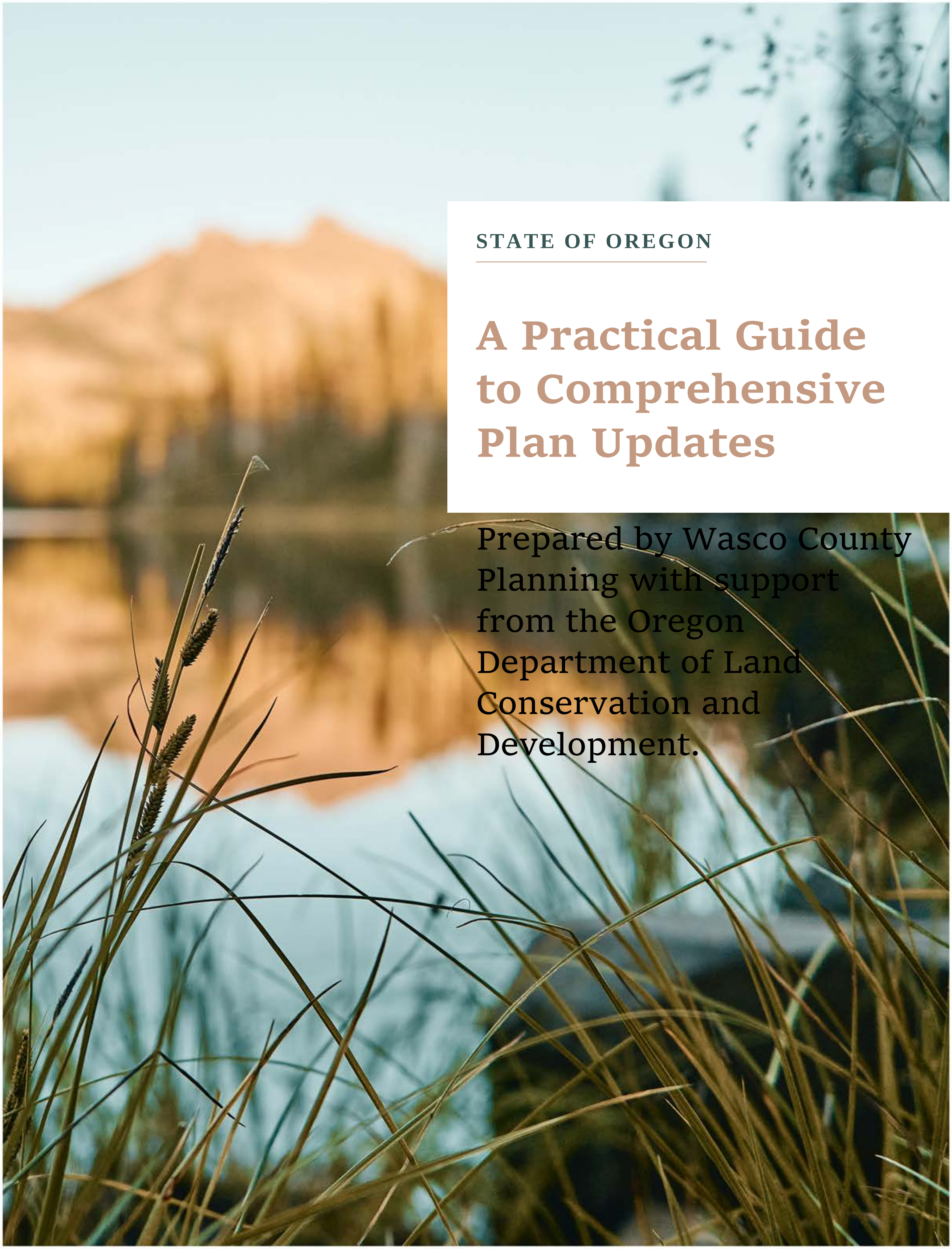


STATE OF OREGON

# A Practical Guide to Comprehensive Plan Updates

Prepared by Wasco County Planning with support from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development.

A GUIDE TO UPDATING YOUR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# Introduction

**Oregon Statewide Planning Goals are achieved through local comprehensive planning. The comprehensive plan is required to ensure consistency with Statewide Planning Goals. Once acknowledged, it is considered the controlling document for land use in the area covered by the plan.**

## Introduction- The Wasco County Story

At Wasco County, we had long identified an update to our Comprehensive Plan as a priority. The county's original plan was adopted in 1983 as a notably robust and effective plan that received guidance and direction from the county's then regional planning commissions and resource specific advisory committees. Decades of unstable funding and political will took its toll however, and by 2015 it contained an incomplete patchwork quilt of old and new regulations. Staff voiced concern the plan was increasingly at risk for litigation and was becoming irrelevant and burdensome to community needs and goals.

Due to significant staffing changes, a stable budget following several years of instability, and recognition of the value of an effective comprehensive plan by county commissioners, 2015 offered a unique opportunity to assess the needs of the department and community. Staff solicited formal feedback, and found that citizens, partners, and appointed and elected officials agreed it was the right time to update the county's vision and goals, and in doing so, update their comprehensive plan.

The County carefully considered the process by which to conduct that update, heavily prioritizing a clear and predictable process, availability of technical assistance, and confidence in the outcome and timeline.

In preparing for the update, we worked with staff from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and our Planning Commission to consider our procedural options. We also added staff capacity to complete a majority of the project work in-house.

To inform our discussions and project need assessment, we prepared two audits of the existing Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use and Development Ordinance: (1) an internal audit prepared by staff that were directly implementing the code, and (2) an external audit resulting from a Goal 3 and 4 Model Code Update grant provided by DLCD and managed independently by Angelo Planning Group (now MIG).

These audits provided a baseline for major areas where our plans were inconsistent or deviated from required state law. We were surprised to learn state law provided us with discretion to reevaluate many of our more prescriptive and restrictive policies. Considering this information in our efforts to scope the project informed the broader procedural question of whether to request Voluntary Periodic Review or update the plan by the more traditional Post Acknowledgment Plan Amendment path.

In considering the options, we knew our vision required consistency to be successful. We needed several years of consistent political will, funding, staffing, and scope of work to see this through. These work plan influencers have unique lifespans that typically vary from one to three years. After careful consideration, we found Voluntary Periodic Review provided us with a predictable timeline of three years, an agreed upon scope of work, and obligated technical assistance from state agencies to ensure fact-based decision making. It was also a valuable tool in developing new staff and empowering them to grow as professionals in the field. These factors were helpful in supporting budget requests; recruitment, retention, and succession of staff; the completion of a cohesive vision and plan; and ultimately, the overall success of what proved to be a major achievement.

For the last several decades only urban jurisdictions have been required to undertake mandatory periodic review or comprehensive plan updates. This meant for Wasco County that in order to follow the Periodic Review (PR) path, we had to ask the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) to approve our request for Voluntary Periodic Review (VPR).

Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) staff was frank with us that the likelihood of approval was a long shot due to many failed attempts by other jurisdictions in years past and the general lack of funding to support a PR request. This meant VPR would be a risk to initiate.

But Wasco County had identified several significant reasons for requesting this path, including: 1) offering legitimacy and broader awareness to rural comprehensive planning needs; 2) adhering to a timeline that would ensure we were meeting deadlines and able to adopt revisions; 3) providing a clear structure that would be transparent to our community; and 4) receiving additional assistance from DLCD staff and the Periodic Review Assistance Team (PRAT).

It very well may have been more cost efficient, easier, and less visible to update via a Post-Acknowledgment Plan Amendment (PAPA).

However, with preparation, DLCD assistance, and an impassioned speech to LCDC, we were approved for Periodic Review. We considered that a win not only for Wasco County, but for all Oregon counties who, even with fewer resources and with a much larger land base to manage than urban jurisdictions, are diligent in trying to uphold and support the framework of the Statewide Planning Goals.

One of our additional goals was to provide insight to our process and lessons learned to share with counterparts who do not have dedicated staff to undertake starting from the beginning, like we did. Planning at its heart is a collaborative practice, and we promised to deliver a guidebook for our counterparts so that they could save time, money, and learn from our successes and failures.

With support from DLCD and a small DLCD Technical Assistance Grant, this guidebook was created to assist jurisdictions across the state – to empower the local visioning process and add capacity where possible.

