for these languages, including ASL, at key project engagement events. When possible, for in-person events, staff will work to select community-based event venues that are accessible by transit and ADA-accessible and offer children’s activities to encourage participation and design the meetings to include interactive components and/or incentives to attend.

### **Community group presentations**

Community Planning will reach out to the community partners and interested parties (audience) section above to provide background information on the update, gather input, or give presentations focused on specific topics or on the general project. Any community group is welcome to contact staff and request a presentation.

## **Surveys**

Community Planning may use surveys to collect feedback from the community on various topics related to the Plan update.

## **Public comments**

Written comments will be accepted by mail or email throughout the update process to Clark County Community Planning, PO Box 9810, Vancouver, WA 98666-9810, an [online comment form](#), or [comp.plan@clark.wa.gov](mailto:comp.plan@clark.wa.gov). There will also be topic specific comment periods during the update process to

provide feedback on certain elements of the plan update, such as during the environmental analysis. All comments received will be posted to the project webpage and provided to the decision makers (Planning Commission and County Council) as part of their hearing packets on major decisions of the Plan update.

There is also opportunity for providing oral testimony during public hearings. Information on how to provide oral testimony will be provided at the hearings.

## **Planning Commission meetings**

Community Planning staff will hold a series of work sessions with the Planning Commission throughout the course of the Plan update. The Planning Commission is a seven-member advisory board to the County Council on issues related to land use policy and land use changes. The Planning Commission typically meets on the first and third Thursdays of every month at either 5:30 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. depending on the agenda. All meetings are currently hybrid, meaning attendees can join remotely via Webex or in-person at the County's Public Service Center, sixth-floor, 1300 Franklin St., Vancouver. All meetings are open to the public, recorded, and posted to the [Planning Commission's webpage](#). The public may attend and listen to work sessions. Planning Commission hearings provide opportunity for public testimony. Clark-Vancouver TV (CVTV) also carries the hearings live on Channels 21/321 or 23/323 and for streaming on [www.cvtv.org](http://www.cvtv.org).

Notice of Planning Commission meetings could be provided through such methods as a news release, email notification, project webpage, social media, and legal notices, as appropriate.

## **County Council meetings**

Community Planning staff will hold a series of work sessions and updates with the County Council throughout the course of the Plan update. Work sessions and council time are typically held on Wednesdays and are open to the public to watch and listen. The work sessions and council time are recorded and posted to the [council's meeting page](#).

Council hearings will be scheduled as needed for key decisions throughout the Plan update process. Notice of these meetings could be provided through such methods as a news release, email notification, project webpage, social media, and legal notices, as appropriate. All meetings are open to the public in a hybrid format, recorded and posted on the [council's meeting page](#). Public hearings are also available to watch live on CVTV channel 21/321 or 23/323 and for streaming on [www.cvtv.org](http://www.cvtv.org).

## **City, County, Tribe Technical Advisory Committee**

Community Planning will coordinate with the cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Woodland, Washougal, the town of Yacolt, and the Cowlitz Tribe on countywide planning issues that affect each jurisdiction. Clark County will coordinate meetings to discuss issues and seek consensus with each municipality before taking final action.

## **Technical advisory groups**

Community Planning may use technical advisory groups to solicit guidance on complex technical issues requiring a high level of intergovernmental coordination. The groups will include members who have specific knowledge of or interest in specialized technical topics. Technical advisory groups may have members from business and interest groups, trade organizations, service providers, municipalities and county departments.

## **Mapping/GIS**

The county's GIS staff and the presentation of maps will be used throughout the update project. The project may also utilize one or more GIS Story Maps located on the project webpage, which will combine maps displaying geographic data or information with narrative text and images.

## Television and online videocasts

CVTV broadcasts of Planning Commission and council hearings will be replayed to reach a broader audience. Community Planning staff will also work with CVTV to produce informational videos on certain elements of the Plan process to raise awareness of the project and help inform the public on upcoming events.

