

# THURSTON



# 2045

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**



**Community Planning & Economic Development**  
Community Planning Division

**March 1, 2023**

# Thurston 2045

## Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update Public Participation Plan



### INTRODUCTION

Thurston County is starting a multi-year review of its comprehensive plan, also known as the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, which is due in June of 2025. “Thurston 2045” will set the vision for Thurston County’s next 20 years. Communities planning under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) are required to periodically update their comprehensive plan and development regulations to bring them up to date with:

- Changes to state law,
- Land use changes,
- Population growth projections, and
- Housing projections.

**This document lays out a plan for public engagement with the citizens of Thurston County during this periodic update.**

The Comprehensive Plan was first adopted in 1975 and set the stage for an introduction of countywide zoning and policies for economic development, public services, and natural resource and environmental protection, in a period of very high population growth.

The plan guides:

- Future land use,
- Housing,
- Economic development,
- Population growth,
- Employment growth,
- Natural resource protection,
- County-funded construction projects,
- Development over the next 20 years, and

- Specialized plans (joint plans for urban growth areas, subarea plans, functional plans).

The update to the plan is expected to continue now through June 2025, with multiple phases that will include public input along each step of the way.



## WHO IS INVOLVED

The update will be a county-wide effort that endeavors to engage with a broad and inclusive range of stakeholders and communities, including the cities, tribes, residents, neighborhood and community groups, cultural organizations, business stakeholders, advocacy organization and other public and private agencies. Public participation is an integral part of the planning process and includes multiple opportunities for interested community members to meet with the project team, connect with your neighbors, and share ideas for the future.

Early and continuous public participation through a variety of different methods brings different viewpoints and values into the decision-making process and enables the county to make more informed decisions. These collaborative efforts build mutual understanding and trust between the county and the public they serve.

Community Planning recognizes that policy and planning decisions about land use, transportation, environmental resources and capital facilities do not impact us all in the same way. Community Planning wants to prioritize engagement with community members who have historically been left out of public planning processes, such as renters, people living with disabilities, immigrants, and BIPOC-led organizations, with the hope that the resulting Plan is well-grounded in the experiences and knowledge of a wider range of public perspectives than has historically been achieved.

As resources allow, materials may be translated into the most commonly spoken non English language(s) in the County, per census data.

By incorporating a more diverse range of public voices, staff can provide a richer and fuller context to elected officials as they make decisions.

**The goal of this Public Participation Plan is to provide all residents, property owners, business owners, and other stakeholders, an opportunity to understand and participate in the Comprehensive Plan update process.**

## OBJECTIVES

Thurston County Community Planning wants to hear from the community about what is important to them. To do that, we will provide multiple ways for the community to learn about and comment on the update:

- Seek input on and ideas about how the county should grow over the next 20 years with a variety of tools, tailored to the needs and opportunities during each phase of the update including surveys, open houses and workshops.
- Seek input through written and oral comments and in-person feedback at meetings from a broad range of individuals and community groups.
- Solicit feedback early in the update process through a survey, and at strategic points throughout the process at open houses, workshops, and open public meetings.
- Provide information that is accessible, inclusive and easily understandable for a diverse audience.
- Focus community input around targeted update tasks.
- Provide information to help the public understand the laws and regulations that shape Comprehensive Planning and the update process.
- Ensure elected officials and staff are aware of and understand community viewpoints and concerns that relate to the Comprehensive Plan update.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Thurston County Community Planning will provide several opportunities for the public to participate, provide comment, and learn about the Comprehensive Plan Update.

## SURVEYS

Community Planning may use surveys to collect feedback from the community about the update and what they consider the biggest priorities for the community over the next 20 years.

### **WRITTEN COMMENTS**

Written comments will be accepted by mail or email throughout the update process to [thurston2045@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:thurston2045@co.thurston.wa.us). There will be a minimum of two specified comment periods prior to public hearings held with the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners (BoCC).

### **COMMUNITY GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

County staff will reach out to a variety of community groups and stakeholders including property owners, residents, environmentalists, builders, realtors, and others to provide background information on the update, gather input, or give presentations focused on specific topics or the general project. Outreach will also be done to other government agencies such as neighboring jurisdictions, and other governments, such as Tribal governments.

### **WORKSHOPS AND OPEN HOUSES**

The County will hold open houses in addition to required public hearings to provide background information and receive comments and feedback from property owners, residents and stakeholders in the area. Open Houses with general information on the update drafts may be scheduled to precede public hearings. Workshops and open houses may be in-person, virtual, or both.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS**

The County will hold a series of work sessions with the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is a nine-member advisory board to the Board of County Commissioners representing the interests of the citizenry and community.

Regular Planning Commission meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays of every month at 6:30 pm in person at 3000 Pacific Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501, Board Meeting Room 110, or virtually.

Planning Commission meetings may be scheduled for additional times and locations as needed during the update. All Planning Commission meetings are open to the public. Recordings will be available on the 2045 webpage as they are available.

## **BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER WORK SESSIONS**

Work sessions with the Board of County Commissioners will be available to the public to watch. Recordings will be available on the 2045 webpage as they are available.