Periodic Review is the state’s comprehensive plan update program. As a requirement for cities with populations of 10,000+ and an option for counties, cities have traditionally received priority for Periodic Review funding assistance. Counties however, represent the largest amount of land and grapple with expansive resource protections, including farm and forest lands – two of the fundamental goals of the Statewide Land Use Planning program.

## Introduction- Your Path Forward

This guide will share information that is applicable to Comprehensive Plan Updates that are conducted through either Post Acknowledgment Plan Amendment (PAPA) or Voluntary Periodic Review (VPR). The Department of Land Conservation and Development are the subject experts for both processes, and your regional representative can provide some assistance to help you determine which process is right for your community.

We have a quick summary of considerations to think through when deciding between the two processes.

# Voluntary Periodic Review (VPR) versus the Post Acknowledgment Plan Amendment (PAPA)

Most planners are familiar with the PAPA process:

- ✓ Identify updates
- ✓ Conduct the analysis
- ✓ Invite participation
- ✓ Send notice to DLCD
- ✓ Send public notice
- ✓ Take the revisions through the legislative process
- ✓ If approved by your elected officials, send notice to DLCD and wait out the appeal period until the plan update is acknowledged. PAPA regulations are found in ORS 197.610-197.615.

Periodic Review has some added steps, most which are covered in the 2012 DLCD *The Complete Planner's Guide to Periodic Review*.

The rules can be found in ORS 197. 628-197. 650, but are also supplemented by OAR 660-025.

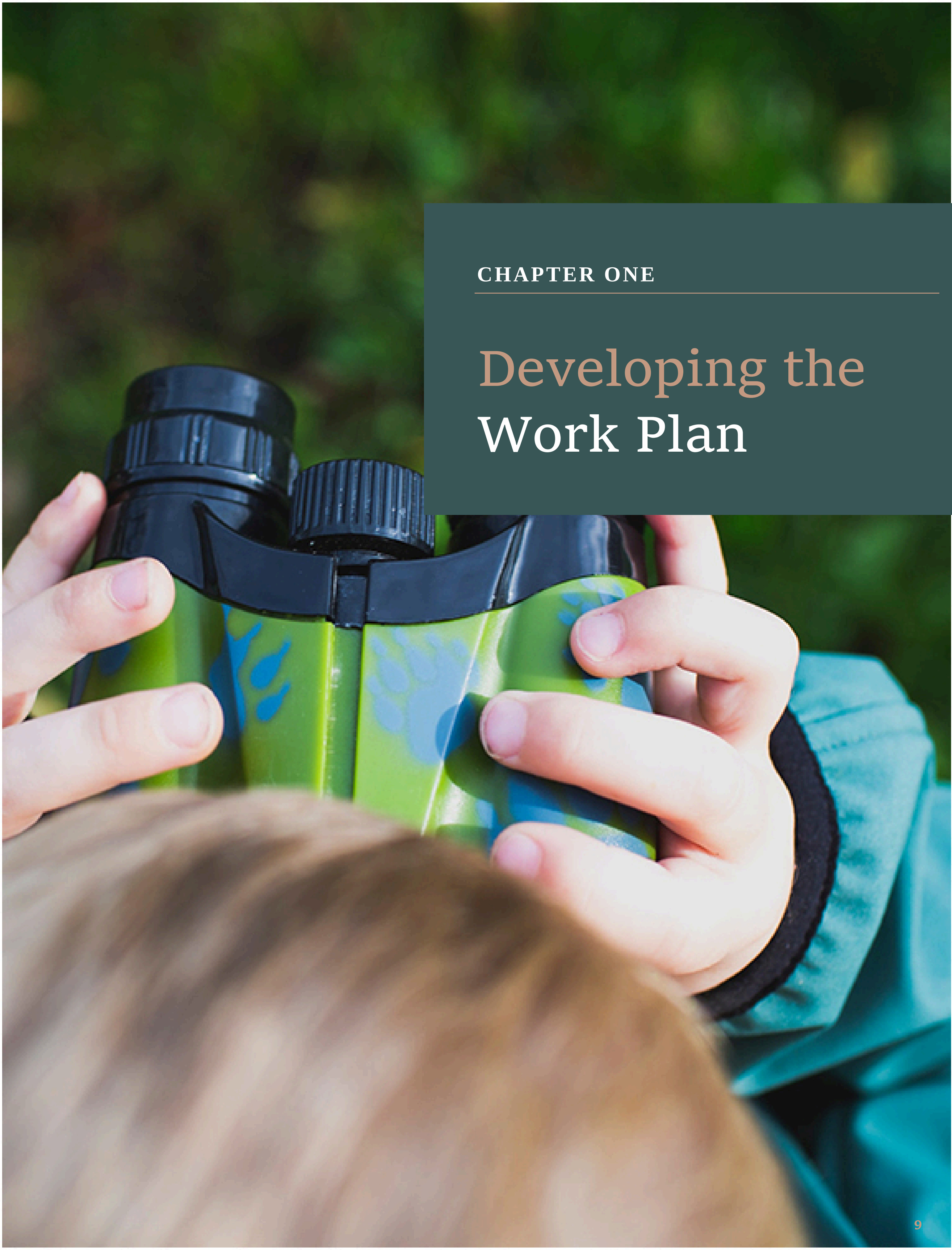
It’s recommended to review these rules before diving into the guide. Most critically, Periodic Review triggers a Goal 5 update as needed, and several added steps for public involvement. It also involves a maximum three year work plan where revisions are adopted on a rolling schedule.

**To summarize the added steps:**

1. You have to demonstrate the need for VPR on the basis of several criteria found in OAR 660-025-0035 and ORS 197.629.
2. You will need to make the request to LCDC for approval to commence PR.
3. If approved, you will then need to review your Citizen Involvement Plan (CIP), inform citizens through a newspaper notice, and conduct a plan evaluation.
4. The plan evaluation (or scoping) is a public process and also includes the review of your current plan by the Periodic Review Assistance Team (PRAT) to identify critical tasks for your work plan.
5. The work program is then approved by DLCD. (Both the plan evaluation phase and work program approval took us a year to complete).
6. You will then start working on your work tasks, according to the agreed upon schedule, submitting them on a rolling basis rather than all at once.
7. There are different forms and criteria for PR when you submit.

This structure was ultimately helpful for W to stay on track, but it's worth reviewing the process to right-size it for your update.

This guidebook and its recommendations can be applied for both PR and PAPA processes; we have left most of the procedural elements of a comprehensive plan update up to the experts and state law. Instead, what you will find are techniques, tools, templates, and case studies based on our experience of a broad comprehensive update. Our intent is to provide some basic foundational elements you can leverage to avoid re-creating the wheel and dodge some of the pain points we experienced.



CHAPTER ONE

# Developing the Work Plan

If you are planning on a Comprehensive Plan update, chances are you already have a strong sense of what areas need revision. However, building the work plan is an opportunity to get stakeholder and community investment in your update process, keep your project manageable, and ensure you are thinking through the updates to clearly understand challenges and opportunities. It's also a requirement for Periodic Review and a best practice for Post Acknowledgement Plan Amendments.

## Building Out the Work Plan

Periodic Review requires, ahead of initiating an update, the jurisdiction consult with citizens and DLCD staff to identify needed updates. This is a helpful process for identifying priorities and ensuring updates will support a comprehensive plan consistent with the Statewide Planning Goals. It's also a good practice for updates via the PAPA method; an organized work plan can offer transparency about the priorities and process.

The work plan is the first step to identify what your update needs is. We have outlined generally the process that can be used for both Periodic Review and Post Acknowledgment Plan Amendments, with some examples for scoping, prioritization of tasks, and key timeline considerations.

### Staff Review

Allowing DLCD staff to read through a current draft of the Comprehensive Plan and flag issues can be a great place to start. Subject experts, in particular, can offer insight into needed improvements for the various goals.

Internal staff conversations are also a great starting place, particularly if staff has been tracking needed changes over a period of time. You may also elect to conduct an internal audit of your Comprehensive Plan to assess policies, implementation measures, and inventories compared state law.

Comparative analysis with known updated Comprehensive Plans or sections of Comprehensive Plans is also an invaluable method for identifying possible needed updates or strategies that have been successful for other communities.

