

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON

IN THE MATTER OF ESTABLISHING A
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AND
PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE FOR THE
2025 PERIODIC UPDATE OF THE
ISLAND COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN

RESOLUTION NO. C-64 -23
PLG-010-23

WHEREAS, Island County conducts planning activities in accordance with Chapter 36.70 RCW, the Planning Enabling Act; and

WHEREAS, the planning process and the Island County Comprehensive Plan are further governed by Chapter 36.70A RCW, the Growth Management Act (GMA); and

WHEREAS, in order to comply with Chapters 36.70 and 36.70A RCW, Island County adopted its Comprehensive Plan on September 29, 1998 by Ordinance C-123-98, with an effective date of December 1, 1998; and

WHEREAS, The GMA requires counties and cities to periodically update their comprehensive plans and development regulations (RCW 36.70A.130(5)). Island County last completed a periodic update in 2016; and Island County must complete an update by June 30, 2025; and

WHEREAS, RCW 36.70A.140 requires cities and counties planning under the GMA to establish and broadly disseminate to the public a public participation program identifying procedures providing for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans; and

WHEREAS, Island County Planning and Community Development created a Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule to address RCW 36.70A.140; and

WHEREAS, the Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule adheres to the timelines established by RCW 36.70A130(5)(b) and Ordinance C-79-12; and

WHEREAS, the Island County Planning Commission held a public hearing and recommended approval of the Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule on September 25, 2023; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Island County Commissioners directs the Department of Planning and Community Development to implement and adhere to the Island County Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule, attached hereto as exhibit A, and the Findings of Fact approved by the Planning Commission, attached hereto as Exhibit B.

ADOPTED this 10th day of October, 2023.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

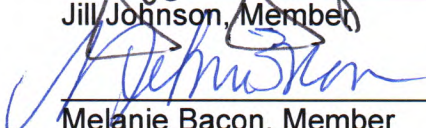




Janet St. Clair, Chair

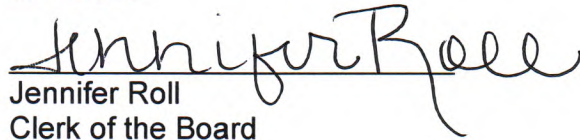


Jill Johnson, Member



Melanie Bacon, Member

ATTEST:



Jennifer Roll
Clerk of the Board

EXHIBIT A

Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule



Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update Public Participation Plan

Introduction

Island County is conducting a periodic update to its comprehensive plan, due by June 30, 2025. Throughout the process of updating the comprehensive plan, the public will be encouraged to participate and help shape growth in the county over the next 20 years. This Public Participation Plan ensures early, continuous, and inclusive public participation, as required by Washington State Law (RCW 36.70A).

Comprehensive Plan Overview

The Growth Management Act (GMA) was passed in Washington State in 1990 to help local jurisdictions manage their growth. The GMA requires periodic updates of comprehensive plans to comply with changes to state law, changes to land use, and updated population growth, housing, and employment projections. A comprehensive plan generally guides growth in the county for a 20-year period and the land use decisions made in a comprehensive plan have long-term effects. During an update, the public has an opportunity to provide input on how and where growth should occur which will help shape how their communities may look in the future.

Goals of the Public Participation Plan

- Ensure broad participation, solicit input from diverse stakeholders, and ensure that no single group or interest dominates the process.
- Maintain and establish meaningful relationships with partner municipalities, organizations, and groups through continuous direct outreach and coordination.
- Provide equitable opportunities for public participation in each of the four Island County planning areas (North Whidbey, Central Whidbey, South Whidbey, and Camano Island).
- Focus resources on soliciting input on elements of the update process likely to be of greatest interest/impact to the public.
- Make use of in-person and online communication technologies to efficiently distribute information and create multiple opportunities for engagement.
- Transparently and proactively share information with the public about all opportunities to provide input including meetings, hearings, surveys, workshops, legislative actions, etc.

Communications Principles and Tactics

The following principles will guide the County's public outreach efforts:

- Public outreach should be intentional and specific, making it easy for individuals to engage.
- Public outreach should be equitable to meet the differing needs of different audiences.
- Public outreach should be iterative, clearly stating how input will be used in decision making.

