

TO: Mindy Brooks, Community Development Director
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FROM: Erin O’Kelley,
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DATE: January 28, 2025

RE: January 28, 2025, Planning Commission briefing – 2045 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – Existing Conditions

The Lewis County Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year plan. It sets the policy direction for future growth (jobs/economic development, housing, population), protection of critical areas and both rural and resource (agricultural, forest, and mineral) lands, and planning transportation, capital facilities, and utilities needed to support growth.

The comprehensive plan is updated every 10 years. The update process is referred to as a periodic comprehensive plan update. This update extends the planning horizon out to 2045. The primary goals of the periodic update to:

- Engage the community and update policies consistent with the local vision for growth
- Plan for housing, population, and employment out to 2045
- Update policies and regulations consistent with state law changes/case law since the last periodic comprehensive plan update
- Update critical area regulations consistent with new Best Available Science (BAS)

The updated comprehensive plan must be consistent with state law and regional policies, which are shared between the county and cities within the county. These are called Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). Adopted policies in the comprehensive plan are implemented in a number of different ways. For example, it can occur through development regulations, coordination with partner organizations to meet regional goals, or through the capital facility planning, just to name a few.

As part of the 2025-2045 periodic comprehensive plan update, we are developing an implementation chapter. This chapter will help ensure that the future goals of the county, expressed through policy, have an implementation mechanism. This should also assist the community, planning commission, and Board of County Commissioners understand will happen after the Plan is adopted.

The Kimley-Horn team is excited to lead this briefing on January 28th as part of a series of briefings to present the updates to Lewis County’s Comprehensive Plan.

Meeting Materials and Preparation

In preparation for the meeting, it is recommended that the Planning Commission review the existing Comprehensive Plan on the website and the policy changes summary boards presented at the open house in October 2024.

[Lewis County 2021 Comprehensive Plan](#) – Review the [Capital Facilities, Transportation, Economic Development](#) Elements

[Summary of Policy Changes Posters October 2024](#)

January 28th Meeting Agenda Lewis County Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update:

- Recap of August PC and BOCC workshop
- Overview of the new climate element requirements
- Engagement results related to climate, resiliency, emergency, facilities, transportation, economic development
- Climate element analysis and results
- New draft climate, resiliency, and emergency preparedness policies
- Updates to transportation, infrastructure and capital facilities policies
- Updates to the economic development policies
- Implementation – How will we get this done?

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.

Previous and Upcoming Meetings on this Topic

If you missed the meeting on January 11th, you can visit the Lewis County Planning Commission website for the meeting minutes and the January 11th presentation and memo. Another briefing regarding the changes to the Comprehensive Plan as part of the periodic update

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 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 ENGAGEMENT

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->

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

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.