All of these forms of expert input can deliver a solid basis for one portion of your work plan, which is a required element of Periodic Review. Most of these conversations can be held over email, phone calls, or staff meetings and can be used to also discuss public input.

Some jurisdictions, like Wasco County, use the Statewide Land Use Planning Goals as the organizational framework for their comprehensive plans while others elect to group the goals thematically. To organize your staff input, having this framework in place will assure nothing gets missed; each goal has requirements, like inventories or specific policy needs, and opportunities to add components including policies, implementation measures, and historical information that is meaningful to your community. It could be as simple as generating a list for each goal of needs, wants, and optional updates or creating a database of state, local, and comparative inputs.

Staff review can also be a powerful tool to share with decision makers and the public. As we will share later on, one public request we received was to clearly demarcate through our mark up style which revisions were required by state or federal law and which were recommendations from staff, experts, or the public. This is a lot easier to achieve if you clearly identify mandatory versus optional updates early on.

**SYSTEM FOR TRACKING FUTURE PLAN AMENDMENTS**

**With staff turnover, disparate record keeping, and the tendency for time to reduce urgency of updates, the best method for ensuring plan updates address past pain points is to have all staff tracking requests or needs in a centralized database. Whether you use excel, a word doc, an annotated plan, or other method, having notes, feedback and requests in one central location will save you a lot of time when it comes to updates. It's helpful to record not only the location, issue, and suggested remedy for the plan but also the author and date. You can also use this method to track legislative updates that have an impact on your plans. This can ensure you are able to follow up with staff or the public at a later date for more information.**

## Public Review

Depending on how focused the intended update is, another helpful method for refining the work plan is to solicit public input. Public input is a required element for Periodic Review, but can also be helpful to ensure community buy in.

Public input can be accomplished through a broad "visioning" phase where by community members are asked to share the challenges and opportunities facing the jurisdiction for the next several decades. This can be fun, creative, and allow citizens to share what they are really concerned about and what direction they would like to see the County go in the next 20 years. Dot exercise, maps, polls, or charrettes are all tools that even someone with a basic knowledge of land use planning can use to give you feedback about what their priorities for development or preservation are.

Your *Citizen Involvement Plan* must be followed during Periodic Review, including during the work program development phase, so it’s also a good idea to review this document ahead of any official activities. Chapter 2 goes into more depth about Citizen Involvement.

If you have a limited *Citizen Involvement Plan* or are updating by PAPA, a more focused discussion with community members on key issues might be a helpful alternative or addition to your process to understand what the community sees as strengths and weaknesses of Comprehensive Plan policies and implementation measures. Interviews, meetings, or questionnaires sent to key agency partners or individuals can be tailored to their needs and availability. Focus groups, surveys, or open houses might also be less intensive than a visioning phase, but can deliver key insights into what the public considers priorities for your plan update.

In our experience, in addition to the community vision, which was easy to map to specific Statewide Goals, partner agencies offered excellent feedback and direction for revisions like resource map updates, changing procedures, or emerging trends. This gave us a thorough foundation to understand the needs and wants of staff, experts, and the public.

Here are some different ideas for visioning phase questions you can ask partners, community members, or others that we utilized in our update that helped us define a shared vision or areas where we needed more work to be done to understand consensus:

Q1

**Where would you like to see development happen in the County (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.)? Where would you like to see conservation or minimal development?**

- Use a map and have participants identify with stickers, drawings, words, or complete digitally via a software program like GIS
- You can also ask participants to identify key landmarks, sources of pride, or critical infrastructure

## Q2

**What types of development would you like to encourage? Discourage?**

- You can use pictures, 3-D models, or ask participants to draw visions
- Alternatively, you can turn this in to a dot exercises by listing various development types

## Q3

**What Statewide Planning Goals are priorities for you?**

- It helps to have a primer that provides an overview for staff, stakeholders, and the public
- You can ask participants to rank these in order of importance
- If staff has already identified critical goals, you may also use this to narrow down priorities

## Q4

**What do you need to achieve prosperity? Resiliency?**

- This can be accomplished in lots of fun and visual ways including keywords that can be translated into word clouds, images that can show visions of a future, or symbols that have meaning to your community.
- It's likely you will get responses that don't have a direct nexus to the comprehensive plan. However, understanding community values and priorities can lend you to out of the box solution development.

## Q5

**What do you think are the biggest opportunities for our County for the next 20 years? Challenges?**

- This is often a great opportunity to tease out Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) needs

## Q6

**Have you ever used the comprehensive plan? If so, how?**

- This is a great question for key stakeholders and staff. It can give you a good gut check on the things that work well and the things that don’t.

## Q7

**Do land use regulations impact your work in any way we should be aware of? How could we develop a document that would be more useful to you/your organization?**

- Also a great question for key stakeholders and staff.
- This could be modified to ask citizens broad questions about how/when/why they have interacted with land use planning.

**A** template questionnaire we used for key stakeholders is available in Appendix A.

Once we had administered these surveys, interviews, and workshop exercises, the next step was to compile the answers and identify key themes.  Data analysis is discussed in Chapter 3; many of those techniques can be used at this phase to provide a high-level summary to decision makers on emergent needs.

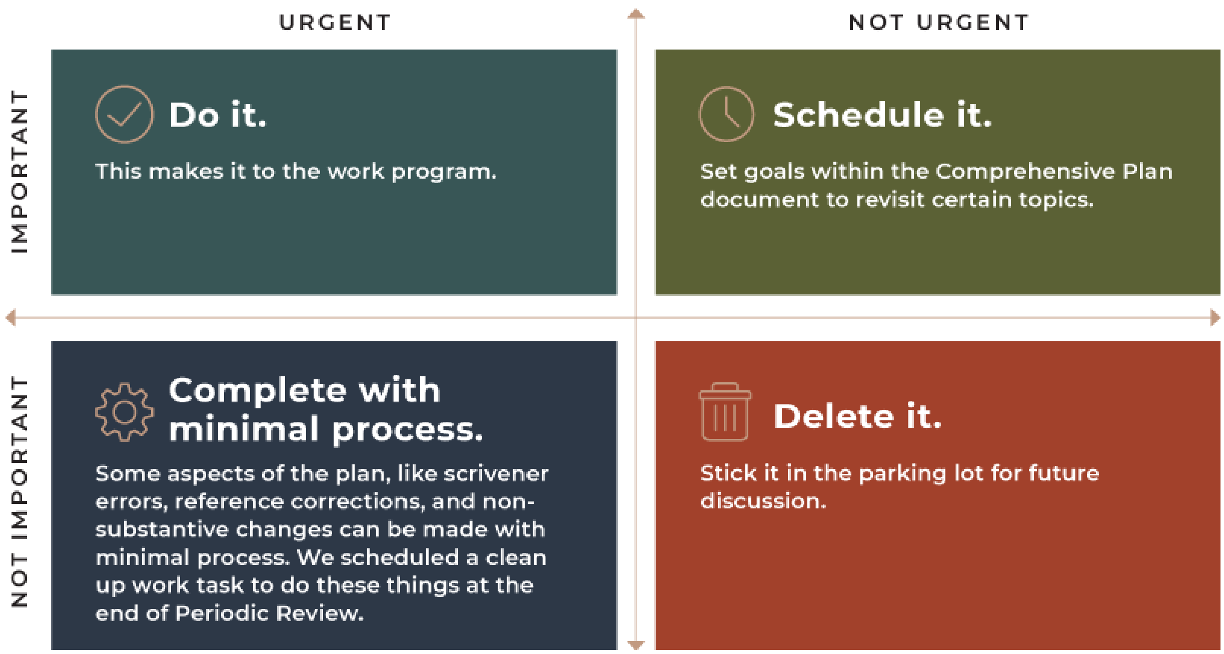
For example, we heard that not many of our partners were familiar with the Comprehensive Plan or its purpose. Similarly, most of the public had never interacted with the Comprehensive Plan.  Even staff suggested they infrequently reviewed the Comprehensive Plan.  As a result, one of our overall goals was to make the plan easy to use and packed with information staff, the public, and partners might need for development applications, research, to support grant requests, or other projects.

We also learned the different types of development people wanted to see in particular places throughout the County.  This enabled staff to think strategically about solutions we might discuss with the public to achieve these goals.

