



Lewis County 2045

Shaping the Future of Lewis County

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan is a compass that guides growth and development over the next 20-years. The plan serves as a guiding document for local governments' future decision making. The plan addresses many topics including population growth, housing, transportation, infrastructure and utilities, economic development, parks, recreation and open space, rural areas, and protection of natural resource lands. The plan includes goals, objectives, policies, actions, and standards. Lewis County has had a Comprehensive Plan since 1999 and is required by State Law regularly update the plan.

Why does it need to be updated?

State Law requires the Comprehensive Plan be updated every 10 years. It also requires that changes in state law since the last update get incorporated into the plan. The plan must also address changes in local circumstances, such as population growth, and community priorities. Updates ensure Comprehensive Plans remain relevant to the evolving conditions of the jurisdiction, while establishing a collective vision for the next 20 years.

Will the update significantly change the plan?

The most significant changes during this update are related to housing and Critical Areas. The State Growth Management Act (GMA) now requires counties and cities to plan for housing that is affordable for all residents at all economic levels. The Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) will also be updated for consistency with the Best Available Science (BAS). In addition, 2023 state law updates require a "Change and Resiliency Element" be added which will be a new chapter to the Comprehensive Plan.

How does the County use the Comprehensive Plan?

The County uses the Comprehensive Plan to guide local development and capital budget decisions. The goals and policies of the plan will be implemented through changes to zoning designations and development regulations.



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How do the County and City coordinate on the Comprehensive Plan?

Cities and counties are required to coordinate comprehensive plans. Lewis County does this through our Planned Growth Committee. Under the State Growth Management Act (GMA) the state Office of Financial Management (OFM) will develop population projects for the state and each county. The Planned Growth Committee then coordinated to allocate the 20-year population forecast to each city and the county. The population allocations were adopted by the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners in June 2023. Next, Lewis County and the cities use that data to make sure their plans can accommodate the projected growth.

How do the County and Tribes coordinate on the Comprehensive Plan?

Coordination with federally recognized tribes is required and must follow a memorandum of agreement if the tribe(s) elect to participate.

How can I provide input on the draft Comprehensive Plan?

Public engagement events will be held April 2024 through June 2025, as well as online surveys and other options to provide input on the plan. Results of community engagement will be used to make updates to the plan where appropriate. Please check the webpage for dates and locations <https://tinyurl.com/2m9j2cyr>. In addition, residents are welcome to submit written and oral feedback prior to plan adoption. You can submit comments via email to Mindy Brooks, mindy.brooks@lewiscountywa.gov or Community Development, Planning Division 2025 NE Kresky Avenue Chehalis, WA 98532 Attention: Mindy Brooks.

Prior to officially adopting the Comprehensive Plan updates formal public hearings will be held. You can sign up to get notifications by subscribing to the [Lewis County Planning Announcements](#) email list.

What are the biggest changes with respect to land use and zoning?

Elements like land use and housing will be updated for consistency with the GMA. In return, development regulations will be updated to ensure consistency with the updated policy. The biggest changes are likely going to be related to housing within urban growth areas and unincorporated towns like Packwood and Onalaska. As the plan progresses, other big changes will be identified.



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Why is the County studying climate and resilience?

The GMA as amended in 2023 requires Comprehensive Plans include Climate Change and Resiliency goals. The State did this to ensure local governments prepare to adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate. For Lewis County the focus will be goals and policies to improve preparedness, response and recovery associated with natural hazards like flooding and wildfire.

When will the comprehensive plan be complete?

The project is estimated to be completed in June 2025. Between now and June 2025 the project will go through a series of phases with varying levels of community engagement. Visit the project webpage <https://tinyurl.com/2m9j2cyr> to see more details regarding the project timeline and recent events.

When does the plan become official?

The plan will become official after Lewis County Board of County Commissioners approval by June 2025.

Who is involved in the planning process?

County staff and the consultant team will lead the roll out of the planning process. The Lewis County Board of County Commissioners and Planning Commission will also receive regular updates and opportunities to contribute to the plan's content. Technical experts will be engaged on their relevant topics. Community involvement is an important component of the plan. A series of public engagement events will be held for community input, please see the webpage for dates and times <https://tinyurl.com/2m9j2cyr>. In addition, the community is welcome to submit written and oral feedback prior to plan adoption.

What is the difference between a public meeting and a public hearing?

A public meeting is set up to inform, educate, or facilitate extensive interaction and dialogue for citizen participation. A public hearing is an official meeting which allows the public to formally comment on proposed plans and projects before officials make a final decision. Public hearings operate under a set of laws and procedures, all citizens must be permitted to verbally present their views for the official record within their allotted time (usually 3 minutes), or in writing, before the hearing body makes its decision. The Comprehensive Plan update process will include both public meetings and public hearings. Please check the webpage for dates and times <https://tinyurl.com/2m9j2cyr>.



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What is the growth management act?

Originally adopted in 1990 the Growth Management Act (GMA) is a series of state statutes requiring cities and counties to develop a comprehensive plan to manage their population growth. The GMA tools enable counties to protect rural areas and resources lands and direct growth to urban areas where public facilities and services can be provided most efficiently.

Questions?

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