

March 2026
Stevens County Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations Update

WHITE BLUFFS CONSULTING

# Public Participation Plan Addendum

Prepared for Stevens County

*Funded through a Washington State Department of Commerce Grant*

FINAL

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# Public Participation Plan Addendum

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# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| County | Stevens County |
| GMA | Growth Management Act |
| PPP | *Stevens County Public Participation Plan Addendum* |
| RCW | Revised Code of Washington |

# 1 Introduction and Overview

The *Stevens County Public Participation Plan Addendum* (PPP) includes guidelines and procedures for early and continuous public participation related to Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA; Revised Code of Washington [RCW] 36.70A) and Stevens County (County) Code (SCC 3.31) in the development and subsequent updates and amendments of the County's Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations. These guidelines and procedures are intended to engage the policy makers from the local jurisdictions and key stakeholders.

This PPP is intended to guide and form the basis for public participation. 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.

As the planning process develops, it should be expected that deviations from the PPP may be warranted. The GMA recognizes such deviation may occur per RCW 36.70A.140.

There is a separate but related effort happening for the County's Climate Element that will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan update. Please see the County's Climate Element PPP for more details.

This 2027 Comprehensive Plan PPP provides additional detail on recently updated state requirements and also how outreach efforts will target input and participation from disadvantaged and underserved areas in Stevens County. Updates and amendments to the Plan and development regulations are necessary to reflect current laws, local needs, new data, correct errors, and/or clarify intent.

The periodic update cycle was changed in 2022 by the Washington State Legislature by the approval of HB 1241, which changed the recurrence from eight to ten years after the 2024-2027 update cycle. Other new laws were passed by the State Legislature, changing GMA planning and local regulation requirements that apply to the 2024-2027 and future periodic update cycle such as:

HB 1220 – Counties and cities/towns must plan for and accommodate, rather than encourage the availability of emergency and affordable housing

HB 1717 – New regulations for cities and counties to include local and regional tribes in planning processes and decisions

HB 2001 – Expands the ability to build tiny houses

SB 5042 – Changes the initial effective date of certain actions under the GMA

SB 5118 – Supports successful reentry for juveniles, amending the definition of "essential public facilities"

SB 5235 – Increasing housing unit inventory by removing arbitrary limits on housing

SB 5275 – Enhances opportunity in Local Areas of More Intense Rural Development or LAMIRDs

SB 5368 – Encourages rural economic development

SB 5593 – Allows a county to make revisions to a UGA boundary to accommodate patterns of development

SB 5818 – Promoting housing construction in cities through amendments to and limiting appeals under SEPA and GMA.

# 2 Public Participation Goals and Objectives

The County recognizes the importance of early and continuous public participation in order to adequately reflect the County's citizens' input. The goal of the PPP is to make all citizens of the County aware of the progress of the planning process and to offer them opportunities to comment or make suggestions. To achieve this goal, the County has adopted the following plan to encourage public participation throughout the remainder of the planning process. Taken individually, the activities are not expected to reach and inform each citizen of the County. Collectively, however, the plan activities are designed to effectively and efficiently provide broad-based dissemination of information and maximize opportunity for citizen involvement and comment.

The following activities will ensure public input is incorporated into the decision-making process:

- Providing procedures for broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives
- Establishing a strategy to educate the public and stakeholders about the Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations update and amendment processes and requirements
- Ensuring available information is current and accessible to the public at the following link: https://stevenscounty2027.com/
- Clearly identifying procedures and strategies for public comment and participation and providing adequate time for review of comprehensive planning materials and code amendments prior to decision-making
- Encouraging and maintaining open lines of communication between the County, the public, and stakeholders through meetings, open houses, and workshops, including virtual formats.

# 3 Public Meetings, Workshops, and Open Houses

The following are key meetings, workshops, and open houses that will be hosted by the County and the Stevens County Planning Commission in order to encourage outreach and public involvement throughout the GMA planning processes:

- **Open Houses.** Stevens County Land Services will host public open houses in the fall of 2026 and spring of 2027 in each Commissioner District to inform the citizens of the growth management planning process, update them on progress to date, and validate or revise previously developed goals and values. Efforts will be made to integrate public input for related planning efforts.
- **Planning Commission Workshops.** Upon completion of preliminary drafts of updated or amended Comprehensive Plan elements, the Stevens County Planning Commission will conduct a series of Planning Commission workshops to present the Comprehensive Plan elements that have been evaluated and updated. This may include virtual meeting formats.
- **Public Officials Workshops/Public Meetings.** The County will conduct one or more workshops with public officials, including the Stevens County Board of County Commissioners, city officials, special district officials, and others, to present technical information regarding the Comprehensive Plan and County-wide planning policies. The meetings will be designed to give officials an opportunity to ask questions and gain a better understanding of the implications of growth management for their jurisdiction or special district and to discuss the issues with other public officials in the same position. The time and place of these meetings will be determined as the plan development proceeds. The County will make final arrangements for accommodation for the workshops. These may include virtual meeting formats.
- **Meetings with City and Town Representatives.** The County will meet with representatives of the cities and towns to discuss their urban growth area boundaries, review population projections, and discuss coordinated strategies.
- **Underserved and Disadvantaged Targeted Outreach Strategy.** Targeted outreach activities will include communications focused on disadvantaged community areas. This covers most of the rural Census Tract areas in the County, with particular emphasis on the higher "Distressed" areas and also more vulnerable senior or disabled members of the population. To reach the underserved and disadvantaged communities, communications may include a variety of strategies.
- **Coordination with State Agencies.** Coordination will be conducted with affected agencies, including the Washington State Department of Commerce, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Department of Transportation, and other interested state and local agencies to keep them informed of plan development progress and to solicit their comments early on in the process. Copies of the environmental review documentation will

also be provided to affected agencies for review and comment as part of the plan review and adoption process.