We shared the compilation of data in an outreach report, through mediums like infographics and whitepapers, and a prioritized list of Statewide Planning Goals that could meet identified needs.  This, coupled with a broader list of desired outcomes, was compiled for project management analysis.

This analysis, based on constraints of resources like capacity, helps you to determine what you have the ability to accomplish over the process of the update. It may be that your feedback has identified a wide list of priorities, and DLCD staff consultation has also identified some areas that are out of sync with Statewide Planning Goals. In our experience, your DLCD point person will want you to be realistic about what you can accomplish so may recommend removing some tasks.

**To complete this analysis we used a matrix method, similar to the Eisenhower Matrix:**




It helps to define ahead of time what rises to urgent and important to you. Compliance issues, generally, are both important and urgent. Similarly, if experts and the public both identify development or conservation needs that is likely to rise to the urgent and important box. With public input, it’s likely you will have vocal residents who feel passionately about one issue, but may be the only one championing those revisions. It helps to build community trust to acknowledge that input and schedule it for a future update when you can devote more attention.

We found there was a sizeable amount of non-substantive updates that could be easily revised with minimal process, but would overall improve our plan. This included our Introduction Section, which we will share more detail about in Chapter 3: Making the Plan Accessible.

Overall, the matrix was helpful in prioritizing the needs and wants to create an effective work plan.

1

DEVELOPING THE WORK PLAN

**DLCD’s recommended work plan format has the following key components:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Task number (for periodic review) |
| 2 | Relationship to Statewide Land Use Planning Goals (naming the Goal) |
| 3 | Task summary and a list of products related to the task |
| 4 | The proposed completion date |

If the intention is to accomplish the Comprehensive Plan update through a Post Acknowledgement Plan Amendment, you may still find a work plan helpful for messaging to the public and leadership about the update as well as keeping you on track and helping to avoid scope creep.

***For a work plan template, see Appendix B.***

# General Advice for the Work Plan:

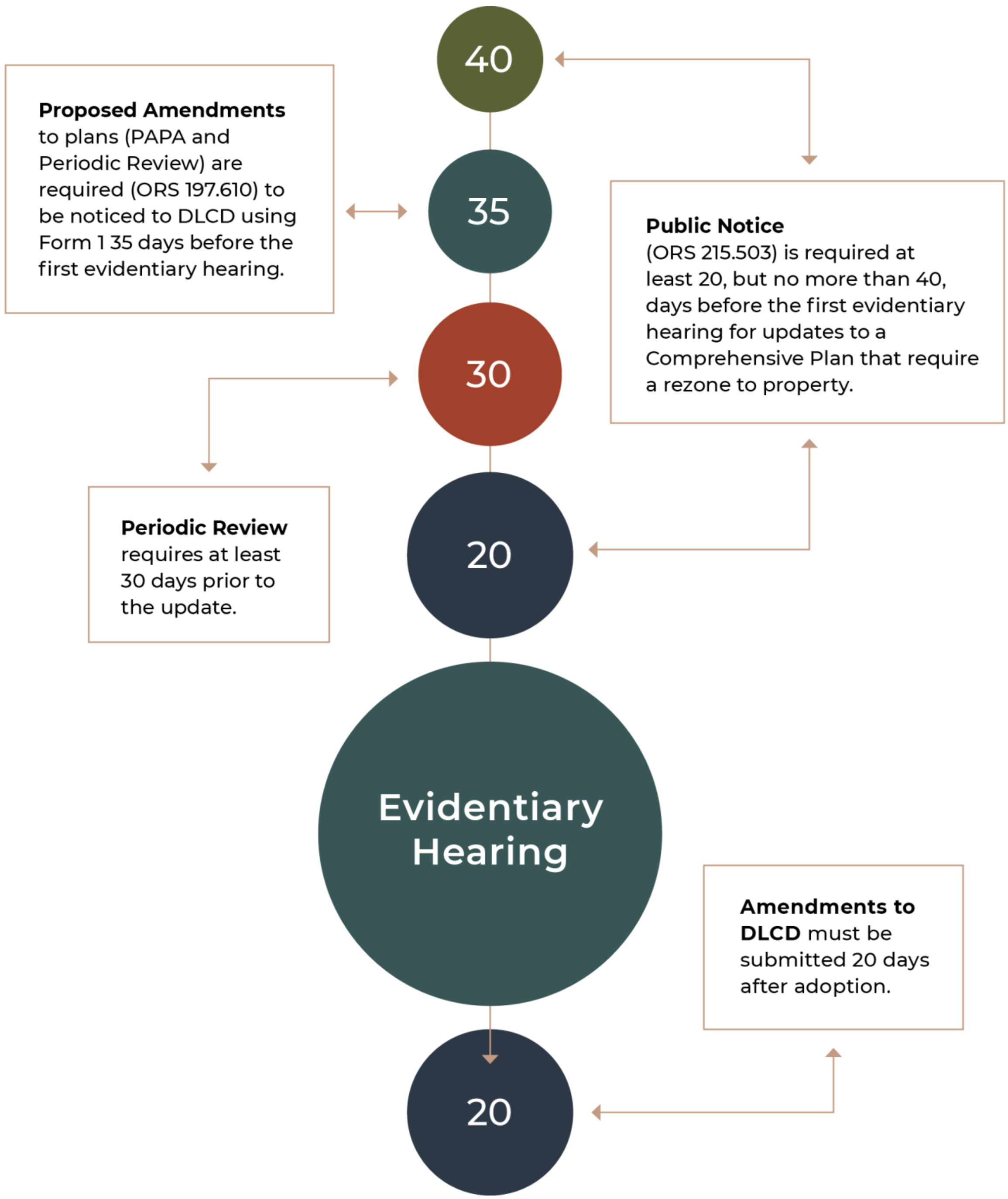
1 **Make sure you have a clear idea of your hearings schedule to reduce extra work.** The public, in particular, loves consistency and predictability. It is also much easier on staff if you have some predictability in your schedule to ensure deadlines are met and messaging is clear. If your update is a multi-year project, consider sticking with an identical process year to year (ex. Q1/Q2: Research, drafting and public input, Q3/Q4: Legislative process). If your update is via Periodic Review, complications with submitting individual work tasks to DLCD can be overcome by pairing like with like. Pairing items into yearly bundles will also go a long way to reduce meeting fatigue on the part of public and your Planning Commission/governing body, and any noticing costs.

2 **Accompany your written, specific work plan with higher level graphic process/work plan documents for the public.** A simple timeline visual can really help citizens better understand the process opposed to a more detailed work plan that can be overwhelming. We have a list of low cost graphic arts tools in Appendix H.

3 **Regardless of how much public outreach you do, some citizens will feel missed.** To improve your odds of reducing this frustration, plan your scope as a funnel, with the easier, more broad updates first followed by the more challenging, specific updates last. This will give citizens not only the maximum time to learn about critical updates, but will also familiarize them with the update process which can be intimidating and confusing.

4 **Keep a staff copy of your work plan with required deadlines** (ORS 215. 503 notice deadline, Form 1 deadline, hearings schedule) to help keep you on track.

# Significant Deadlines



### TIME ESTIMATES

To estimate our time for completion of each task for the work plan, Wasco County considered the following components for each: data/analysis, drafting, public input, and legislative process. Our legislative process takes a minimum of three months to complete, and the data/analysis took on average three to four months of full-time staff work. Wanting to dedicate ample time for public input, this meant by the end of the process each year’s work tasks took, on average, eleven months from start to adoption. However, this was not how we originally structured our work plan; we had to adjust our time frames mid-Periodic Review to consolidate tasks into one legislative process to reduce meeting fatigue, cost of notice, etc.

Luckily, because we had started our work plan with easy tasks that did not need significant input, we were able to adopt the first few tasks (Goals 1 and 2) in alignment with our work plan, which only gave us a few months to complete once we received work plan approval. The ease of those first few tasks allowed us to adjust our timelines to allow for a longer process.

Another thing we learned, that was a conflict with our planned deadlines, was which seasons worked best for public outreach with our community. This is an important consideration when planning your process. For instance, harvest and fire season also coincide with summer vacation for school kids, meaning summers were much less productive for citizen involvement. Similarly, winters can make traveling challenging in Wasco County, and the many holidays mean low participation. As we worked our way through the first year, it became apparent that winters were a great time for analysis and drafting, spring was the most ideal for higher levels of public involvement, and autumn was most ideal to kick off the legislative process.

