

TO: Mindy Brooks, Community Development Director
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FROM: Erin O’Kelley,
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DATE: January 6, 2025

RE: January 14, 2025, Planning Commission briefing – 2045 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – Existing Conditions

The goal of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update is to address changes in state law since the last update and respond to changing conditions in Lewis County. Since 2017, the population has grown, businesses have come to the county and some businesses have left, housing has been built. Now, the community has the opportunity to look forward and set the direction for the next 10 years.

The Kimley-Horn team is excited to begin sharing the draft Lewis County 2045 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update with the Lewis County Planning Commission on January 14, 2025. This first meeting will be a high-level overview focusing on the following:

- 2025 Project Schedule
- 2023-2024 Project Recap
- Provide a Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update overview including:
 - State law amendments being addressed with project
 - Accommodating population and housing projections
 - Summary of data collection and analysis completed for the project
 - Summary of new climate and resiliency analysis completed for the project
- Answer questions from the Planning Commission
- Discuss next steps

This meeting will set the stage for the discussion at the next two meetings on January 28th and February 11th where we will get into more details.

Getting feedback from the Planning Commission is very important to the project team as we prepare for the upcoming public hearings. We want to ensure that the Lewis County 2045 Comprehensive Plan update reflects the community vision for the future, while achieving the state requirements.

2025 PROJECT SCHEDULE

Keep in mind that the adoption process starts with the Comprehensive Plan goals, policies and maps; then, once those are adopted, the zoning and development regulations that implement the goals and policies are adopted. The following table outlines the proposed 2025 public meeting and hearing schedule for the Lewis County Planning Commission.

Planning Commission Schedule		
January	Workshop Comprehensive Plan Project Overview, Existing Conditions	Tuesday, January 14, 2025
	Workshop Comprehensive Plan Proposed Policies & Implementation	Tuesday, January 28, 2025
February	Workshop Comprehensive Plan Proposed Policies and Implementation	Tuesday, February 11, 2025
	Workshop Onalaska Subarea Plan	Tuesday, February 25, 2025
March	Workshop Packwood Subarea Plan	Tuesday, March 11, 2025
	Hearing Onalaska Subarea Plan	Tuesday, March 25, 2025
April	Hearing Packwood UGA	Tuesday, April 8, 2025
	Hearing Comprehensive Plan	Tuesday, April 22, 2025
May	Workshop Development Regulations Overview and Proposed Changed	Tuesday, May 13, 2025
	Workshop Development Regulations Proposed Changes Continued	Tuesday, May 27, 2025
June	Workshop Critical Areas Overview and Proposed Changed	Tuesday, June 10, 2025
	Hearing Development Regulations	Tuesday, June 24, 2025
July	Hearing Critical Areas Ordinance	Tuesday, July 8, 2025

Starting in May, the Board of County Commissioners will hold public meetings and hearings following a similar schedule to the Planning Commission meetings schedule between January and July. All elements of the Periodic Update – goals, policies, maps, zoning and development regulations – are anticipated to be adopted by the BOCC by September 2025.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Lewis County to update its Comprehensive Plans and implementing development regulations every 10 years ([RCW 36.70A.130](#)). Comprehensive Plans are 20-year policy documents that guide and plan for growth (population and employment), housing, transportation, capital facilities and utilities, parks, recreation and open space, rural areas, and protection of natural resource lands ([RCW 36.70A.070](#)). Lewis County is required to complete the periodic comprehensive plan update by December 30, 2025¹. Comprehensive Plan updates are an opportunity to revise the existing Plan to ensure consistency with state



¹ SB 2296 Extended the deadline for plan review and revision for deadline for Lewis County to December 31, 2025.

laws/case law since the last update and Best Available Science (BAS) for incorporation into critical areas regulations. This update also provides a great opportunity to balance state requirements with community vision to shape the future for Lewis County.

COMMUNITY ENAGEMENT

As of January 2025, the following community engagement events have been completed. Visit the Lewis County project website for details. <https://lewiscountywa.gov/departments/community-development/rezones/comprehensive-plan-and-development-regulation-amendments/comprehensive-plan-periodic-update/>

The following is a summary of the events held to date.

Engagement Type	Engagement Name	Month Completed
Public Meetings	Board of County Commissioners	Ongoing
Public Meetings	Planned Growth Committee	Ongoing
Public Meetings	Planning Commission	Ongoing
Public Meetings	Community Meetings	Ongoing
Survey	Proposed Policies Community-Wide Survey	November 2024
Open House	Present Proposed Policies	October 2024
Open House	Present Proposed Policies	October 2024
Open House	Present Proposed Policies	October 2024
Public Meeting	BOCC and PC Joint Workshop	August 2024
Survey	First Community-Wide Survey	April 2024
Public Meeting	Randle Community Meeting	January 2023
Public Meeting	South Lewis County Community Meeting	December 2023
Public Meeting	Mineral Community Meeting	November 2023
Public Meeting	Salkum Community Meeting	October 2023

The primary themes that have emerged from the public engagement are:

1. **Maintain rural character.** This means containing high density growth, preserving farms, forests and small towns and protecting open spaces and the environment.
2. **Encourage jobs.** This means supporting local, family-owned businesses in rural areas and small towns and encouraging larger-scale development near Interstate 5 and other state highways.
3. **Provide housing options.** This means creating opportunities for different types of housing and reducing the cost-burden on existing homeowners.
4. **Improve public safety.** This means ensuring adequate police, fire and EMS services and providing appropriate transportation and communication infrastructure to support expected growth.
5. **Address natural hazards.** This means reducing the risk to people, property and infrastructure from extreme weather events such as flooding and wildfire.



These themes are infused throughout the goals, policies and maps that will be presented to the Planning Commission over the next three meetings. It is our goal to help the community see where their vision for the future is addressed in the Lewis County 2045 Comprehensive Plan.