



DOUGLAS COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - 2026 PERIODIC UPDATE

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

REVISED OCTOBER, 2024



Introduction and Purpose

Douglas County is undertaking a periodic review of its Comprehensive Plan as required by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) under Chapter 36.70A RCW. The GMA is composed of a series of statutes, first adopted in 1990, requiring fast-growing cities and counties to develop a comprehensive plan to manage population growth while protecting rural and resource lands.

GMA requires each Comprehensive Plan be reviewed and revised if needed on a 10-year schedule established by the Legislature. The review ensures that the County's Comprehensive Plan stays current with changes in laws and rules, remains consistent with other plans and regulations, and is responsive to changed circumstances, new information, and improved data. The County is undertaking this task in conjunction with the 2026 periodic update of its Comprehensive Plan, which plans for growth out to the year 2046.

The purpose of this public participation plan (PPP) is to define the variety of methods, both those employed to date and to occur during the update process, to encourage and solicit public and stakeholder engagement in the Douglas County 2026 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. It is designed to provide the community and stakeholders with diverse and meaningful opportunities for engagement. It specifically targets the County's current demographics and includes a variety of ways to consult and collaborate with them. Understanding what stakeholders' concerns are and the aspirations they hold for themselves, and their community are essential to the success of the update. A successful public participation plan should create a sense of community ownership that will ultimately result in an improved, supported, and sustainable Comprehensive Plan.

Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.040 and RCW 36.70A.140, staff has prepared this draft Public Participation Plan for the Board of County Commissioners to review and approve, and as amended, the written procedures will provide effective, early, and continuous public participation throughout the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations update process from all geographic, ethnic, and economic areas. The procedures shall provide for:

- (a) The broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives.
- (b) The opportunity for written comments.
- (c) Public hearings after effective notice.
- (d) Open discussions, communications programs, and information services.
- (e) Consideration of public comments.

Community feedback will help guide the formation of draft goals and policies and to guide the physical development of the County for the next twenty years as required by GMA. that will be considered by the Planning Commission and ultimately the Board of County Commissioners for adoption. This plan is a working document and will be adjusted as needed to provide for the

deepest and broadest public participation that is feasible over the course of the periodic review and update process.

1.0 Public Participation Goals

- Provide interested parties with timely information, an understanding of the process, and multiple opportunities to review and comment on proposed amendments to the Plan.
- Build trust between community members and County staff.
- Strive for understanding and respect, not agreement.
- Ensure that historically underrepresented groups are encouraged to participate in the planning process.
- Implement a resident engagement strategy that supports environmental justice and the goals of the Growth Management Act.
- Actively solicit information from residents, tribes, property owners, business owners, and other stakeholders about their concerns, questions, and priorities for the periodic review process.
- Ensure that all stakeholders have an equitable opportunity to participate collaboratively in Douglas County's planning process' core steps and policy creation & implementation efforts.
- Encourage interested parties to informally review and comment on proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan throughout the process and provide those comments to the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.
- Provide forums for formal public input at project milestones prior to decision-making by local officials.
- Consult and consider recommendations from Tribal entities and public agencies.

2.0 Ensuring Equitable Engagement

While the County hopes to hear from a broad range of community members and stakeholders, certain groups will require additional engagement efforts or unique approaches. The intention is to have a range of engaged community members who broadly represent the interests and needs of all the diverse communities in Douglas County. The following approaches may be utilized to focus on these community members with the goal of including a more representative percentage of them in the engagement process:

- Utilizing a variety of opportunities for engagement both in person (at a variety of locations) and remotely accessible;
- Offering an array of opportunities and methods for providing feedback and engaging with other community members;
- Utilizing awareness campaigns such as posting flyers or tabling in areas frequented by these groups;
- Providing information in Spanish;

- Focusing website posts towards groups that traditionally have not participated in planning processes;
- Offering presentations or discussions to organizations focusing on serving or working with these groups.

3.0 Public Participation Opportunities

Douglas County is committed to providing multiple opportunities for public participation throughout the process and will use a variety of communication tools to inform the public and encourage participation, including the efforts listed below. The County’s Public Information Officer (PIO) or designee will be involved in all aspects of public outreach and information dissemination for the project, including social media posts, press releases, and others.

3.1 Interactive and Online Engagement

The project will have an interactive online engagement component, enhancing the menu of options for community members to engage with the project.