Depending on your resources and community, you may find a similar rhythm for your update. You may also find that six months is too long for public input, and can complete work tasks within six to nine months. Whatever timeline you land on, our biggest recommendation would be to make sure and build in some extra time (especially at the end of your work plan) for unexpected revisions or needs.

## Finalizing the Work Plan

For Periodic Review, DLCD will approve or reject the work program or determine that no work plan/update is necessary. An approval is final and not appealable. A denial can be appealed to LCDC.

Simultaneously with your work plan, you should be evaluating your *Citizen Involvement Plan* and developing a plan for citizen involvement. The next Chapter provides some recommendations for Goal 1 activities.

CHAPTER TWO

# Citizen Involvement Analysis, Plans, and Reports

**Goal 1 is a cornerstone of the Oregon Statewide Land Use Planning Goals that aims to engage the public in the planning process. A required component of Periodic Review is a work plan consistent with your Community Involvement Plan (CIP).**

2



# Community Involvement Plan

**The Community Involvement Plan (CIP) is a Goal 1 requirement and outlines how your jurisdiction does the following:**

1. Provides opportunities for widespread public involvement
2. Establishes effective two-way communication with the public
3. Provides ability for the public to be involved in all phases of the planning process
4. Makes technical information easy to understand
5. Offers feedback mechanisms for policy-makers to respond to public input
6. Has adequate financial support for public involvement efforts

Whether your CIP is outdated or has been revised in keeping with your program, the outline offers a good start for developing your public participation plan. You want to think about making your information accessible to all potential audiences, establish both outreach and input goals and methods, and ensure you are clear with the public, partners, and decision makers how to participate in the process.

Funding considerations are a necessary part of the formula; at the outset you will want to establish any mandatory noticing costs as a base fee. You will also have meeting costs (hybrid platforms, meeting room fees, staff time, materials costs) and more to consider. Ahead of cost projections, however, it's helpful to nail down your public participation plan.

2



## Start with the Who

The public participation plan is also an opportunity to define your audience, or the "who" you are wanting to engage. This should be done with demographics that tell you the age ranges, languages, rates of poverty/internet access, household size, and other data points on the public you need to reach and involve in the update process. This is really critical to identify the best ways and methods to spend resources in engaging the public. Many organizations use the "spaghetti method" for communications: throwing everything against the wall to see what sticks. Alternatively, others might do the bare minimum of statutory requirements resulting in challenges down the line. A public participation plan can help you streamline your Goal 1 activities by focusing on the right size approach for your community and actually save you a lot of time and money, in contrast to the spaghetti or bare minimum approaches.

The easiest method to understand the "who" is to look at Census data. That will highlight some of those key demographics and give you a sense of the different populations you will want to target.

After you have a handle on the basic makeup of your community, the next step will be to understand your audiences to tailor your approach to them. This is a great opportunity to reach out to key stakeholders, partners, elected, and Citizen Advisory Group (if you have one) to gain some insight about your audiences.

**Questions you might ask include:**

- What motivates this audience to take action?
- Who does this audience trust to provide information?
- Where do they get information?
  (Friends/neighbors, church, newspaper, social media)
- What languages do they speak?
- Are there key opinion leaders within this audience who

# 2

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

- would be willing to be a champion for your update?
- Are there images, concepts, or messages that either connect with or offend this audience?

**When trying to explain transfer development rights, we used some examples from King County because they had a nice graphic element. This was a huge trigger for some participants who interpreted this as if King County would become a receiving area.**

**Alternatively, audiences generally really connected when staff was able to hook messages in with their sense of place…what makes their community unique. Using images from their landscape rather than stock images worked really well with our residents to make a connection and ensure them we were actively thinking about them and their sense of place.**

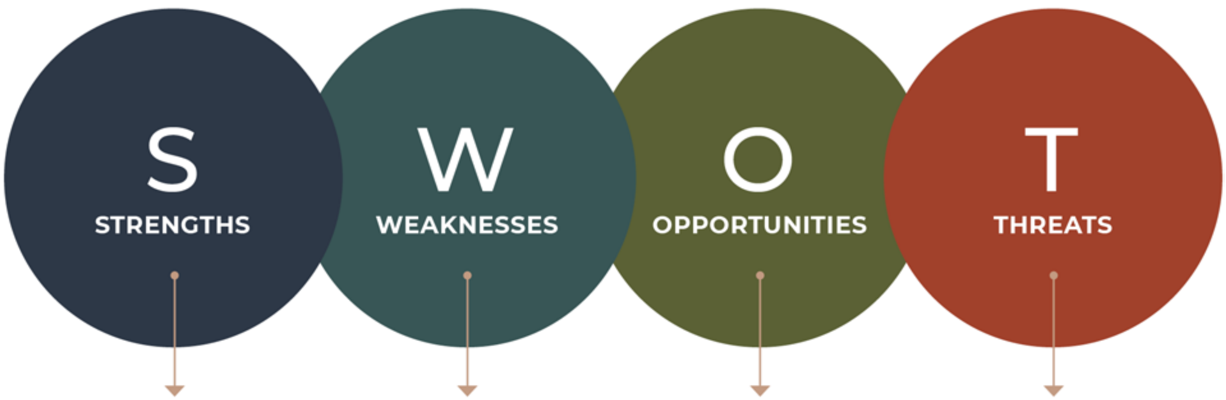
There is dedicated research to studying how different generations, genders, ethnicities, or other diverse populations communicate. You can utilize this research to improve your messaging and method for communication. There are also some universal truths to reach the broadest audiences:

- Images, infographics, and interactive content are popular with most people
- Keeping your word count down, avoiding jargon, and sticking to a 5-8th grade reading level will ensure most can participate. We have some recommendations for free or low-cost readability checkers in Appendix H.
- Research shows most people need to see a message at least seven times before it sticks; repetition is key.
- All audiences have a variety of learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, read/write). Try to incorporate all to maximize participation.
- The optimal attention span for an audience is **just 20** minutes. Combined with various learning styles for your audience, you should think about events and activities that are short, diverse, and focus on

action (what you want them to do or how the updates will impact them).

## SWOT Analysis

Once you have the foundation of who your audience is, you can then start with a S. W. O. T. (strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats) analysis.




**Focus on community strengths and the strengths of your program. How are you most successful at reaching people?**

**Think of other "wheres" and "hows" of your community.**

**When in doubt, put out a survey to ask directly.**

**How has your public outreach been unsuccessful in the past? Identify areas for improvement.**

**When in doubt, think of the inverse of your strengths for ideas on areas for improvement.**

**Thinking of your strengths and weaknesses, what are some tried and true and new ways to reach your community?**

**Think of the "what" and "when" to strengthen your "where" and "how."**

**Threats are risks to your engagement and how you might use strengths and opportunities to overcome them.**

**Think of the "why" and how that might encourage participation.**

## Strengths

For strengths, you want to understand "where" your population is, so you can meet them there. In developing the "who" of your audience, you likely have already had many insights in possible ways to reach your different target audiences. If you have identified key partnerships like social organizations, established local newspapers or other places where people get their information, social media preferences, locations where folks congregate, and other assets, you already have a foundation of "where" people go to learn and share. These are assets, or strengths, that you can rely on.

**Your list may look like:**

| AUDIENCE 1 | AUDIENCE 2 | AUDIENCE 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Loves social media, especially Facebook | 75% subscribes to newspaper | Prefers mailed notices |
| Shops at farmers market | Prefers local grocery store | Likes the specialty market |
| Prefers on demand content | Likes large events | Prefers small events |

You can then compare that with assets that you have in place: dedicated website, free public service announcements or press release coverage with local news, and/or low cost venue spaces for events.

Your strengths can also include "hows" like times of year, time of day, days of the week when participation tends to be high, sources of pride for your community that can be leveraged to encourage participation and local partners that might be good ambassadors. For instance, Wasco County residents are proud of many of our community organizations, who in turn were great champions for our update. We also relied on key partners, like our Soil and Water Conservation District, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, Fire Districts, and others to share our information with their audiences.