## Issue papers/informational documents

Community Planning staff will develop issue papers and informational documents to provide focused guidance and document the evolution of the update process. The documents will be posted to the project's website.

## Scope of Work

To organize the complex process of updating the Plan, Community Planning has divided essential elements of the project into four phases. Each phase will have distinct tasks and activities that are planned to engage community members and key stakeholders in identifying issues, developing policy concepts, and shaping the final recommended plan that will be considered by the County Council in 2025.

The estimated completion dates for each step are indeed estimates. In some cases, final action may occur before or after the target date because of constrained resources, need for additional intergovernmental collaboration, or unforeseen circumstances.



### Phase 1-Project initiation (January 2023-Summer 2023)

Phase 1 is the initiation of the periodic update project. The county will kick-off the project with a public meeting that provides decision makers and the public information about the GMA, recent state legislation related to the GMA, and an overview of the anticipated periodic update process. This phase also includes review and analysis of the current plan in relation to changes to state law, land use, and population projections for the twenty-year planning period and planning for public engagement.

Objectives for phase 1 include:



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- Raise public awareness and provide information about the Plan update and seek feedback about how the public and stakeholders prefer to be engaged
- Establish Preliminary Scope of Work and Public Participation Plan
- Research of the issues, state law and other planning requirements that need to be included in the update
- Coordinate with cities, town, and tribe, and other public agencies, as appropriate, on population and employment projections (based on a council adopted Office of Financial Management population forecast)
- Coordinate with cities, town, and tribe on reviewing and, if needed, revising countywide planning policies

## KEY MILESTONES AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN PHASE 1:

Date	Milestone	Engagement opportunities
Winter 2023	<b>Public Participation Plan and Scope of Work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public comment period</li><li>• Planning Commission work session</li><li>• Council work session and hearing</li></ul>
Spring 2023	<b>County Population Projection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning Commission work session</li><li>• Council work session and hearing</li></ul>
Summer 2023	<b>County Employment Projection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning Commission work session</li><li>• Council work session and hearing</li></ul>
Fall 2023	<b>Countywide Planning Policies and Population Allocation to each urban area (adoption of updated policies, if needed)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning Commission work Session and hearing</li><li>• Council work session and hearing</li></ul>

## Phase 2 –Shape the plan (Fall 2023-Summer 2024)

During the second phase, Clark County will engage with the public to inform and shape growth alternatives, provide input for the scope of environmental analysis, and seek input on new and revised Comprehensive Plan policies. Growth options will be informed by the community feedback, technical analysis, and the range of desired alternatives for study established by the County Council.

Objectives for phase 2 include:

- Collect individual property owner proposals for comprehensive plan amendments for consideration through the lens of the chosen growth alternatives
- Provide information to the public on the scope of an anticipated environmental impact statement (EIS) and seek input on potential growth strategy alternatives, impacts and mitigation measures
- Seek out more specific input on proposed new and revised policies in each of the Plan elements
- Continued coordination with the cities, town, tribe, and federal, state, and local public agencies

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## KEY MILESTONES AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN PHASE 2-Shape the Plan:

Date	Milestone	Engagement opportunities
Fall 2023	<b>Hire environmental analysis consultant for environmental analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Council hearing</li> </ul>
Fall 2023	<b>Property owner submittal for comprehensive land use changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposal submittal period</li> </ul>
Fall 2023-Winter 2024	<b>Environmental Impact Scoping (the scope is the range and types of issues to be studied for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS))</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open houses/public meetings</li> <li>Public comment period</li> <li>Planning Commission work session</li> <li>County Council work session</li> </ul>
Spring 2024	<b>Review and selection of Growth Alternatives for Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open houses/public meetings</li> <li>Public comment period</li> <li>Planning Commission work session</li> <li>County Council work session and hearing</li> </ul>
Spring-Fall 2024	<b>Input on County Comprehensive Plan text and policies and Title 40 revisions, if needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public comment period</li> </ul>