- **Project Website:** The County’s website includes a periodic review webpage where interested parties can access and review status updates, draft documents, official notices, minutes, and other project information. It can be found at: <https://www.douglascountywa.net/684/Douglas-County-2046-Comprehensive-Plan-U>. The webpage will include a link to the project’s online Open House webpage and Story Map (see below).
- **Online Open House/Interactive Website:** The consultant team will build an interactive website that will serve as the central repository for project information, project surveys and ways to engage during different phases of the project. The website will include an interactive component, known as a story map, to tell the story about the Comprehensive Plan through maps, text and multimedia. This will be the primary repository of all information related to the periodic review process, including draft documents, project schedule, official notices, and other pertinent information. The page will include links to resources and an email link for questions and comments. Email blasts will be used as the primary marketing strategy to direct community members to project and event information, sign up for updates, or to engage with the project.
- **Story Map:** The story map will present interactive narratives to engage users, solicit feedback, and provide instantly accessible geographic context to the project. Story maps serve as effective tools for reaching wide audiences who may not have time to attend meetings. This platform creates engaging presentations that make it easier to publicly share information and solicit feedback on proposed recommendations.

3.2-Social Media and Project E-Newsletters

- Project information, including upcoming events and release of draft documents, will be shared and disseminated on social media by the PIO. Active accounts include Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn.
- Project-based content for newsletters, articles, and/or e-mail updates will be provided to communicate project-meeting information and milestones.

Note: County staff will be responsible for information distribution and will coordinate with the consultant team on the preparation of materials.

3.3 Noticing

Public notification will comply with County and State requirements and will be provided through a variety of platforms including legal notices in local newspapers, press releases, the County website (periodic review web page), flyers, postcard mailings, and an email distribution list which will be maintained by the County's Land Services Department. The email list will be created specifically for the Comprehensive Plan Update and will be used to notify interested parties regarding periodic review progress and participation opportunities, including open houses, surveys, Planning Commission meetings, and others. Interested parties can be added to the list by contacting Swati Rastogi, Principal Planner at: srastogi@co.douglas.wa.us

3.4 Workshop / Open House Events

Plan Introduction.

Workshop/open house events will be hosted in different locations in the County to introduce the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update project. Although the format has yet to be determined, these events will provide an opportunity to discuss state requirements and allow community members and stakeholders to share their concerns and priorities. Participants will have an opportunity to speak with County officials on a one-to-one basis and submit comment forms during the open houses. The tentative Comprehensive Plan 2026 Periodic Update timeline (see 6.0 below) anticipates a minimum of two (2) in-person open houses early in the process (2024), with a minimum of two additional open house events early spring 2025.

Release of Draft Plan Elements.

A second series of open house events may occur following the release of the Draft Periodic Update. The workshops/open houses will provide details and highlights of the draft plan and revisions from previous drafts. There will also be opportunities for questions and answers, education on specific topics, and opportunities for comments, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.140. Public comments received during the open house events will be posted on the periodic review webpage and the interactive open house website. All comments received will be evaluated and the resulting analysis, along with alternative and potential solutions, will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for recommended modifications. The tentative

Comprehensive Plan 2026 Periodic Update schedule anticipates a minimum of two (2) in-person open houses upon the release of the draft Comprehensive Plan.

3.5 Community Surveys (ArcGIS Survey 123)

One or more GIS-linked community surveys will be prepared by the consulting team for review and distribution by the County. The interactive website will serve as a repository for the surveys. A link to the surveys will be posted on the project website and shared by email, social media, and other methods. The surveys will also be made available in paper format and translated into Spanish if needed. The surveys will focus on Comprehensive Plan elements, such as housing, climate change, and land use. Individual communities will have the opportunity to use the surveys to provide targeted community specific comments. Surveys will also have a mapping functionality component, where communities will have the opportunity to place comments on a map.

3.6 Joint Planning Commission / Board of County Commissioner Workshops

Two (2) joint workshops with the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners are tentatively proposed. The first workshop will occur early in the process to provide an overview of the project, state requirements and address questions and concerns. The second workshop will occur following the release of the draft Plan amendments.

3.7 Tribal Engagement

Native American Tribal entities will be invited by the County to participate and inform the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and development of goal and policy revisions. The County will coordinate with each tribe wishing to engage participate to discuss how they want to engage in the process. If tribes decline to participate due to capacity constraints or other issues, the County will share updates and continue to invite input in other ways.

3.8 Community Events

Contingent on staffing availability, County representatives will reach out to local event organizers and community organizations to disseminate information and possibly attend events, such as the North Central Washington Fair, Apple Blossom Festival, Classy Chassis Parade and Car Show, farmers markets and others. Where appropriate, written materials will be translated in Spanish.

3.9 Public Comment Periods, Public Meetings and Hearings

- The Planning Commission will be the primary forum for detailed review and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. The Planning Commission will conduct a public comment period and at least one public hearing to solicit input on the periodic review.
- County staff will coordinate with the Department of Commerce on public notification of comment periods and hearings.
- Public notice of all hearings will specify the date, time, and location of any public hearing. Notices will be published per official policy and comply with all other legal requirements such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. Notices will be posted on the County's website,

published in local newspapers and distributed via email and social media. County staff will provide copies of notices to the Department of Commerce.