The following tactics will be utilized in assessing which communications tools and outreach methods to implement:

- Identify communities most impacted by planned growth and any development changes and establish best practices for communicating with these communities.
- Engage with affected communities early and often to establish, build, and maintain meaningful relationships.
- Clearly communicate the public participation goal when conducting engagement, be specific with requests for input, and define a feedback loop to share how the input was used.
- Remove barriers for participation, consider location and time of day of meetings/events, consider providing food and childcare as resources allow, provide materials in multiple languages, and offer multiple ways to participate.

Emphasis on Vulnerable and Historically Underserved Communities

Historically, members of the public who choose to participate in planning processes tend to be individuals who have flexibility in their work to attend meetings during the day, individuals with a technical background, or community members who are retired. Planning processes that do not try to engage more diverse audiences can perpetuate inequity by reflecting the values and desires of people who hold power and privilege in a community.

To encourage diverse participation and build trust during this comprehensive planning process, Island County intends to focus public engagement efforts on including communities who are vulnerable and/or have historically been underserved. Examples of vulnerable and underserved communities may include veterans, seniors, youth, immigrants and refugees, people of low income, people with disabilities, and people of color.

Decision Making for Comprehensive Plan

Island County Planning and Community Development is the department tasked with coordinating the periodic update for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, with assistance and support from other county departments. Planning staff will conduct the public outreach efforts outlined under this Public Participation Plan. Planning staff will also perform the technical review work and draft the

policy updates necessary to meet the conditions in the GMA and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

Island County Planning Commission advises on comprehensive plan updates. The Planning Commission consists of nine members who are appointed by the Board of Island County Commissioners to make recommendations on planning related matters including growth and development. The Planning Commission will review and advise on comprehensive plan updates throughout 2023-2025 during their regular meeting and work session agendas.

Island County Board of Commissioners is the County's legislative authority and holds the decision-making authority on the 2025 Comprehensive Plan process. The Board of Commissioners is made up of three commissioners who represent geographic districts of Whidbey and Camano islands based on population. The Board of County Commissioners will review and act on comprehensive plan updates throughout 2023-2025 during their regular meetings and work session agendas.

Communication Tools

The communications tools that will be used by Island County during the comprehensive plan update process may include, but are not limited to:

- Website – Planning and Community Development (planning staff) will regularly update its website with comprehensive plan information. Relevant documents and schedules will be posted on the website along with announcements and notices concerning upcoming meetings, hearings, and public involvement opportunities.
- Email List – Planning staff will maintain a list of individuals or groups who have expressed an interest in the comprehensive plan update process. The email list will be used to disseminate announcements and notices. Current list has over 8,000 subscribers.
- Direct Mail – Postcards or other informational materials may be directly mailed to residents during the comprehensive plan update process to notify the public about opportunities to participate, key dates or deadlines, and/or public meetings and hearings.
- News Releases – For major topics and decisions, Island County will prepare press releases and distribute to local papers.
- Social Media – Planning staff will use already established social media platforms to promote public meetings and opportunities to provide formal public comment (those social media channels already owned by Island County or by partner organizations and community groups) in the comprehensive plan update process.
- Posters – Hang posters about public events or opportunities to comment at common gathering places in affected communities such as community centers, libraries, food banks, etc.
- Commissioners Town Hall and/or Newsletters – During key milestones in the comprehensive plan process, planning staff will work with the Board of Island County

Commissioners (BOCC) to provide information via regularly scheduled Town Halls and in regular newsletters, as deemed appropriate by the Commissioners.

- Issue Papers – Issue papers will provide focused guidance to decision makers and document the evolution of the update process. Prior to the final adoption stage, planning staff will compile all of the issue papers into a single background report. Planning staff will post issue papers on the department's website as they are prepared.