The public may contact the Board of County Commissioners directly through email, or by commenting during regular Board of County Commissioner meetings which are held on Tuesday's at 2:00 PM in person at The Atrium at 3000 Pacific Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501, Board Meeting Room 110.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

The County will hold a minimum of two public hearings during the update process: one with the Planning Commission and one with the Board of County Commissioners. Both oral and written comments will be accepted at hearings.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH METHODS**

Thurston County Community Planning will use a variety of methods to conduct public outreach on the Comprehensive Plan Update and ensure a broad and diverse population has been informed of their opportunity to participate.

## **PROJECT SPECIFIC WEBPAGE**

Maintain a [web page](#) dedicated to the Comprehensive Plan update that includes draft documents, maps, scope of work, meeting times and locations, staff contact information, information on how to submit comments, and recorded meetings as they become available.

## **FACT SHEET**

Community Planning will maintain a fact sheet that provides a simple overview of the project and can be placed throughout the community. Informational fact sheets will be translated into Spanish and Vietnamese, the two most common languages other than English in Thurston County.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Submit posts on the County and Community Planning social media accounts to inform of open houses, workshops and public hearing times and locations, and other notices.

## **MEDIA RELEASES**

Issue press releases and advertise public meetings in the newspaper of record. Encourage coverage of the update via a variety of media outlets, including *The Olympian*, *Nisqually Valley News*, *Thurston Talk*, and TCTV.

## **EMAIL NOTICE TO INTERESTED PARTIES**

Maintain a list of interested members of the public and stakeholders who will be notified of meetings and other information related to the update process via email.

## **NOTICE BOARDS**

Post public notices identifying public hearing times and locations, as well as information on how to provide comment. Also post informational sheets on notice boards at a variety of locations such as schools, post offices, libraries, and neighborhood stores.

## **GENERAL PROJECT TIMELINE**

The Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) will approve a scope of work for updating the Comprehensive Plan. Following that, the update will follow the legislative process and include strategic opportunities for public engagement.

### **Phase 1    *Scoping the Update***

*November 2022 - March 2023*

Thurston County Community Planning will conduct outreach to the community on important updates to the Comprehensive Plan that will set the vision for Thurston County over the next twenty years. Following outreach, Community Planning may refine scope of work options and will then present public input and options for the scope of the Comprehensive Plan update to the BoCC. Once the BoCC provides direction on scope and scale for the Comprehensive Plan update, it will be adopted formally by resolution.

### **Public Involvement Opportunities**

### **Through These Methods**

- Info on Project Webpage
- Social media
- Webmail
- Survey
- Presentation to the BoCC on options for scope of the update
- Comments via mail and email
- Survey Report

## **Phase 2** *Initial Outreach and Internal Review*

*March 2023 - March 2024*

Community Planning staff will seek early input from the public, community groups, and interested parties on pieces of the comprehensive plan that are under review. Staff will review planning documents and development regulations for GMA compliance consistent with the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work and will prepare initial draft documents.

Public Involvement Opportunities	Through These Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Info on Project Webpage</li> <li>• Public Open Houses to introduce update, opportunities for input, and challenges for development</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Thurston 2045 Photo Contest (through Facebook and Instagram)</li> <li>• Meetings on proposed updates to community and stakeholder groups</li> <li>• Stakeholder outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting summaries</li> <li>• Open House and online comment forms</li> <li>• Comments via mail and email</li> </ul>

## **Phase 3** *Planning Commission Review*

*March - September 2024*

Proposed revisions will be reviewed by the Thurston County Planning Commission, and a recommendation made to the BoCC, following a duly noticed public hearing. All Planning Commission meetings are open to the public.

Public Involvement Opportunities	Through These Methods
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- Info on Project Webpage
- Open House(s), online and/or in-person
- Social media
- Presentations to interested community and stakeholder groups providing an overview of the draft plan
- Draft plan available online and in county offices for public review and comment
- Presentations to Planning Commission, work sessions and hearing(s)
- Open House and online comment forms
- Comments via mail and email
- Meeting summaries
- Public testimony

#### **Phase 4** *BoCC Review and Adoption*

*September 2024 - June 2025*

Planning Commission recommendations on the update will be reviewed by the BoCC. Final revisions will be adopted by resolution and ordinance of the BoCC, following a duly noticed public hearing. This phase includes a required 60-day notice of Adoption to the Department of Commerce, as well as review and comment periods required under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The Comprehensive Plan update is due under state law by June 30, 2025.

<b>Public Involvement Opportunities</b>	<b>Through These Methods</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Info on Project Webpage</li> <li>• Open House(s), online and/or in-person</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Presentations to BoCC, work sessions and hearing(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments via mail and email</li> <li>• Public testimony</li> </ul>

Errors in exact compliance with this specific public participation program shall not constitute grounds for invalidation of any comprehensive plan amendment,

development regulation, or other legislation adopted under this chapter so long as the spirit of the procedures is observed, unless otherwise provided by state or federal law.