



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

HORIZON 2046 - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

YAKIMA COUNTY

Introduction

Yakima County is required through the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) (RCW 36.70A) to periodically conduct a thorough review of our Comprehensive Plan – **Horizon 2040**, Urban Growth Area, and development regulations, and to update the plan and associated regulations in response to changes in land use trends and population growth, while incorporating relevant changes in the GMA, and changes made through case law.

Yakima County must complete the update process by June 30, 2026 and every ten years thereafter. Yakima County's first GMA comprehensive plan - **Plan 2015** was originally adopted May 20, 1997 and was subsequently updated in 2007 and in 2017. This document meets the mandate by RCW 36.70A.130(2)(a) to establish and broadly disseminate to the public a public participation plan that identifies procedures and schedules whereby updates, proposed amendments, or revisions of the comprehensive plan are considered by the governing body of the county, and that the program shall provide for consideration of amendments of an urban growth area.

Public participation is good business practice. A good public participation plan will build trust and credibility and can earn the respect of involved citizens. Ultimately it results in better and more responsive services to meet the needs of citizens.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of County Commissioners

The Board's duties include adopting and enacting ordinances and resolutions, levying taxes and establishing county policies. As the County's legislative authority, the Board is responsible adoption of the annual budget, provision and maintenance of public facilities, construction and maintenance of County roads, development and implementation of planning and zoning policies, and appointments to advisory boards and commissions.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission (PC) is designated by the Yakima County Code (YCC 2.16) as the responsible citizen panel for assisting the Planning Division in the preparation and execution of the comprehensive plan, zoning regulations, and/or amendments to each. The PC will conduct hearings regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update Program, related Urban Growth Area changes, and development regulation amendments. The PC will be the primary source of public involvement and will ensure that the public is involved throughout the 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update Program. The PC will use the Public Participation Plan to consider public comments in making findings of fact and conclusions and forwarding a recommendation to the board for approval.

Goal and Objectives

Goal: Provide all residents, property owners, business owners and other stakeholders, an opportunity to understand and participate in the Comprehensive Plan Update process.

Objectives:

1. Provide for “early and continuous” public participation
2. Build community trust in the planning process
3. Build upon past planning work and carry forward the vision and directions that are important for the County
4. Seek public input and ideas of what Yakima County should become in the next 20+ years
5. Encourage participation of individuals, community groups and organizations that may not normally participate in the planning process
6. Explain the laws by which the County is obligated to conduct the Update process
7. Inform the public about plans that are related to the Comprehensive Plan

Type of Public Involvement/Outreach

Study Sessions: Provide project status and discussion of any topic/issue.

Comments are captured through meeting minutes.

- Policy Makers
- Recommending Bodies
- Advisory Boards

Open Houses: Provides background information and solicits feedback on project topics/issue(s). Comments are captured through open house comment sheets, mapping exercises, comment boards and priority interest boards.

- General Public
- Community Groups

Meetings: Provides project background and information. Comments are captured through event comment sheets.

- Policy Makers
- Community Groups
- Advisory Boards
- General Public

Group Presentations: Provides background information focused on specific topic or the general project. Comments are captured through event comment sheets.

- Community Groups

Social Media: May be used to provide information and solicit feedback on project topics/issues.

Comments are captured through questionnaires, Questions of the Week, and comment sheets.

- General Public
- Advisory Boards
- Community Groups

General Public

- Residents
- Property Owners
- Business Tenants
- Business Owners

Community Group

- Cities and Towns
- School Districts
- Fire Districts
- Water Purveyors
- Environmental Groups
- Development Groups
- Real Estate Groups
- Agricultural Interests
- Transit Organizations

Recommending Bodies

- Advisory Boards
- Planning Commission
- Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG)
- Countywide Planning Policy Committee (CWPPC)
- Yakama Nation

Policy Makers

- Yakima County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

Public Hearings: Provides opportunity to general public and community groups to provide testimony before recommending body(ies) and Board of County Commissioners. Testimony is captured in the public record.

- Policy Makers
- Recommending Bodies
- Advisory Boards
- Community Groups
- General Public

Major Events and Activities

The public participation process is comprised of four main stages.

Stage 1: Community Outreach

Stage 2: Public Comments/Feedback on Comprehensive Plan Drafts

Stage 3: Environmental Review

Stage 4: Public Comments/Feedback during public hearings for Adoption and Environmental Review

The process will be supported throughout by a three-pronged approach to communication and engagement with the community:

- **Events** consisting of key public events such as open houses and public meetings that are well publicized through web and media.
- **Community Groups** consisting of information conveyed to Planning Commission and other groups and organizations such as service, environmental, land development and planning groups via “roadshow” presentations.
- **Electronic Communication** consisting of a website and social media, virtual workshops and presentations, etc.

Notification Methods

The following methods shall be used to inform the public of the opportunity to participate (as described in YCC 16B.10.080):

1. A general mailing to interested parties,
2. Posting on the Public Services Web site (<http://www.yakimacounty.us/publicservices>),
3. Posting on the Planning Division Web site (<http://www.yakimacounty.us/Planning/default.htm>),
4. Notice in the County’s newspaper of record and other print media as appropriate,
5. Press Releases to the media,
6. Posting of information at the Planning Division and other office areas of the County’s where interested parties may conduct business.

In addition to the public participation procedures described above, Yakima County may utilize the following means to increase public involvement and to disseminate information:

1. Postings on the Planning Division Social Media sites: Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/YakCoPlan>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/YakCoPlan>),
2. E-mail notice to interested parties on existing lists,
3. Posters and Notice Boards – Placement of posters or desktop notice boards or banners highlighting the project and the opportunity to comment,
4. Utility Billing flyers,
5. Newspaper advertisements,
6. Quarterly Spot Light Newsletter (distribute via mail, e-mail, website, and social media)

Stages	Public Involvement Major Events and Activities	Input Captured in
Stage 1	Community Outreach	
December 2024-March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website sign up for electronic newsletters, email notifications, and public feedback forums on-line Open Houses for the General Public to introduce the Comprehensive Plan Update. Future trends, opportunities, and challenges for community development in Yakima County including breakout areas to discuss and respond to questions about key policy choices Study sessions Presentations (Road Show) for community groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting Summaries Open House and Online Comment Sheets Mapping exercises Comment and priority interest boards
Stage 2	Public Comments/Feedback on Comprehensive Plan Drafts	
March 2025 - June 2026	<p>Review of Comprehensive Plan Draft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with CWPPC, YVCOG, Yakama Nation, etc. Study Sessions with Planning Commission and BOCC Presentations (Road Show) of drafts for community groups Drafts available online and in County offices for public review and comment Review sessions and recommendations from Recommending Bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes Written comments on Comprehensive Plan documents Online comments on Plan Alternatives Written comments from community group presentations Public Testimony
Stage 3	Environmental Review	
December 2025 – June 2026	<p>Review of environmental impacts, potential alternatives, mitigation measures, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study Sessions with Planning Commission and BOCC Presentations (Road Show) of Comprehensive Plan Draft and Environmental Review for community groups Drafts available online and in County offices for public review and comment Planning Commission Workshops Yakima County Board of County Commissioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes Written comments on Comprehensive Plan documents Online comments on Plan Alternatives Written comments from community group presentations Public Testimony
Stage 4	Public Comments/Feedback during public hearings for Adoption and Environmental Review	
January 2026- June 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Commission Hearings Yakima County Board of County Commissioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes Written comments on Comprehensive Plan draft /environmental review Public Testimony