### Phase 3 – Review and refine (Fall 2024-Winter 2025)

Phase 3 will begin with release of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS); draft Comprehensive Plan document; and revised development regulations, if needed. This phase will include multiple opportunities for the public to learn about the draft analysis, draft Plan and code amendments, if any. The public will be able to provide input as we move toward a preferred growth strategy alternative and release of a final Plan for transmittal to the County Council in 2025. There will be a formal comment period associated with the DEIS and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), in which the public will be invited to submit feedback. The county will also engage local communities more deeply around land use changes that may be needed to implement the plan.

#### Objectives for Phase 3:

- Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- Draft Comprehensive Plan document with updated information
- Determination of preferred alternative (chosen growth alternative to study in final Environmental Impact Statement)
- Analysis of preferred alternative through update of Vacant Buildable Lands Model, Rural Capacity Estimate, Capital Facilities Plan, Capital Facilities Financial Plan, and Transportation Analyses
- Preferred Alternative for Final Environmental Impact Statement



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## KEY MILESTONES AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN PHASE 3:

Date	Milestone	Engagement opportunities
Fall 2024	<b>Draft Environmental Impact Statement Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public comment period</li> <li>Planning Commission work sessions and hearings</li> <li>County Council work sessions and hearings</li> </ul>
Fall 2024	<b>Selection of Preferred Alternative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Council hearing</li> </ul>
Fall 2024 - Winter 2025	<b>Preferred Alternative Analysis work: Update Vacant Buildable Lands Model, Capital Facilities Plan, Capital Financial Facilities Plan, Transportation Analysis, and Arterial Atlas based on Preferred Alternative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Commission work session</li> <li>County Council work session and hearing</li> </ul>
Winter 2025	<b>Issue Final Environmental Impact Statement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public comment period</li> <li>Planning Commission work sessions</li> </ul>
Winter 2025	<b>Public Review of Comprehensive Plan Update Materials (Plan text, Title 40, Capital Facilities Plan, Capital Facilities Financial Plan)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open houses/public meetings</li> <li>Public comment period</li> <li>Planning Commission work sessions</li> </ul>

## Phase 4 – Adoption process (Spring 2025-June 2025)

Phase 4 begins with presentation of the Comprehensive Plan and final preferred growth strategy to the Planning Commission and County Council.

Objectives for Phase 4:

- Submittal of Plan to Washington State Department of Commerce for 60-day review
- Review and recommendation of the Plan by the Planning Commission
- Review and adoption of the Plan by County Council

## KEY MILESTONES AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN PHASE 4:

Date	Milestone	Engagement opportunities
Spring 2025	<b>Washington Department of Commerce 60-day review submittal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>
Spring 2025	<b>Planning Commission work sessions/hearings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Commission work sessions and hearings</li> </ul>
Spring 2025	<b>County Council work sessions (review Planning Commission recommendations)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Council work sessions</li> </ul>
June 2025	<b>Final Adoption of Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Council hearing</li> </ul>

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Decision Makers**

County Manager	Prepare and present to the Planning Commission the comprehensive plan update and then presents the Planning Commission's recommendations on these matters to the council.
Planning Commission	Appointed by the Clark County Council, the Planning Commission serves as an advisory board on matters related to physical development of land in the unincorporated area. The role of the Planning Commission is primarily legislative because its members review policy proposals and land use changes, which could be considered quasi-judicial.
County Council	Elected to four-year terms, members of the Clark County Council hold legislative authority for Clark County. Related to the comprehensive plan update, the council is the ultimate decision maker and responsible for adopting the Comprehensive Plan and related development regulations.
City/Town Councils	Each city/town in Clark County is responsible for creating its own comprehensive plan, policies, and development regulations. The county and the cities' comprehensive plans must be consistent with one another.