

Planning Commission Workshop



Community Development • 125 NW Chehalis Avenue, Chehalis, WA 98532 • Phone: (360) 740-1146

STAFF REPORT

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE

Date: March 7, 2025

Staff: Mindy Brooks, Director

BACKGROUND

Planning Commissioner received the Internal Review Draft Comprehensive Plan on February 14 and were asked to review the document and provide questions to staff by February 28. In addition, staff provided presentations that summarized the significant changes to the Comprehensive Plan at workshops on January 14, January 28 and February 25. The following questions and answers are provided as follow up. The next meeting will be on March 11 and will be the last workshop before public hearings begin.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Please provide an example of promoting the natural environment over built environment, located in the rural element.

In the rural areas most of the land is intended to remain undeveloped. Lot sizes, typically five acres or larger, are intended to remain mostly open, or natural, and free of structures, which is the built environment. This is one of the key strategies for preserving rural character, which is the highest priority identified by the community. Because the Lewis County Code already conforms to this policy, there will be no changes proposed to implement this policy. Lewis County will maintain large lot sizes and allow uses that are compatible with rural character such as single-family homes, barns and shops, as well as farming and forestry.

2. Are we suggesting eliminating the density bonus?

There will be no anticipated changes to the existing density bonus, also known as clustering.

3. Have we considered transfer of development rights code?

Yes, transfer of development rights (TDRs) have been considered in the past. However, those will not be considered as part of implementation during Periodic Update because there is not enough staffing resource to inventory and identified potential receiving sites and set up a program to track sellers and buyers of density. This can be added to the list of next steps once Periodic Update is finished.

4. What is an example of considering cultural assets in neighborhood design?

Some properties are identified by the state Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation as having significant historic and cultural resources, or assets. Those resources are considered during Master Site Review to ensure they are protected from development. There will be no changes proposed to the development regulations to implement this policy.

5. While it is important to focus housing near facilities, rural communities like Packwood need housing as well. Can we make sure rural housing is a priority?

Yes. H 2.4 and the LAMIRD policies focus on housing in rural areas. This is a high priority for Lewis County and one of the reason for the Packwood Subarea Plan. The county is also working at the state level to push for legislation that supports rural housing in LAMIRDs.

6. If there was funding, would the County collaborate with local nonprofits toward the goal of affordable housing?

To the extent that Lewis County can obtain state or federal funding to support subsidized housing, then yes the County would collaborate with partners in identifying housing needs.

NEXT STEPS

March 11 will be the final workshop on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. Staff will focus the presentation on land use and housing, as requested by the commissioners. Staff will also review proposed zoning changes.

The public hearing will begin on March 25, focusing on Onalaska, continue to April 8, focusing on Packwood, and continuing to April 22, focusing on the rest of the Comprehensive Plan goals, policies and zoning changes. Following close of the hearing, the Planning Commission will deliberate and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners.

Public notice was posted in the legal newspaper of record on March 5 and individual notices will be sent to properties owner with proposed zoning changes on March 10. All proposals are on the webpage for the community to review. Testimony may be provided from March 5 through 4:00pm on April 21, as well as at each of the hearings. Questions should be directed to Mindy Brooks at mindy.brooks@lewiscountywa.gov or 360-740-2610.

<https://lewiscountywa.gov/departments/community-development/rezones/comprehensive-plan-and-development-regulation-amendments/comprehensive-plan-periodic-update/>