

Whatcom County

# 2025 Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations Update: **Public Participation Plan**

Whatcom County Council Planning & Development Committee  
June 4, 2024



WHATCOM COUNTY  
*Washington*



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# 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update



The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Whatcom County to review and revise its comprehensive plan and development regulations by December 31, 2025 (RCW 36.70A.130(1)).

The Comprehensive Plan and development regulation update process will include:

- Public engagement
- Analysis under the State Environmental Policy Act
- Coordination with cities as they proceed through their Comprehensive Plan updates
- Advisory committee meetings
- Whatcom County Planning Commission work sessions and hearings
- Whatcom County Council meetings and hearings

# Participation Plan Objectives

**Inform & Engage:** Share updates and offer ways to participate (variety of outreach methods & events).

**Sense of Ownership:** Foster collaboration and information exchange for a better plan.

**Inclusive Voices:** Reach diverse populations and understand community needs.

**Accessible Participation:** Ensure equitable access for all residents including vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

**Transparency & Trust:** Reflect various viewpoints and promote open communication.

**Shared Success:** Build community support and implement the plan effectively.

## Engagement

- **Residents:** Individuals, businesses, farmers, and farmworkers.
- **Community Groups:** Interest groups and nonprofits.
- **County Departments:** Planning, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, etc.
- **County Boards and Committees:** Planning Commission, Racial Equity Commission, and all Advisory Committees
- **Native Nations:** Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe.
- **Cities:** Bellingham, Blaine, Ferndale, Lynden, Sumas, Everson, and Nooksack
- **Local Authorities and Special Districts:** Port of Bellingham, PUD No. 1, Whatcom Conservation District.
- **State Government:** Includes relevant departments as needed (e.g., Dept. of Natural Resources, Dept. of Ecology, Dept. of Commerce)
- **Federal Government:** Includes relevant agencies as needed (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife)





# Participation Inclusivity & Potential Barriers





## Engagement Methods, Barriers, and Solutions

METHOD	BARRIERS	SOLUTIONS
Project Website	Access, Language	Social media outreach, translation, multiple formats.
Social Media	Access, Language	Diverse content, translation, links to website.
Public Meetings	Location, Language, Accessibility	Hybrid options (virtual/in-person), diverse locations, translation.
Printed Materials	Language	Translation, distribution through a variety of outlets (e.g., community organizations).
Community Events	Language, Accessibility, Participation	Hybrid options, translation, diverse locations.
Formal Meetings	Language, Accessibility, Participation	Virtual options, ADA accessibility, opportunity for written comment by non-English speakers

## Vulnerable Populations and Overburdened Communities Participation

- **East Whatcom:** Partner with Foothills Community Alliance or Columbia Valley Parks District for meetings.
- **Health Equity:** Collaborate with health advocates & utilize existing communication channels.
- **Environmental Justice:** Partner with Chardi Kala Project for discussions at One Whatcom events.
- **Racial Equity:** Involve the County's Racial Equity Commission throughout outreach.
- **Lummi Nation:** Interviews, letter, and pop-up booth at the Stommish Water Festival.
- **Nooksack Tribe:** Interviews, letter, and pop-up booth in Nooksack/Everson/Sumas.