Outreach Methods

The outreach methods that will be used by Island County during the comprehensive plan update process may include, but are not limited to:

- Focus Groups / Technical Advisory Groups – In order to solicit guidance on specific issues or complex technical issues, planning staff may utilize BOCC approved Focus Groups or Technical Advisory Groups. These groups will include members who have specific knowledge or interest in certain topics or can effectively represent a subset of the community. Focus Groups or Technical Advisory Groups may have members from business groups, trade organizations, interest groups, Government agencies, County departments, community or environmental groups, and/or members of the public.
- Paid Focus Groups – One method that could be used for engaging historically underserved members of the public who may not otherwise be able to participate in a Focus Group or Technical Advisory Group, is to provide payment for their service. Members would have to demonstrate that their employer would not otherwise compensate them for their time on the Focus Group or Technical Advisory Group and would be paid an hourly rate commensurate with a living wage in Island County. [See [PSRC Compensation Policy](#) for an example model of how this could work.]
- Surveys – For specific topics where planning staff feel they could benefit from specific feedback on the comprehensive plan updates, surveys may be utilized to better understand the community's point of view. Surveys could be administered online or in-person at outreach events.
- Community Events / Fairs and Festivals – Planning staff will utilize already established community events to share information about the comprehensive plan process. During the summer 2024, the County will host booths at events like farmers markets, local parades, and annual community events.
- Public Meetings / Workshops – Public meetings and workshops are informal public gatherings to solicit public feedback on Island County's planning efforts. Public meetings or workshops may involve presentations by planning staff, question and answer sessions, and interactive activities.
- Public Hearings – Public Hearings are a formal public process conducted and held before the BOCC or the Island County Planning Commission.

- Council of Governments – Issues requiring a high level of intergovernmental coordination or decision making may be forwarded to the Island County Council of Governments for discussion. In particular, the Council of Governments will take a leading role in updating the County Wide Planning Policies.
- Board of Commissioners Work Sessions – Planning staff will frequently attend works sessions in order to brief Board members on the update process.
- Planning Commission Work Sessions – Planning staff will frequently attend work sessions in order to brief Planning Commission members on the update process.

Key Audiences

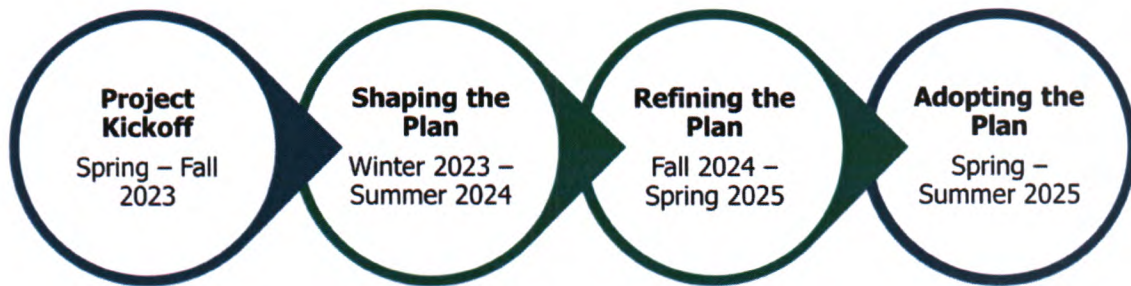
The audiences below include groups who will be engaged by Island County during the comprehensive planning process. This list represents a draft list of groups who are required to be involved or have expressed interest in being involved during the drafting of this public participation plan; this will remain a living document and will be added to as the comprehensive plan update process continues.

- **Members of the public**, with an emphasis on vulnerable and historically underserved communities
- **Island County Departments:** Public Health, Public Works, Human Services, Facilities, Dept. of Emergency Management, Environmental Health, Marine Resources Committee, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, County Administrator, Prosecuting Attorney, Conservation Futures Program, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Team
- **Cities/Towns:** City of Oak Harbor, Town of Coupeville, City of Langley
- **Tribal Governments:** Samish, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, Tulalip, Sauk-Suiattle, other tribes as applicable
- **Federal Government:** Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, U.S. Coast Guard, Army Corps of Engineers, National Parks Service, Federal Aviation Administration
- **State Agencies:** Dept. of Ecology, Dept. of Commerce, Office of Financial Management, WSDOT, WSDOT Aviation Dept., Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Dept. of Natural Resources, Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Puget Sound Partnership
- **Local Organizations:** Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, North Whidbey Parks and Recreation, South Whidbey Parks and Recreation, Island County Historical Society, Friends of Camano Island Parks, Sound Defense Alliance, COER, Camano Preparedness Group, libraries, community councils, churches, groceries/farmers markets, bookstores, other local businesses that serve as gathering places

