

City of Burlington

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Participation Plan

1. Public Participation

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide formal notice of opportunities to participate in the City of Burlington's 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update. Washington State law requires local governments to periodically review, and if necessary, update their comprehensive plans. State law also requires that local governments provide opportunities for the public to participate in this process. The Burlington Comprehensive Plan also contains specific goals and policies regarding public participation. This document describes how the City will ensure early and continuous public participation as required by Chapter 36.70A RCW.

1.2 Goals

1. All members of the public, particularly those who are traditionally least inclined, or least able, to participate will have timely access to good quality information and feel they are able to effectively engage in the comprehensive plan update project.
2. Maintain effective communication with adjacent municipalities, Skagit County, and the Skagit Council of Governments through direct communication.
3. Information on the comprehensive plan update project will be posted on the Community Development website.
4. Accommodate budgetary and timeline constraints by ensuring that public participation resources are focused on those elements of the update process likely to be of the greatest interest to the public.
5. Notify the public of all meetings, hearings, workshops, and legislative actions.
6. Members of the public will have a clear understanding of how their input will be used to inform the decision-making process.

1.3 Program Structure

In order to efficiently utilize the City's existing resources, this plan identifies both *essential* public participation strategies that *will* be employed at designated stages in the planning process, as well as *optional* public participation strategies which *may* be employed if time and resources are available. Detailed public participation procedures and schedules may be developed for individual components of the project as the project scope is further refined.

1.4 Methods

The public participation methods that will be employed by the City of Burlington may include, but are not limited to, the following techniques and strategies.

1. Public Meetings – Public meetings are informal public gatherings to solicit feedback on the City's planning efforts. Public meetings may involve presentations by city staff, question and answer sessions, and interactive activities. Meetings may take place before the City Council or Planning Commission.
2. Public Hearings – Public Hearings are a formal public process conducted and held before the City Council or the Planning Commission and precede legislative actions.
3. Community Development Department Website – The Community Development Department will periodically update its website. Relevant documents and schedules will be posted on the website along with announcements and notices concerning upcoming meetings, hearings, and public involvement opportunities.
4. Interdepartmental Coordination – The Community Development Department will regularly schedule meetings with representatives from other departments and government agencies involved in the comprehensive plan update to ensure coordination.
5. E-mail List – Planning and Community Development may maintain a list of individuals or groups who have expressed an interest in the Comprehensive Plan update process. The e-mail list will be used to disseminate announcements and notices.
6. Reports, Issue Papers, and Briefing Memos – Issue papers and briefing memos will provide focused guidance to decision makers and document the evolution of the update process. Issue papers and briefing memos will generally be posted on the department's website as they are prepared.
7. News Releases – At key steps the City may prepare press releases and distribute these to local papers.

8. Intergovernmental Coordination – Issues requiring a high level of intergovernmental coordination or decision making may be forwarded to the Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) for discussion and Planning Department staff will continue participating in regularly scheduled SCOG meetings. The City will also forward documents to State agencies as required by the Growth Management Act and comply with all applicable Countywide Planning Policies and inter-local agreements.
9. Public Notice –Notice of public hearings and meetings should be posted in public facilities and advertised in the Skagit Herald.
10. Interest Group Outreach & Communication – Provide updates to, and actively seek to involve, interest groups representing business and community concerns.

1.5 Essential Public Participation Strategies

Essential public participation strategies have been outlined below in section 2.1. In addition to these strategies, the City will ensure that any other meeting, hearing, notification, or procedure required by State law or Burlington Municipal Code is adequately addressed.

1.6 Availability of Documents

The City will make every effort to post all relevant documents on the Community Development Department website. Key documents will be available for review at the Community Development office and may be made available at the Burlington library prior to final adoption.

2. Project Steps and Participation Methods

The following schedule is intended to outline the final adoption process for the Burlington Comprehensive Plan Update.

1. Public Participation Plan and Project Scope – The Planning Commission and City Council will adopt a public participation plan and a preliminary project schedule.
 - *Essential Public Participation:* Public notice, Planning Commission hearing, City Council meeting, and posting on Community Development website.
2. Code and Comprehensive Plan Audit – The Burlington Municipal Code and comprehensive plan will be reviewed for consistency with recent changes to Washington State planning laws and for internal consistency. The results of this audit will be a Washington State Department of Commerce comprehensive plan update

checklist. The checklist will be used to refine the scope of the comprehensive plan update.

- *Essential Public Participation:* Department memo, public notice, Planning Commission Hearing, City Council meeting, intergovernmental coordination, department website posting.
3. Request for Proposals (RFPs) for Consulting Services – Issue RFPs for consulting services for non-motorized/transportation safety plan and assistance with impact fee analysis and capital facilities planning.
 - *Essential Public Participation:* Public notice, department website posting, City Council meeting (to approve any resulting contracts).
 4. Minor Code Amendments – Adopt minor code amendments as part of the City’s reoccurring, biannual, code update cycle.
 - *Essential Public Participation:* Public notice, department memo, Planning Commission Hearing, City Council meeting, intergovernmental coordination, and department website posting.
 5. Preliminary Adoption Process – The Planning Commission and City Council will review, and preliminarily approve, each component of the update process.
 - *Essential Public Participation:* Public notice, Planning Commission meeting, department memo, department website posting, and City Council meeting.
 6. Final Adoption Process – Notification will be provided the Washington State Department of Commerce, a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) determination will be issued, a 60-day comment period will be provided, and the Planning Commission and City Council will take final action to adopt the updated comprehensive plan and associated code provisions.
 - *Essential Public Participation:* Public notice, department memo, department website posting, intergovernmental coordination, Planning Commission hearing, and City Council hearing.