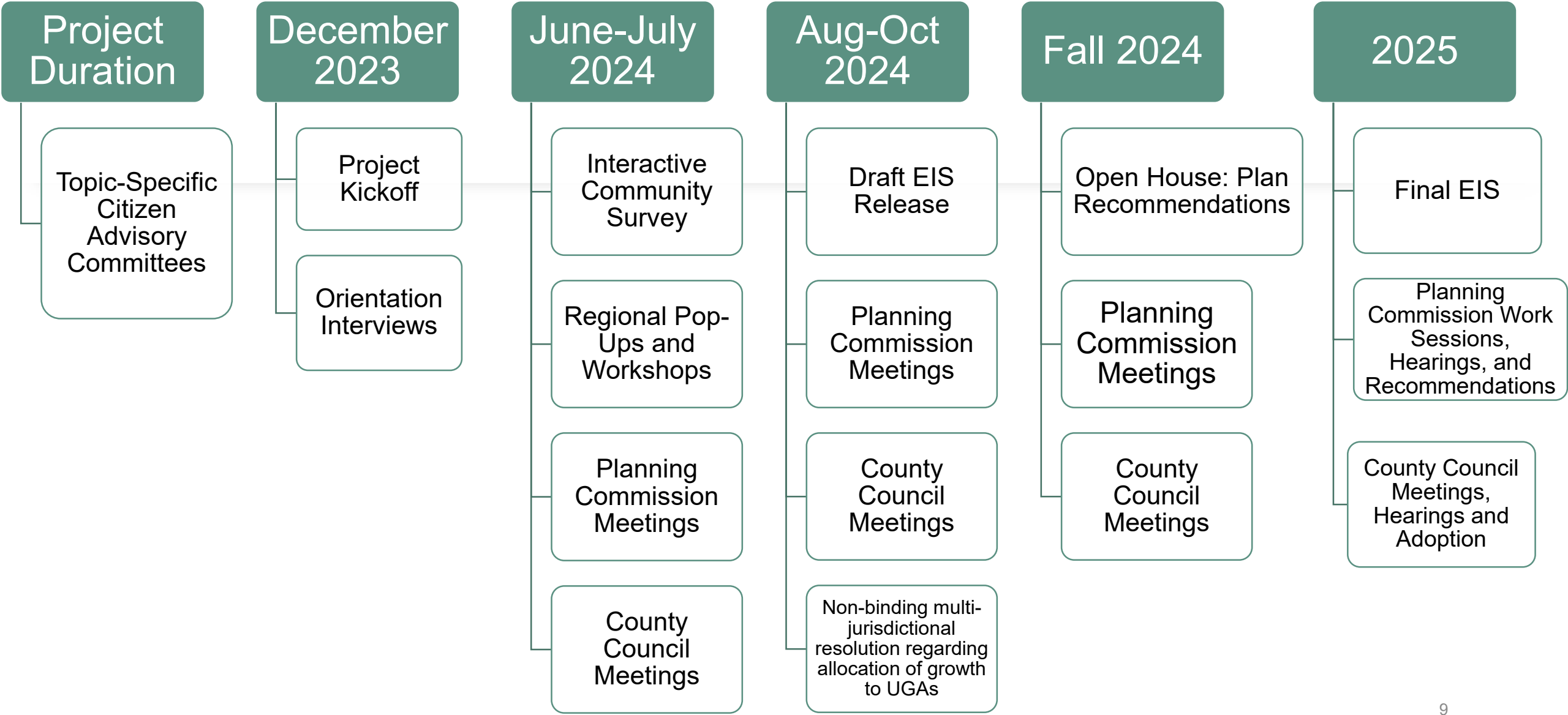


# Engagement Activities





# Timeline



## Regional Pop-Ups and Workshops

Area	Event	Location	Date(s)
<b>Blaine/Birch Bay/ Custer</b>	Market by the Sea	Blaine	Sat, June 1 @10a-2p
<b>Lynden/Central County</b>	Lynden Farmer's Day Parade	Lynden	Sat, Jun 1 @10:30am
<b>Maple Falls/Kendall</b>	Coffee Talk @ Joe's Fine Coffee	Maple Falls	Sun, Jun 2 @8am-11am
<b>Lummi Reservation</b>	Lummi Stommish Water Festival	Lummi Reservation	Thurs/Fri, June 13 all-day, & 14 half-day
<b>Ferndale</b>	Ferndale Farmer's Market	Ferndale	Friday, June 14 @3p-7p
<b>Sumas/ Nooksack/ Everson</b>	Everson Summer Festival (Tentative)	Everson	Fri, Jul 12 all day
<b>Bellingham</b>	Bellingham Farmer's Market	Bellingham	Date TBD based on market space availability



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## Project Website



<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/4218/2025-Comprehensive-Plan-Updates>

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