- **Environmental Groups:** Whidbey Camano Land Trust, Whidbey Island Conservation District, Snohomish Conservation District, Whidbey Environmental Action Network, Conservation Futures, Whidbey Audubon Society, Sound Water Stewards
- **Agriculture / Farm Groups:** Whidbey Island Grown, Whidbey Island Conservation District, Agricultural Resource Committee of Island County, Island County Farm Bureau, Growing Veterans, South Whidbey Tilth, NW Ag Council, school gardens/community gardens, Goosefoot, farmers markets, farmstands
- **Economic Groups:** Island County Economic Development Council, Chambers of Commerce, Port of South Whidbey, Port of Coupeville, Northwest Workforce Development Council, aviation organizations and owners
- **Housing Groups:** Island County Housing Advisory Board, Housing Authority of Island County, Camano Island Housing Task Group, Ituha Crisis Stabilization Center, SPIN Café, Low Income Housing Institute, Thinc Whidbey, Goosefoot, Shelter Resources, Habitat for Humanity, Whidbey Homelessness Coalition, builders and developers
- **Transportation Groups:** IRTPO, Island Transit, Public Works, Whidbey SeaTac Shuttle, Sno-Goose Transit
- **Utility Providers:** PSE, SNOPUD, Freeland Water and Sewer District, Camano Fire, Oak Harbor Fire, NW Fire, South Whidbey Fire & EMS, Central Whidbey Fire, Island County Broadband Action Team, Whidbey Island Water Systems Association, Langley Public Works, Coupeville Utilities
- **Veteran Groups:** Veterans Advisory Board, Whidbey Island Veteran Resource Center, VFW, American Legions, Opportunity Council, Disabled American Veterans
- **Senior Service Groups:** Island Senior Resources, Northwest Senior Services Board, Camano Center, Camano Island Senior Center, Oak Harbor Senior Center
- **Social Service Groups:** Community Health Advisory Board, North Sound Behavioral Health Organization Advisory Board, DSHS, Whidbey Health, Compass Health, Skagit Regional Clinic, Camano Island Health System, Sunrise Services, Whidbey Island Nourishes, Goosefoot, Good Cheer, South Whidbey CARES Coalition, ZCADA, Opportunity Council, Stanwood Camano Community Resource Center, Stanwood Camano Area Foundation, Whidbey Community Foundation, food banks, homeless shelters, churches, community service clubs (e.g.; rotary and elks clubs)
- **Youth Service Groups:** Oak Harbor School District, Coupeville School District, South Whidbey School District, Stanwood-Camano School District, Boys & Girls Clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Island County, Stanwood Camano YMCA, Stanwood Camano Community Resource Center, Skagit Valley College, Pediatric Associations of Whidbey Island, Ryan's House for Youth, childcare centers and early childhood education providers, church youth groups, sports clubs

- **News Outlets:** South Whidbey Record, Whidbey News-Times, Stanwood-Camano News, Everett Herald, Drews List, Crab Cracker, Whidbey Weekly

Key Milestones and Engagement Opportunities



| Key Tasks / Engagement Opportunities | Anticipated Date <i>(all dates are estimates and may change)</i> |
|---|--|
| Project Kickoff | |
| Draft Public Participation Plan | Sept. 2023 |
| Proposed changes to CWPP | Fall 2023 |
| Project kickoff awareness building | Fall 2023 |
| Establish website for regular updates | Fall 2023 |
| Attend community meetings to build relationships | Fall 2023 |
| Shaping the Plan | |
| Agency / Partner Meetings | Winter 2023-24 |
| Housing Workshop | Spring 2024 |
| Conservation / Natural Resources Workshop | Spring 2024 |
| Sub Area Plans Workshops | Spring 2024 |
| Attend community meetings to share information and encourage participation | Spring/Summer 2024 |
| Community Events / Fairs and Festivals (list specific ones if known) | Summer 2024 |
| BOCC Meetings / Work Sessions | Winter, Spring, Summer 2024 |
| Planning Commission Meetings / Work Sessions | Winter, Spring, Summer 2024 |
| Refining the Plan | |
| Agency Partner Meetings | Fall 2024 |
| Draft Element Review | Winter 2024-25 |
| Attend community meetings to encourage comments and participation in upcoming public meetings | Winter 2024-25 |
| BOCC Meetings / Work Sessions | Fall-Winter 2024, Spring 2025 |
| Planning Commission Meetings / Work Sessions | Fall-Winter 2024, Spring 2025 |
| Public Meetings (North, Central, South, Camano) | Spring 2025 |
| Adopting the Plan | |

