

March 2026
Stevens County Climate Resiliency Element

WHITE BLUFFS CONSULTING

Public Participation Plan Addendum

Prepared for Stevens County

Funded through a Washington State Department of Commerce climate planning grant from Washington's Climate Commitment Act

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Prepared by
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Kennewick, WA

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPAT	Climate Policy Advisory Team
Commerce	Washington State Department of Commerce
GMA	Growth Management Act
PPP	Steven's County Public Participation Plan Addendum

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1 Introduction and Overview

The Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Washington cities and counties to develop comprehensive plans that respond to challenges associated with population growth. The GMA was amended in 2023 to include House Bill (HB) 1181, which requires cities and counties to integrate climate resilience into their comprehensive planning.

The Climate Resiliency Element provides a foundation for Stevens County's (County) 2027 comprehensive plan update and is an important step in meeting state planning requirements for integrating climate planning into their comprehensive plan.

This Public Participation Plan Addendum (PPP) includes guidelines and procedures for early and continuous public participation during the Climate Element development process. In conducting this work, the County will comply with this PPP and Steven's County Code Chapter 3.31 provisions, which includes steps and commitments for promoting public participation in review and decision-making processes. The PPP also describes opportunities for input throughout the Climate Element development process and provides stakeholder information and communication tools.

It also guides the County on how to reach out to the public and outlines methods and resources used to do so. The County is committed to providing meaningful opportunities to engage the public in the development of the Climate Resiliency Element.

The PPP aids the County by providing a framework for information distribution, public noticing, and input on key Climate Element decisions. It is important to the County to ensure local, state and federal partners, and the public are aware of the Climate Element planning activities. This plan provides an outline of those activities.

This plan is a working document and will be adjusted as needed to provide for the broadest feasible public participation.

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2 Public Participation Goals and Objectives

The County recognizes the importance of early and continuous public participation and has developed this PPP to encourage public involvement during the Climate Element planning process consistent with the Commerce grant agreement, County Code and state laws and regulations. The PPP identifies the following goals:

- Broad participation of all interested groups and individuals
- A transparent process which clearly documents all public input and makes it available for any and all to review.
- Public meetings and events, including a timeline of meetings and events, are designed to provide opportunities for all interested parties to be heard and for people to listen and learn from one another.

Objectives to meet goals include:

- Characterize opportunities for public input and engagement during the Climate Element planning process and how to stay informed throughout the process.
- Identify a list of key stakeholders to engage in early and continuous participation in the Climate Element planning process, including disadvantaged or potentially underserved areas in the communities along with strategies for how to reach out to them.
- Develop and maintain a Climate Element planning webpage (see https://stevenscounty2027.com/) with information from the consultant team, to provide the public with information on the planning process, meeting announcements, and draft work products.
- Work with tribal governments to develop strategy for communications with these tribal communities, consistent with their desired level of coordination.

The PPP also describes how the County will prepare draft outreach and informational documents and public notices that inform the public of the Climate Element planning activities. It also contains descriptions of how the County will seek public input and involvement. The adoption process will happen as part of the 2027 Comprehensive Plan Update, as described in more detail in the PPP for that effort.

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3 Stakeholder Groups, Public Meetings and Workshops

3.1 Climate Policy Advisory Team (CPAT) Meetings

The Department of Commerce requires a regional policy advisory committee to support and inform the Climate Element development process. The County will participate in Climate Policy Advisory Team meetings along with advisory team members and consultant team facilitators to:

- Review and discuss vulnerability and risk findings, outreach strategies, and draft goals and policies.
- Help identify locations or populations most vulnerable to wildfires, drought, extreme heat, poor air quality, flooding, and water quality issues.
- Ensure the Climate Element reflects Stevens County's unique context and needs.
- Promote participation in this County planning effort.

While these meetings are open to the public and available for anyone to attend, they are not advertised. Members of the public that would like to attend should reach out to the County Land Services Department for information or send an email of interest to https://stevenscounty2027.com/. The first meeting will be held in the spring 2026 and going forward they will be held quarterly.

The membership of the CPAT will be comprised of Stevens County representatives and other invitees that agree to participate, including but not necessarily limited to the Stevens County Conservation District, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, Rural Resources Community Action, NE Tri-County Health District, Tri County Economic Development District, Utilities, Tribal representatives and members of the public at-large. The Department of Ecology has also been invited to participate.

Separate support focus group meetings to address one or more of the 11 different sectors listed below will be scheduled, with special focus on key hazards facing the county being extreme heat, wildfire and smoke, drought, and extreme precipitation/flood risk:

- Agriculture & Food Systems
- Buildings & Energy
- Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Emergency Management
- Health & Well-being

- Ecosystems
- Transportation
- Waste Management
- Water Resources
- Zoning & Development

3.2 Public Meetings

In 2026, regular workshops with the County Planning Commission will be held and open to the public. Workshops will include updates on the Climate element. During adoption of the Climate element and County Comprehensive Plan, there will be additional public meetings and review periods providing opportunity for public input.