Your Planning Commission and elected officials can also help you brainstorm a basic list of strengths to help identify “where” your population is and “how” to reach them. Another good method is to launch a simple survey and promote in a few different places to get a good baseline.

In SWOT Analysis, the strength section is typically internally focused.  It is also helpful to think about ways you have been successful with public outreach in the past.  Assets, like a social media account or good website, can be included in an inventory of things you already do well.

## Weaknesses

Weaknesses for public outreach can look like the inverse of your strengths. You may not have a local newspaper, your community may have a strong digital divide, and you may have a woefully outdated Capital Improvements Plan. It may be that you have a sizable English as a Second Language (ESL) population that has not been engaged in the past due to the lack of materials provided in their language or low government trust. It could be that generally you have low turnout for events. Generating a list of potential challenges or roadblocks to public outreach is a great way to identify strategies that will ensure you are meeting Goal 1 and connecting with your various audiences. Keep in mind what is a weakness for one audience might be a strength for another. Weaknesses, like strengths, should be considered for all your audiences.

**Your list may look like:**

| AUDIENCE 1 | AUDIENCE 2 | AUDIENCE 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Does not attend events | Not comfortable with technology | Low trust of government |
| Does not read the newspaper | Not engaged in winter months | Minimal transportation access |

Weaknesses are also internally focused, so you might think about ways your organization or staff might be challenged. For instance, your staff may have low skill with web design, you may have minimal staffing, or you may have a tight budget. These things are not deal breakers, but it’s a good idea to know what constraints you have for the update to ensure you are strategic about where to invest your resources.

## Opportunities

Opportunities are an expansion of your strengths, informed by your weaknesses. They also focus more on the external pieces that can be leveraged for great public participation.  For instance, you may have identified a new organization that works with your ESL population as an opportunity to bridge that gap. Or, if you have active Facebook groups for areas in your community but also struggle with populations with limited internet, you may think about ways to leverage the Facebook groups to share information with friends and neighbors outside of social media. Opportunities look like “what” and “when”, but can also look like a more specific “where”.

One opportunity we had were a few active community organizations that were already talking to residents about similar ideas like economic development and resiliency.  By teaming up and having dual meetings, we brought in a lot more people particularly as the community was learning about our project. In part, we capitalized on the trust those community organizations had established with the residents, and in part it was because we were able to share resources – like free food, ride sharing, and easy access. Plates of cookies and punch created a party atmosphere that was welcoming and created an opportunity for informal conversation.

We had also identified the need to meet people where they are, instead of requiring them to come to us, and were lucky to have many low cost meetings spaces that served like neighborhood community centers.  This was a great way to make our citizens feel safe, as we were on "their turf".  Meeting people closer to home was absolutely fundamental to our success.

Champions, community spaces or events, or public service announcement allotments with local media are all examples of external opportunities that can help bridge the gap for your project.

## Threats

Threats can be broad obstacles to successful public outreach, but its best at this phase of your analysis if you are specific. Having covered the who, what, when, where, and how, the remaining question is “why”. Threat analysis considers the why, or what motivates individuals to take time away from other things to participate. This is critical to your messaging and should be honed for each aspect of your plan update. You can use strengths to avoid threats and leverage your opportunities, or the combination of strengths and weaknesses, to reduce threats.

A threat to successful completion of your plan may be decision makers wanting to delay because they feel like not enough citizens were involved. You may think about reasons why citizens wouldn’t be involved, and use that to improve your “who, what, when, where, and how.”  Another threat that ties into Goal 1 is that the large amount of technical information involved in a plan update can be alienating to many people. Threats can also be viewed as opportunities for strengthening your overall public participation plan.

During our process, we realized that there was a strong digital and cultural divide in places in our County. That suggested that holding multiple events in multiple locations would be successful, particularly if we tailored invitations to the local community. For instance, we had some communities where the best way to reach residents was to send a postcard invitation, while others preferred flyers in local shops, and still others liked notices on bills.

We also heard from many people that summers were a terrible time to hold events, because they conflicted with harvest, and found that the dinner hour mid-week was often the best time to bring folks out…but we needed to make sure our event didn’t conflict with other community events, particularly during the school year. That meant we could focus on having events in the Winter and Spring and use the summer to target other audiences that didn’t have time for events but wanted to engage with on demand content like surveys, polls, or virtual open houses. These external obstacles were things we identified and were able to mitigate to ensure for maximum participation.

Once you have completed an analysis, you can start to develop your public participation plan.

***For a SWOT analysis worksheet, see Appendix D.***

## Public Participation Plan

Your public participation plan can be detailed or it can be short, depending on the breadth of your update, available resources, and timeline. It will consist of several parts, much of what you gathered during the demographic and SWOT analysis, and provide direction for staff, elected officials, and your community on how you intend to encourage engagement and conduct outreach through the life of the update.

**Some key components are:**

- Project goals. These should include identified opportunities, particularly if they have come from review of strengths and weaknesses.
- List of key stakeholders. Invite help to brainstorm champions, important reviewing bodies, and other agencies/organizations who will be interested to participate in the update. If you are updating through Periodic Review, this will include your Periodic Review Assistance Team (PRAT).
- Your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion principles.
- A schedule overview of the update and how engagement fits in to the process. It’s helpful to also include any statutory timelines, like official notices.
- Mechanisms for outreach.
- Mechanisms for input.
- How you will measure success of your public participation. Do you have a percentage of the population in mind as goal? How will you know if your different modes of communication are successful? Decision makers and community members often want to

understand the Return on Investment (ROI) of communication efforts, so having a few identified targets will help you showcase successes or areas for improvement.

- Outcomes. What are the types of analysis/reports you are likely to produce as a result of public participation?

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Your DEI strategy will rely heavily on your demographic data and SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis hopefully helped you to identify underrepresented populations in your community and possible opportunities to engage them.

**Here are some strategies to consider:**

- Provide materials in multiple languages
- Have interpreters available for events on demand(including American Sign Language)
- Use a variety of visual, audio, and written communications to incorporate all learning and communication styles and access to households without internet.
- Offer multiple public comment formats
- Partner with trusted community leaders to bring participants to the table
- Acknowledge cultural or other bias
- Consider venues that are easily accessible by the widest number of people, especially for populations with limited transit options

- Consider venues that are "neutral"/ public spaces where all feel welcome
- Provide food, beverages, childcare, gift cards or other amenities that might eliminate barriers to participation
- Follow the American Planning Association's guidelines on diversity and inclusion
- Follow ADA standards for readability and accessibility including:
  - Ensuring venues are wheelchair accessible
  - Considering large font sizes
  - Including Alt Text for images
  - Providing close captioning for videos
  - Using clean typography
  - We also found it helpful to share ground rules for meetings ahead of time and transparency about the process, limitations, and impact of participation.

## Outreach Mechanisms

Beyond statutory requirements, there are a lot of low and no cost tools and techniques even a small program can leverage to get the word out about updates.

Following is a list of methods and techniques we used, separated by technology demands, including skill. We defined high tech as things that take fairly sophisticated skills for both staff and users. Low tech suggestions are things most of the population should meet the threshold for engagement and are fairly easy for staff to implement. No tech are items that require no technology to engage or implement.