3.10 News media, Mailings, and other Communications

- The local news media and legal newspapers will be kept up to date on the periodic review process and receive copies of all official notices and press releases.
- In addition to electronic forms of communication (website, email, social media), information will be distributed in paper format via postcard mailers, flyers and posters.
- Information directed to Spanish speakers, such as postcard mailings, surveys and brochures, will be made available in Spanish.
- Community forums and meetings will also have a Spanish-speaking interpreter (if required) to assist those who need help understanding the process, and to answer any questions.

3.11 Ongoing Comment

All documents under consideration will be available on the periodic review webpage and available for review at the County's Land Services Department. Interested parties will be encouraged to provide comments by letter or email. All comments will be compiled and provided to the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. The consultant team will develop and maintain a comment matrix spreadsheet throughout the project.

4.0 Stakeholders

The County will provide targeted outreach to the following stakeholders to provide information on the periodic review process and encourage participation:

- Chambers of Commerce
- Housing Authority of Chelan County and the City of Wenatchee
- Link Transit
- County residents / property owners
- Fire Departments
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hospital Districts
- Incorporated and unincorporated communities (Bridgeport, East Wenatchee, Rock Island, Coulee Dam, Mansfield, Waterville, Orondo, Douglas)
- Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority
- School Districts
- Tribal entities
- Utility providers
- Washington Department of Ecology
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Washington State Department of Commerce

- Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Community groups
- *Others identified by the County*

5.0 Public Engagement Summaries

Results of public engagement efforts will be made available in summary form at different stages throughout the project. This will include results of survey responses, matrix of written comments received, input obtained during community events and meetings, indicator mapping – including a summary of map-based survey feedback, technical memo(s), indicator (heat or other cartographic) maps, word clouds and scoring methodologies. Engagement results will be used to inform Comprehensive Plan Elements. A comprehensive summary of all public engagement activities will be incorporated into the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.

6.0 General Timeline

The following is a general timeline including anticipated public participation opportunities.

	Activity	Description	Task Lead
2024			
Sept	Public Engagement Plan (PPP)	Update and revise PPP (to be further updated as needed)	Consultants
	County project web page	Set up and maintain project webpage on County website	County
	Interactive website / Open House/ Story Map	Develop interactive web features utilizing ArcGIS StoryMap platform	Consultants
October	Email distribution list	Establish email distribution list	County
	Press release	Issue press release launching project	County?
	Initiate Tribal engagement	Formal invitation letter to Tribes*	Consultant to compose letters. Verified and mailed by County.
	Web page	Post updates, new materials	County (Consultant to provide materials)
	Initial outreach materials	Brochure, flyer, FAQ, postcard, other	Consultants to provide as needed
	Interactive website / Open House/ Story Map	Publish/post StoryMap – Introducing Comprehensive Plan process	Consultants
	Stakeholder outreach	Targeted email to stakeholders	County
November/ December	Community Open House events on November 14 th	City of Bridgeport and Town of Mansfield	County with consultant support.

			<i>Note: County will provide public noticing and make venue arrangements.</i>
	Tribal outreach	Follow-up on tribal invitation letters as needed	County with consultant support as needed.
	Final initial outreach materials	Finalize and distribute initial outreach materials	Consultants (County to post and distribute on County website)
2025			
January	Community survey	Post / distribute interactive survey with GIS mapping. Spanish translation	Consultants
	County Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	Open house announcements. Distribute info/links via postcard mailer, email, website, press release, other	County with consultant support
	Interactive website / Open House/ Story Map	Open house announcements. Distribute info/links via postcard mailer, email, website, press release, other	Consultants
	Tribal outreach	Tribal outreach as needed	County
	Stakeholder outreach	Stakeholder outreach as needed	County
February			
	Joint BOCC/PC Workshop	Workshop: Overview / discussion of Comprehensive Plan elements, required updates (Feb 10 th or 17 th)	County staff with consultant support
	Community survey	Close survey	Consultant
	Tribal outreach	As needed	County
	Stakeholder outreach	As needed	County
	Community events	Staff attendance at farmers markets, festivals, and other community events as appropriate	County
	County Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	Post updates, new materials	County with consultant support
	Interactive website / Open House/ Story Map	Post updates, new materials and features as needed	Consultants
March	Survey	Release results of survey and GIS mapping	Consultants