3.3 Underserved and Disadvantaged Targeted Outreach Strategy

Targeted outreach activities will include communications focused on disadvantaged community areas vulnerable to climate hazards. This includes not only those community members that live in climate-hazard risk areas (flood, fire, smoke, public health, drought and ecosystem risks) but also reaching out to other economically or health services disadvantaged and underserved areas in the County that might be affected by. This nexus in effect covers most of the rural Census Tract areas in the County, with particular emphasis on the higher "Distressed" areas.

To reach the underserved and disadvantaged communities, we will seek to utilize one or more community organizations to assist in broadcasting the opportunity for participation and input to provide perspectives and input on the Climate Element and broader Comprehensive Plan Update process-related questions and concerns, as applicable.

Public workshops will be held in conjunction with the Climate Element planning activities. These workshops will include sharing information on the draft Climate Element content along with other relevant and related information.

Table 1
Public Participation Estimated Timeline

Tasks	Public Outreach Efforts for Stevens County
Project Launch	March - May 2026 • Launch CPAT • Discuss climate hazards
Early Analysis and Public Outreach	June – October 2026 • CPAT meetings 2 and 3 • Climate Impacts memo • Climate Vulnerability Assessment findings • Specific concerns on climate hazards • Strategies for resiliency • Two quarterly PC workshops on Comprehensive Plan which will include updates on the Climate Element
Draft Approach and Public Review	November - April 2027 • CPAT meetings 4 and 5 • Draft policies and strategies review and revisions
Ready for Comprehensive Plan Inclusion	April 2027/Q2 2027 • Final draft recommendation • Updates on early actions

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4 Public Involvement and Outreach Strategies

This section describes the key strategies developed to encourage outreach and public involvement throughout the Climate Element process. Implementation of these strategies is expected to generate meaningful public participation.

4.1 Webpage

The Climate Element webpage[1] will be hosted as a dedicated webpage on the County website and provide a public forum for obtaining planning information, including but not limited to the following:

- Status updates
- CPAT meeting dates, agendas and notes
- Climate Element draft review documents
- An email address for submitting public comments
- Email distribution list registration

4.2 Methods for Reaching Disadvantaged and Underserved Areas

Targeted outreach to seek input and participation from disadvantaged and underserved areas in Stevens County will be addressed as part of the planning process. Portions of Stevens County's population are considered disadvantaged communities because of their vulnerability to climate change (including changes in flood and wildfire risk) as well as environmental health conditions, affordable housing access and limited access to services, and potentially other socioeconomic factors (based on several demographics data sources).

To reduce participation barriers, notifications will be conducted through a variety of media to maximize awareness and details about public meeting times and locations, and other opportunities for input. This approach is intended to broaden participation and ensure participation from communities that might be most affected by climate impacts.

4.3 Communications

An email distribution list of interested parties will be maintained for individuals and groups who wish to receive periodic project announcements, public notices of upcoming meetings, and other Climate Element related information. Names included on the interested parties list will also originate from

[1] https://stevenscounty2027.com/

meeting sign-in sheets, written correspondence, and recognized community groups, as well as individual requests to be included. Additionally, the County will conduct the following activities:

- Issue news releases announcing the public meetings and times, dates, and locations to the local media.
- All people desiring to speak or submit written comments will be allowed to do so at all meetings and during designated comment periods.
- One- or two-page information fact sheets may be used to facilitate the dissemination of public information.

4.4 Education and Outreach Materials

Draft and final education and outreach materials will be prepared including:

- Meeting notifications and announcements
- Overview of the Climate Element requirements
- Presentations
- Webpage content and updates

Technical work products will also be posted to the webpage along with executive summaries of these work products. Final education and outreach materials, as described above, will be prepared for distribution and posting to the project webpage.

4.5 Sharing and Formatting Work Products

The County's Climate Element webpages will be updated with draft documents as they become available. Consistent with the grant agreement between the County and Commerce, visual accessibility formatting will be completed for all materials that are posted to the webpage and will comply with the Washington State Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), OCIO Policy no. 188, Accessibility (https://ocio.wa.gov/policy/accessibility) as it relates to "covered technology." This requirement applies to all Climate Element planning products, providing equal access to information technology by individuals with disabilities, including and not limited to web sites/pages, web-based applications, software systems, video and audio content, and electronic documents intended for publishing on Commerce's public web site.

4.6 Documentation

All public outreach efforts and the results of those efforts will be documented in the administrative record maintained by the consultant team hired by the County to assist with developing the Climate element. Documentation will include CPAT meeting materials, meeting notes with attendance and

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comments received, draft and final work products, comment/response matrices, and other information as applicable.

PPP Approval

Erik Johansen

By:

Signature

Land Services Director

Title

03-17-2026

Date