To generate this list, we conducted extensive research on best practices from not only planning but other professions.

| METHOD | DESCRIPTION | COST | HIGH TECH | LOW TECH | NO TECH |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Advertisements** | Newspaper, radio, & online | $$$ | | ● | ● |
| **Ask A Planner** | Website button for email or online event that allows for interactive Q&A. This method comes from Reddit, but we found it worked best on Facebook live stream or via email in our community | $ | ● | | |
| **Champions/ Partners** | Partners or champions sharing through various methods including bills, newsletters, or during events | 0 | | | ● |
| **Code Annotation** | Online tool for people to comment and ask questions in the text | $$$ | ● | | |
| **Community Station** | Digital or in person station where people can find handouts, interact with a tablet, find QR codes for surveys, etc. at places people frequent | $$ | ● | ● | ● |
| **Email Newsletter** | Newsletter emails to subscribers | $ | ● | | |
| **Mail Newsletter** | Newsletter mailed to subscribers | $$$ | | ● | |
| **Explainer Videos** | Videos for social media, websites, on handouts or at the community station | $$ | ● | | |
| **FAQs** | Online and interactive or paper handout | $ | ● | | ● |
| **Flyers** | Flyers for posting that can also have high tech components with QR codes or website addresses | $ | ● | | ● |
| **Mailers** | Standard notice, can include high tech interaction with web address or QR Codes | $$$$ | ● | | ● |
| **One Sheet Summaries** | Handouts that can be downloaded or interactive as well | $ | ● | | ● |
| **Open Houses** | Virtual or in person open houses to share drafts and solicit feedback | $ | ● | ● | ● |
| **Presentations** | In person, virtual, or hybrid. Can make interactive with tools like Mentimeter. | $ | ● | ● | ● |
| **Social Media** | Social media pages, hashtags, and link sharing | $ | ● | | |
| **Story Maps** | Use GIS tools to tell a visual story about plan updates | $$ | ● | | |
| **Tabling/Events** | Attending community events, can include high tech through interactive tools or QR codes | $ | ● | ● | ● |
| **Traditional Media** | Press releases to news and radio. Can refer to website | $ | | ● | ● |
| **Website** | Either a standalone project website or a dedicated landing page in your organizational website with a variety of outreach and engagement tools | $$ | ● | ● | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Word of Mouth** | Leverage citizens to spread the word | 0 | | | ● |
| **Door-to-Door** | Canvas areas for face to face contact | $$ | | | ● |
| **Work Sessions** | Special events (virtual, in person or hybrid) that can use both digital and non-digital methods for sharing information | $ | | ● | ● |

## Input Mechanisms

Many of the tools for outreach can help you generate comments or feedback for your update. Providing a variety of opportunities for public input can build confidence not only with the public but also decision makers that your process has been inclusive and thorough.

We found most audiences prefer having something to react to or engage with; broader, open ended asks tended to generate more confusion than results unless there was dedicated direction and guidance. Open ended asks are great for small groups or can also be facilitated through various opportunities to provide detail comment. Conversely, you can achieve a higher volume of participation by asking for specific reactions to different materials, like plan language, land use planning tools or solutions, or inventories.

| METHOD | DESCRIPTION | COST | HIGH TECH | LOW TECH | NO TECH |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Comment Cards/Comment Submittal Functions** | Index cards, website forms, or other tools to allow for comments (including anonymous). This is also a great way to gain emails for your newsletters | $ | ● | ● | ● |
| **Code Annotation** | Online tool for people to comment and ask questions in the text | $$$ | ● | | |
| **Community Station** | Digital or in person station where people can find handouts, interact with a tablet, find QR codes for surveys, etc. at places people frequent | $$ | ● | ● | ● |
| **Dot Exercises, Sticky Notes, etc.** | At events (or on the website) ask participants specific questions to get their reactions or responses. Make sure to leave room for comments | $ | ● | ● | ● |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GIS Platform** | Use GIS for residents to input information on maps | $$ | ● | | |
| **Meeting kiosk** | Establish a meeting kiosk using a tablet or other simple device where people can provide simple thumbs up or down responses | $$ | | ● | |
| **Email Comments** | Sharing email address for comments | 0 | | ● | |
| **Engagement Stories** | Ask citizens to share input and ideas with community using hashtags on social media | $$ | ● | | |
| **Events** | At any events, including tabling, solicit feedback and have someone recording (or record with technology) comment. Can also use various meeting tools like surveys to get feedback | $ | ● | ● | ● |
| **Mailed Letters** | Share your address for mailed comments | 0 | | | ● |
| **Self-addressed stamped envelope** | Provide a self-addressed stamped envelope and questionnaire or comment card for citizens to provide input | $$$ | | | ● |
| **Surveys and Polls** | Share through various outreach methods, including website, social media, and with handouts | $ | ● | ● | ● |
| **Voicemail Box** | Establish a voicemail box where citizens can call in with comments | $$ | | ● | |
| **Comment box** | Establish a comment box at one or more locations for people to leave comments | $ | | | ● |
| **Focus group** | Coordinate a representative focus group to respond to concepts or drafts | $$ | | | ● |
| **Interviews** | Conduct in person or phone interviews with key stakeholders | $ | | ● | ● |
| **Telephone Polls** | Call households to gather their responses | $$$ | | ● | |

# Measuring Success

Depending on what methods you use to communicate with your community, there are a lot of options for measuring success. Ask your decision making body to set a goal for total participation. That may be a percentage of your total population, or it may be a number of comments. Similarly, decision makers may want to understand the value of their investment. In the outreach report, we will share some ideas and a template for ways to analyze and share your results.

## Outcomes

Beyond the outreach report, there may be other actions you complete as a result of input or questions. It can be helpful to think ahead about what those might look like, as way to show your community there are follow up actions resulting from their feedback. If you are in the work plan development phase, one outcome is a complete work plan based on community identified priorities (this is a requirement of Periodic Review). As you start to work through tasks in the work plan, outcomes might be specific or general.

**Some examples of outcomes include:**

- An evolving Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document
- A whitepaper covering feedback and any staff analysis
- Alternatives analysis or Economic, Environmental, Social, Energy (ESEE) analysis
- Maps or other visuals
- An input results infographic or report (for things like surveys, dot exercises) shared on various platforms

Generally, your participant's time is valuable and they want to know you will listen and use their feedback. Making sure to follow up and share results is a key way to keep engagement up and your community invested in the project.

***We have shared a template for a Public Participation Plan in Appendix E.***

## Outreach Report

Another useful tool with all Goal 1 efforts is to produce an outreach report. This may be done at different phases of your update or at the end to summarize all your efforts, successes, and areas for future improvements. This has been an incredible messaging tool for staff, elected officials, and our Planning Commission to showcase the efforts we made beyond statutory requirements to engage the public. It's also useful for preparing staff reports and as a supplement to DLCD final submittal.

**The outreach report includes:**

- An executive summary of the project and process, with reference to the guiding documents like the CIP and PPP.
- A summary of all events and activities. This can include screenshots, photos, attendance numbers, a summary, and other vital information. We typically added written comments or other feedback (like event exercises) to an appendix for easy reading.
- Analysis of engagement and other success measures.
- Survey and poll results.

During the visioning phase, or the initial Periodic Review phase prior to approval of our work plan, we used the outreach report to also tease out key themes we heard from the public to narrow the scope of the project. Staff used techniques like word clouds, the Statewide Planning Goal structure, and statistics to clearly call out priorities for the update identified by community members.

***There is an outreach report template in Appendix F.***

# 2

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

## SOCIAL MEDIA, "TROLLS," COMMENTS, AND ARCHIVING

Social Media was a successful tool for us to spread the word and increase online engagement during our update process. However, if you do not currently utilize social media you will need to evaluate how to address troll behavior, comments, and archive all interaction for public records requests and other state law archival requirements.

To address troll behavior, you will want to have a brief policy that is readily available that explains what type of language (profanity, violent, discriminatory ) what will not be tolerated and what the consequences are (removal of content, flag, blocking )  Comments that trigger action by the agency need to be preserved. The general recommendation is to preserve any comments removed for violation of comment terms.

Social media posts are considered public record if made on official government account or private account used to distribute information for a public agency and content being posted is unique. Redundant content does not need to be preserved; if content is posted on a website, for example, that can serve as the primary record. As public record, comments or engagement need to be archived. Services that archive for you can be costly. If you estimate a low volume of comments, it may be something staff can manage through a log/screenshot approach.

Direct messaging, or IM-ing, is not recommended as it will require additional record keeping measures to adhere to public records laws.

Instead, it is recommended you draft an automated or boilerplate response to send to direct messages, letting users know that the account does not respond to direct messages and giving them the appropriate methods for contact including email and phone numbers. Include the response in your social media work plan for easy copy and paste into messages.

Where available, you should also consider turning off the ability for people to direct message and notice that it is disabled in your disclosure statement, along with correct contact information.