	Community Open House	TBD – City of Waterville	County staff with consultant support
	Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	Project updates as needed	County with consultant support
	Planning Commission	Planning Commission update / policy discussion	County
	Community events	Staff attendance at farmers markets, festivals and other events as appropriate	County
	Data reports/Technical Memo's	Release of draft reports (HNA, Middle Housing, Future Land Use Map(s), other)	Consultant
	Tribal outreach	As needed	County
	Stakeholder outreach	As needed	County
	Community events	Attendance at farmers markets, festivals, and other community events as appropriate	County
	April	Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	Project updates as needed
Interactive website / Open House/ Story Map		Post updates, new materials and features as needed	Consultant
BOCC		BOCC update/data presentation/policy discussion (April 7 or 14 th – Tentative)	County with consultant support
Community events		Attendance at farmers markets, festivals, and other community events as appropriate	County
Data reports/Technical Memo's		Release of draft data reports if applicable	Consultants
May	Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	Project updates as needed	County with consultant support
	Interactive website / Open House/ Story Map	Post updates, new materials and features as needed	Consultants
	BOCC	BOCC update/data presentation / policy discussion (As needed)	County
	Community events	Attendance at farmers markets, festivals, and other events as appropriate	County
	Tribal outreach	As needed	County
	Stakeholder outreach	As needed	County
	Data reports/technical memo's	Provision of draft data reports if applicable	Consultants

June	Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	Project updates as needed	County with consultant support
	Interactive website / Open House/ Story Map	Post updates, new materials and features as needed	Consultants
	BOCC	BOCC update/policy discussion (As needed)	County
	Community events	Attendance at farmers markets, festivals, and other community events as appropriate	County
	Tribal outreach	As needed	County
	Stakeholder outreach	As needed	County
July	Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	Project updates as needed	County with consultant support
	Interactive website / Open House/ Story Map	Post updates, new materials and features as needed	Consultants
	BOCC	BOCC update/policy discussion (As needed)	County with consultant support as needed
	Community events	Attendance at farmers markets, festivals, and other community events as appropriate	County
	Tribal outreach	As needed	County
	Stakeholder outreach	As needed	County
August	Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	Project updates as needed	County with consultant support
	Interactive website / Open House/ Story Map	Post updates, new materials and features as needed	Consultants
	Community events	Attendance at farmers markets, festivals, and other community events as appropriate	County
	BOCC	BOCC update/policy discussion (As needed)	County with consultant support as needed
	Tribal outreach	As needed	County
	Stakeholder outreach	As needed	County
September	Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	Project updates as needed	County with consultant support
	BOCC	BOCC update/policy discussion (As needed)	County with consultant support as needed

	Community events	Attendance at farmers markets, festivals and other community events as appropriate	County
	Tribal outreach	As needed	County
	Stakeholder outreach	As needed	County
October	Draft Periodic Update Release	Public release of Draft Plan. Coordinate with Dept. of Commerce regarding state review and hearing dates	Consultants
	Public engagement summary report and comment matrix of written comments received to date.	Release of report on public engagement efforts to date	Consultants
	Web page, social media, media, e-newsletter	Issue press release, web page updates, distribute links	County with consultant support
	Outreach materials	Update FAQ, brochures, other	Consultants
	Tribal outreach	Send notification, coordinate meetings as requested	County
	Stakeholder outreach	Send notification, coordinate presentations	County
November	BOCC/PC Joint Workshop	Presentation/overview of Comp. Plan Periodic Update (revisions)	County with consultant support
	Open house events	Up to 2 open house events to present and evaluate draft plan goals and policies.	Consultants
	Environmental review	Issue SEPA determination, public review period	Consultants to prepare DNS. County to issue public notice and publish in SEPA register.
	Tribal outreach	Coordination as needed on draft plan	County
	Stakeholder outreach	Outreach as needed on draft plan.	County
	Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	Updates as needed. Post SEPA comment period dates, hearing dates (if known)	County with consultant support
December	SEPA Comment Period (30 days)	Compile, document comments	TBD
	Webpage, social media, e-newsletter updates	As appropriate	County with consultant support
2026			

January	State review	60-day review by the Department of Commerce	County to submit
	Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	As needed. Post public hearing dates	County with consultant support
February	BOCC	Public Hearing	County with consultant support
	Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	As needed	County with consultant support
March	BOCC	Tentative: Continuation of Public Hearing	County with consultant support
	Web page, social media, e-newsletter updates	As needed	County with consultant support
	Public engagement summary update, comment matrix update	Final report on public engagement efforts	Consultants
April	BOCC Commissioners	Adoption meeting (option to hold separate public hearing)	County
May	State submittal	Submittal of final periodic update to the Dept. of Commerce	County
June	State deadline (June 30 th)		

*Set up recurring meetings as requested with Native American Tribal entities, stakeholders, and others.