- **Public Hearing and Formal Comment Periods.** Once the Final Draft Comprehensive Plan is completed, a formal public review will be conducted under the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C) including a public hearing and public comment period. All comments received during the public hearing and public comment period will be compiled and an updated Comprehensive Plan will be developed.
- **Develop and Maintain an Interested Parties List.** Identify interest groups such as the following and share information with these groups and others who request to be on the list (https://stevenscounty2027.com/)

  - Affected property owners and citizens who desire to be kept informed through email communications
  - Avista and Inland Power
  - Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
  - FutureWise
  - National Park Service
  - Natural Resources Conservation Service
  - Northeast Tri-County Health District
  - Rural Resources Community Action
  - Spokane Tribe of Indians
  - Stevens County Conservation District
  - Stevens County Water Conservancy Board
  - Stevens Public Utility District
  - Stevens County Voluntary Stewardship Program work group
  - The Lands Council
  - Tri-County Economic Development District
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
  - U.S. Bureau of Land Management
  - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
  - U.S. Forest Service Three Rivers Ranger District
  - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
  - Washington State Department of Natural Resources
  - Washington State Farm Bureau
  - Washington State Parks and Recreation
  - Washington Department of Health

Stevens County Land Services staff will place legal notices of hearings and comment periods in the County's official paper, currently the Chewelah *Independent*. Hearing notices will be published as required by state law and County Code. Legal notifications notifying dates and times of open houses and public hearings and comment periods will be distributed to the public via email and other public postings. Notices will also be provided on the Land Services page of the County website and the GMA Update website.

**Prospective Project Work Schedule**

| Major Deliverables | 2026 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2027 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun |
| Develop Periodic Update Work Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Public Participation Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Critical Areas Update Checklist | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Draft CAO Updates | | | | PC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Population and Housing Allocation | | | | PC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Land Use / Capacity Analysis | | | | PC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Update County-wide Planning Policies | | | | PC | | BOCC | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Draft Comp Plan Elements | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *Land Use* | | | | | | | | | PC | | | | | | | | | |
| *Resource Lands - Mineral* | | | | | | | | | PC | | | | | | | | | |
| *Natural Resources* | | | | | | | | | PC | | PC | | | | | | | |
| *Housing* | | | | | | | | | | | PC | | | | | | | |
| *Economic Development* | | | | | | | | | | | PC | | | | | | | |
| *Parks and Recreation* | | | | | | | | | | | PC | | | | | | | |
| *Transportation* | | | | | | | | | | | | | PC | | | | | |
| *Utilities* | | | | | | | | | | | | | PC | | | | | |
| *Capital Facilities* | | | | | | | | | | | | | PC | | | | | |
| Draft Development Regs Ordinance | | | | | | | | | | | | | PC | | | | | |
| SEPA/ Environmental Review | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 60 Day Review | | | | |
| Public Participation Report | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Periodic Update Checklist | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comprehensive Plan Adoprtion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | PC | BOCC |
| BOCC and Planning Commisison Meetings | | | | PC | | | | | PC | | PC | | | PC | | | * | ** |

***Planning Commission Hearing Target**

****BOCC Hearing Target**

# 4 Public Involvement and Outreach Strategies

Described below are key strategies developed to encourage outreach and public involvement throughout the GMA planning processes. Implementation of these strategies is expected to generate meaningful public participation.

## 4.1 Website

The County's GMA website (https://stevenscounty2027.com/) will include a page regarding growth management and comprehensive planning. This site will provide a public forum for obtaining comprehensive planning information, including but not limited to the following:

- Status updates
- Meeting notices and agendas
- Comprehensive Plan draft documents and maps
- Contact lists
- An email address for submitting public comments
- Email distribution list registration

## 4.2 Communications

An email distribution list will be maintained for individuals and groups who wish to receive periodic project announcements, public notices of upcoming public meetings, and other comprehensive planning and development codes update-related information. Those interested in being included on the email distribution list should contact the Stevens County Land Services Department.

## 4.3 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 Steven's County's population are considered disadvantaged communities because of their vulnerability to 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 are most affected by climate impacts.

## 4.4 Work Products

A hard copy of draft planning work products will be available at the Stevens County Land Services Department The comprehensive planning website will be updated with documents as they become available, along with hard copy locations. Hard copies will be available for the cost of reproduction upon request from Stevens County Land Services

## 4.5 Planning Document Dissemination

Documents such as reports, plans, or environmental reviews that contain or describe draft plans, policies, maps, or regulations will be made available for public review. Such documents will be made available well in advance of opportunities for public discussion or testimony. Such documents will be made available typically at least 5 business days prior to any public meeting or hearing scheduled for their discussion or decision.

Documents will be disseminated as follows:

- Digital versions will be posted on the County's GMA website.
- Hard copies will be made available for review at the Stevens County Land Services Department.
- Hard copies will be made available for the cost of reproduction through the Stevens County Land Services Department.

Meeting and hearing notices will state the availability and location of documents.

## 4.6 Public Involvement, Implementation and Documentation

All public outreach efforts and the results of those efforts will be documented in the administrative record maintained by the County. Documentation will include invitation letters and responses, meeting and hearing notices, meeting materials, meeting notes with attendance and comments received, draft and final work products, and other information as applicable.

**PPP Approval**

Erik Johansen

By:



Signature

Land Services Director

Title

03-17-2026

Date