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| SEPA Determination | Spring 2025 |
| Public Hearings for Comp Plan Changes | Spring-Summer 2025 |
| Public Hearings for Code Changes | Spring-Summer 2025 |
| BOCC Meetings / Work Sessions | Spring-Summer 2025 |
| Planning Commission Meetings / Work Sessions | Spring-Summer 2025 |

Contacts

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Long Range Planning

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Camano Office: 121 N East Camano Drive, Camano Island, WA 98282

EXHIBIT B

Planning Commission Findings of Fact



Island County Planning and Community Development

Mary Engle, Director

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Ph: Whidbey 360-679-7339 | Camano 360-387-3443 | Fax: 360-679-7306

Email: PlanningDept@islandcountywa.gov | <https://www.islandcountywa.gov/207/Planning-Community-Development>

~ FINDINGS OF FACT ~

TO: Planning Commissioners
FROM: Emily Neff, Long Range Planner
DATE: September 25, 2023
SUBJECT: Findings of Fact – 2025 Comprehensive Plan Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule

Summary

Island County is beginning the process of completing a periodic update for the Comprehensive Plan. The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires local governments to establish a public participation program that ensures early and continuous public participation in the development and amendments of comprehensive plans and development regulations. The Island County Planning and Community Development department has developed a Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule in order to meet this requirement.

On September 6, 2023, the Board of County Commissioners reviewed the Draft Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule. The draft plan was sent to the Planning Commission on September 7, 2023, for review.

Findings

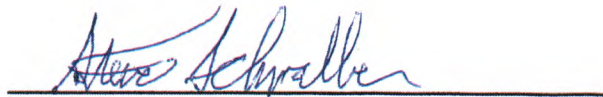
1. In order to address the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act, Island County first adopted a Comprehensive Plan and development regulations in 1998.
2. The GMA requires counties and cities to periodically update their comprehensive plans and development regulations (RCW 36.70A.130(5)). Island County last completed a periodic update in 2016; and Island County must complete an update by June 30, 2025.
3. In order to comply with the periodic update requirements outlined above, Island County is beginning the process of updating its comprehensive plan and development regulations.

4. The GMA requires that cities and counties establish a public participation program that ensures early and continuous public participation in the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations (RCW 36.70A.140). The GMA also requires that public participation programs adopted by local governments clearly identify schedules and procedures for the public to participate in the periodic update process (RCW 36.70A.130(2)(a)).
5. Island County adopted a Public Participation Plan during the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update to meet the state requirements. The 2016 Public Participation Plan has been revised and updated for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update process.
6. The Planning Commission strongly believes that public participation is of vital importance to the comprehensive planning process.
7. The Island County Planning and Community Development department has developed a Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule. The plan ensures early and continuous public input and clearly identifies schedules and procedures for the public to participate in the comprehensive plan update process.

Conclusion

The Island County Planning Commission has held a public hearing on the Public Participation Plan and Preliminary Schedule and hereby recommends that the Board of Island County Commissioners adopt a resolution stating that the attached plan (with applicable amendments from public input) will be used to ensure early and continuous public participation in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Respectfully submitted through the Island County Planning Department to the Board of Island County Commissioners, pursuant to RCW 36.70.430, this 25 day of September, 2023 by,



Steve Schwalbe
Chair, Island County Planning Commission

Attachments:

- Public Participation Plan
- Preliminary Schedule