

# Planning Commission Workshop



Community Development • 2025 NE Kresky Ave, Chehalis, WA 98532 • Phone: (360) 740-1146

## STAFF REPORT

## Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update

**Date:** September 15, 2023  
**Staff:** Eric Eisenberg, Housing and Infrastructure Specialist  
**RE:** **Mandatory Updates**

### INTRODUCTION

Lewis County is beginning its Periodic Update. By June 30, 2025, the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the County to review and update its population projections, countywide planning policies, Urban Growth Area designations, and Comprehensive Plan to comply with current requirements, including any changes in the GMA since 2017. The County must also update its development regulations to be consistent with those updated policies and plan, as well as review its resource land designations and critical areas ordinance to reflect current conditions and the best available science. All of these changes are “mandatory updates.” They will proceed using the work plan and public participation program discussed in the other memo.

### REQUIRED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS

The County’s updated Comprehensive Plan must contain planning goals and policies for Land Use, Housing, Capital Facilities, Utilities, Rural Development and Character, Transportation, and Climate Change/Resiliency. The Climate Change/Resiliency element is new. The other elements must be updated to reflect GMA changes, as outlined below. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan must reflect changes in our community since 2017, such as new census and population data; new circumstances regarding housing, development, transportation, or capital facilities; changes in farming, timber, or mining demand or practices; and changes in the best available science regarding critical areas.

### KEY LEGAL CHANGES TO ADDRESS

The following new laws from 2021 through 2023 will require attention in our periodic update:

#### Plan for and accommodate affordable housing ([HB 1220](#), 2021)

- Adopt population and housing allocations – *completed June 2023*
- Make policies and zoning consistent with housing allocations – *this will include updated goals and policies under the [Housing Element](#), followed by changes to the Lewis County Code*
- Address disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion in housing – *examine issues such as overcrowding, gentrification, and risk of displacement in the unincorporated county*

Allow LAMIRDS to intensify in their areas; impose size cap on new retail stores (SB 5275, 2022)

- Allow infill housing/development if sufficient services exist – *infill is already addressed, but intensification is not*
- Disallow new retail uses over 2500 sq ft, or 5000 sq ft for similar uses – *Community Development put a policy in place and will move into Title 17*

Collaborate and plan with tribe(s) upon their request (HB 1717, 2022)

- Invite tribes to countywide planning policies process – *formalize process to do this*
- Upon notice of from tribe, collaborate on Comprehensive Plan – *negotiate parameters*

Allow Urban Growth Area (UGA) swaps of land that has not developed as urban (SB 5593, 2022)

- Cities may request to swap UGA that did not develop for more promising UGA territory – *Community Development has alerted cities; may need to develop review criteria*

Remove limits on unrelated persons living in a single dwelling unit (HB 5235, 2021)

- Use only health and building code limitations unit occupancy (except short term rentals)
- Size caps on definition of "family" no longer allowed – *will need a code change*

Accommodate Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) within UGAs (HB 1337, 2023)

- Allow at least two ADUs (attached or detached) in any single-family zone – *will need to consider impacts on unincorporated UGAs in Comp Plan, and then in zoning code*
- Prohibits several forms of regulations on ADUs – *will need to consider these prohibitions in urban housing policies and in zoning code*

Use objective design standards only (HB 1293, 2023)

- "Character of area" or other soft design standards are disallowed – *will need to make any qualitative design goals and policies objective, and then make corresponding code changes. Particularly need to consider how "rural character" constraints are to be reconciled with this law.*

Climate change/resiliency and environmental justice planning (HB 1181, 2023)

- Consider wildfire risk and environmental justice in land use element – *this is new, but may rely on the county's previous emergency management work*
- New mandatory planning for climate / natural disaster resiliency – *same as above*
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled and plan for multimodal transportation – *The existing Transportation element is already multimodal, but the goals and policies may need updating to reflect a greater emphasis on reducing miles traveled*
- Coordinate with public capital facility owners and public utilities – *Community Development already does this, but may need to document or formalize it more*