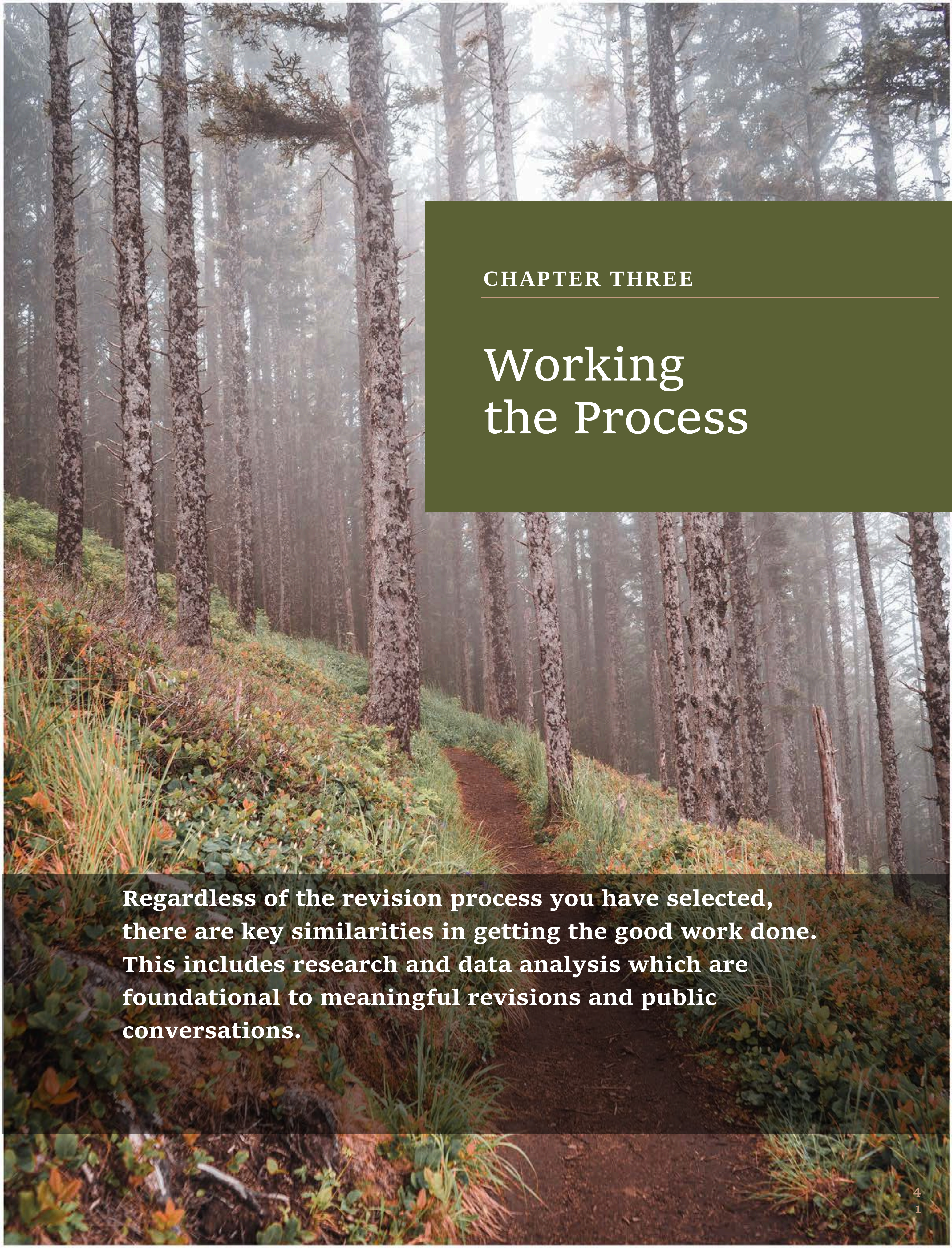
There may be instances where you need to direct message people, either as an investigative tool or in the case where you need to address comments but do not have an individual's contact information. In those cases, or other similar instances, you will need to keep copies of the messages in an archive.

You can screenshot or snip messages or capture in similar way so that the archive reflects the time and date stamp as well as participants and full text/images. All data should be well labelled and stored in an easy to search folder.

The National Archives and Records Administration makes some recommendations about archiving information, best practices for social media records management, and a survey of external tools available for records: https://www.archives. gov/files/records-mgmt/resources/socialmediacapture.pdf

The best public participation plan is one that can be nimble and adapt to any changes in your work plan, specific needs of each task, and other limitations. As a foundation to your update, having a clear idea of your input and output methods, how you will reach diverse communities, and how to address some of the pain points of citizen involvement can make your update process not only effective, but also fun.

In the next Chapter, we review the update process.

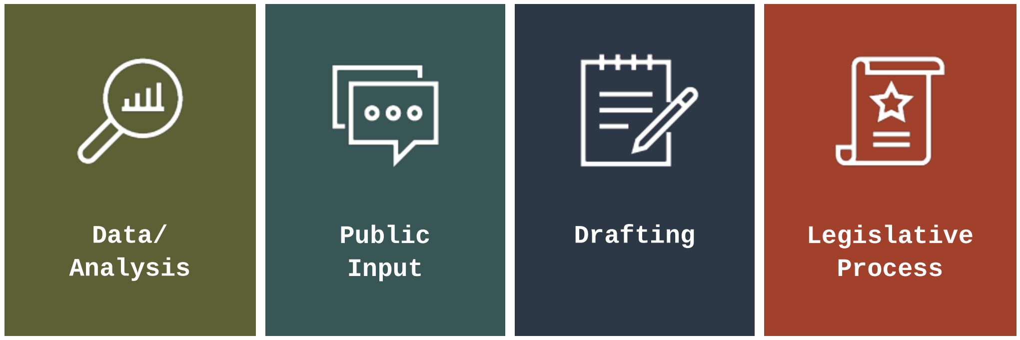


CHAPTER THREE

# Working the Process

**Regardless of the revision process you have selected, there are key similarities in getting the good work done. This includes research and data analysis which are foundational to meaningful revisions and public conversations.**

**With your work and communication plan in place, staff can begin the work to revise your plan. It can be helpful to break down the process into steps:**




## Data/Analysis

If you took the Periodic Review path, the evaluation phase required a focus on economic development, needed housing, transportation, public facilities and services, and urbanization, or Statewide Land Use Planning Goals 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14. You may have found some of these goals relevant, while reducing or replacing the focus with other goals. Periodic Review also triggers a specific rule (OAR 660-023) to address any aspects of Goal 5 that haven't been updated. Even if you are choosing to use the PAPA process for your update, this can serve as a useful framework for evaluating and conducting your update.

Depending on what goal you are addressing, the data and analysis you prepare ahead of citizen involvement will vary in breadth and depth. Generally, the type of data you may need to prepare and review could include: demographic/census data, census of agriculture data, inventory of existing conditions, population or other community forecasts, state plans or legislative changes, and other relevant plans. During the development of your work plan, outreach with stakeholders and community members may have also flagged other data sources that will help with your revisions.

For the Goals we evaluated (1-14), here are some examples of documents we reviewed, ideas we had, and specific targets for community engagement:

## Goal 1

**Citizen Involvement**

➔ Planning Commission, Advisory Committees or Groups

- Are they still active/relevant?
- What is the process for appointment?
- Are the rules still sufficient, or do they need to be revised?

➔ Citizen Involvement Plan

- Is it still relevant?
- Does it reflect changes to our program, including technology, media, and meetings?
- How can we improve to ensure for citizen involvement?

➔ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Principles

- ADA Compliance
- Accessibility considerations
- Multi-media needs
- Translation services
- Are providing written, verbal, and multi-media information written in an accessible way? (See Appendix H for tools)
- How do we adjust notices and meetings to encourage broad participation?
- Do our plans have any cultural or other biases we need to remove, including outdated language like gendered terms?

## Goal 2

**Land Use Planning**

**We reviewed all our plans, and asked ourselves the following questions:**

- Are plans consistent?
- How often are we reviewing plans?
- Are there any tools (like incentives or education) we can offer to achieve objectives and ensure for engagement?
- Are there components of our plan that show bias or are problematic?
- How can we make implementation measures, part of the Comprehensive Plan, actionable?
- Are the Goal Exceptions listed in the Comprehensive Plan organized in a way, with the level of detail, needed by planners and citizens?
- How can we generally make the Comprehensive Plan more usable?

## Goal 3

**Agricultural Lands**

- Are the policies and implementation measures up to date?
- Is our zoning code/land use ordinance consistent with state law?
- How are we ensuring for protection of agricultural lands from conversion?
- