



PLANNING ►►► OUR TOMORROW

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Public Participation Program

Community engagement overview for the
Comprehensive Plan Update

Last updated January 25, 2022

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Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan sets the direction for the future of Pierce County. It articulates a vision of how we can build strong communities so that Pierce County is a place people are proud to call home. The Comprehensive Plan guides County decisions related to:



Affordable housing options



Sustainability



Responsible growth



Transportation and traffic



Parks and open spaces



Public services and facilities



Environmental protection



Agriculture and forest resources

The focal point of County long-range planning is the County's Comprehensive Plan and its Capital Facilities Plan which help with policy, financing and development regulation decisions over a 20-year period.

Public Participation Program Purpose

The Growth Management Act (GMA) (RCW 36.70A.140) calls for "early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans." The purpose of the public participation program is to engage residents, property and business owners, cities, tribes, military and other stakeholders on the periodic update process and how they can provide feedback to County decision makers.

The goal of the program is to encourage input and collaboration that fosters diverse viewpoints for the County to consider.

About the Periodic Update

The GMA requires the County to periodically review and, if needed, revise its 20-year comprehensive plan, capital facility plan and development regulations. The periodic update occurs every eight years to respond to changes in state law and to address new information about land use, community needs, and population and employment growth. As Pierce County continues to grow and change, the County's comprehensive plan is intended to change and reflect the needs and vision of the County now and into the future.

The next major update is required to be completed by completed by December 31, 2024.

Engagement Overview

The County has established key process milestones to help the public understand where engagement opportunities exist. These key process milestones may be expanded and tailored depending on the nature and scope of the updates. Cities, tribes, interested parties and the public will have opportunities for involvement and are encouraged to participate. Throughout the process, Pierce County will:

- Commit to early and continuous engagement
- Provide timely information at key milestones
- Use concise, plain, and easy to understand language
- Involve local tribes
- Consult neighboring cities and towns and federal and state agencies
- Provide multilingual engagement opportunities and materials
- Keep the project website updated with current information
- Utilize a variety of outreach mediums including but not limited to local media, print, web, social media, emails, community meetings and online open houses

Want to request an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for your property?

The County reviews individual requests for changes to the Comprehensive Plan every two years.

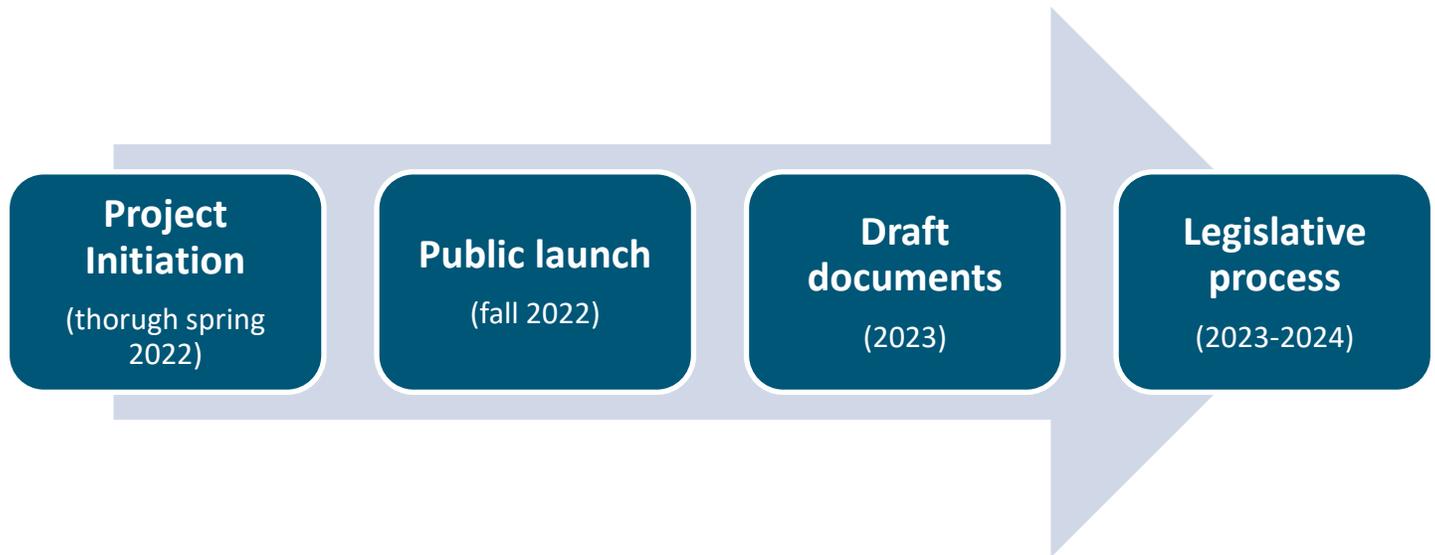
This process is known as the amendment cycle and it runs separately from the periodic update.

Applications will be accepted in July 2022 for final approval in 2023. To learn more about this process visit:

[PierceCountyWa.gov/
CompPlanAmendments](https://www.piercecountywa.gov/CompPlanAmendments)



Key Milestones



Project Initiation Phase – Getting Ready for Public Engagement

- Staff researches the issues, state law and other regional planning requirements that need to be included in the update
- Coordinate with local tribes, neighboring cities and towns, and federal and state agencies
- Collect individual proposals for amendments through the Comprehensive Plan Amendment cycle
- Develop the Public Participation Program document and materials

Public Launch Phase – Inviting all to Participate

- Invite every Pierce County resident to comment on project scoping utilizing a variety of mediums including but not limited to local media, print, web, social media, emails, mailed post cards, flyers in high-activity venues like libraries and buses, community meetings and online open houses
- Provide opportunities for stakeholders to learn about the Comprehensive Plan, the update process and how to engage
- Engage key partners and interested parties including but not limited to civic, environmental and economic groups, school districts, utilities, special purpose districts (fire, sheriff, parks etc.)
- Continued coordination with local tribes, neighboring cities and towns, and federal and state agencies

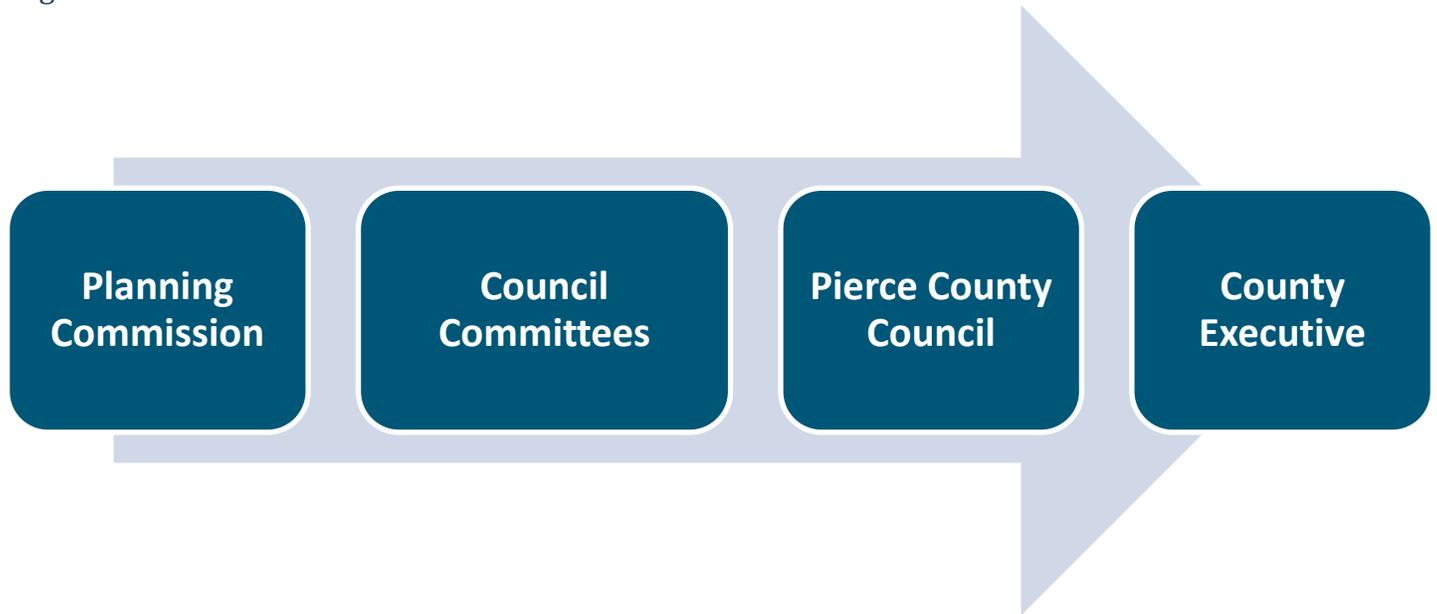
Draft Documents Phase – Providing Opportunities to Review Proposals and Alternatives

- Develop and release draft documents for comment
- Develop and release environmental impact statement
- Develop alternatives that are in line with GMA requirements
- Invite every Pierce County resident, tribe, city, and interested party to learn about the draft documents and provide opportunities to provide feedback
- Analyze feedback to inform next steps

Legislative Process Phase- Providing Opportunities to Comment on the Final Proposal

Pierce County residents are welcome to attend and listen to discussions and make comments at Committee/Commission/Council meetings. These legislative bodies are comprised of appointed or elected officials who hold meetings of record to gather information from County staff and input from the public on a topic. Often, participants may also submit written comment.

Legislative Process:



Roles and Responsibilities

Planning Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed by Executive and confirmed by Council • Members Represent different geographic areas in Pierce County • Makes recommendations to County Council
Council Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committees of the Pierce County Council • Reviews planning issues • Makes amendments to proposals and recommendations to Council
Pierce County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County's legislative branch • Makes amendments to proposals • Enacts all plans, policies and regulations
County Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May or may not sign adopted legislation • Has veto power which can be overridden by Council majority 5-2

Engagement Approach

The Comprehensive Plan Update is a multi-faceted project that spans years. Communication and engagement plans will be developed at key milestones throughout the process that consider audiences(s), medium(s), and key messages.

Community Partners and Interested Parties (Audience)

- All Pierce County residents including the following subgroups:
 - Interested parties
 - Underrepresented communities
 - Communities of color
 - Those who prefer to communicate in a language other than English
 - Youth
- Local tribes
- State and Federal agencies
- Surrounding cities and towns
- Joint Base Lewis-McChord
- Economic and industry groups
- Environmental groups
- WSDOT
- Pierce Transit
- Local utilities
- School districts
- Special purpose districts
- Port of Tacoma
- Advocacy Groups
- Civic groups

Communication and Engagement Mediums

The County will utilize the following mediums to inform the public and encourage participation at key milestones throughout the planning process:

- Website (piercecounitywa.gov/CompPlan)
- Email updates through Planning Our Community email subscriber list
- Social media (PPW Facebook and Pierce County Facebook and Twitter)
- Local media news outlets (radio, advertising, print, blogs)
- Online open houses
- Online surveys
- Printed materials (like postcards) distributed via mail, at high activity venues (e.g. buses, farmers markets, libraries...) and at in-person events/gatherings*
- Community meetings*
- Public information sessions*
- Tabling at community events*

*(in-person and/or virtual pending safety guidelines for Washington State)

Key Messages

- Share why the topic is important
- Educate on a topic
- Explain the process
- Address controversial topics
- Describe next steps
- Encourage action
 - Take a survey
 - Review a document
 - Provide comment
 - Attend an event

Equitable Engagement

Engaging hard-to-reach populations such as minority or low-income groups is critical to the planning process. We will utilize current demographic information for Pierce County to identify underserved and underrepresented populations in the County and develop and deploy targeted communication.

We also realize the importance of providing accessible opportunities for those who do not speak or read English, may not read the language spoken in their homes, may not have a home, and who may have other barriers that limit or prevent their ability to participate. The following tactics will be utilized:

- Engage local newspapers and publications serving non-English audiences
- Focus messaging on practical information about the project and how to get involved
- Develop materials in an appropriate number of languages other than English or provide non-English interpreter service contact information on selected materials in an appropriate number of languages other than English
- When possible, for in-person events:
 - Select community-based event venues that are accessible by transit and ADA-accessible
 - Offer food to encourage participation and design the meetings to include interactive components and/or incentives to attend
- Communicate access to and provide interpretation services upon request at in-person and virtual community events*
- Work through community organizations to best understand how to engage, share information and gather feedback

*(in-person and/or virtual pending safety guidelines for Washington)

Learn More

For further information, please contact the Pierce County Planning and Public Works Department Long Range Planning.



[PierceCountyWa.gov/CompPlan](https://www.piercecountywa.gov/CompPlan)

Phone: (253) 798-3736

Email: longrangeplanning@piercecountywa.gov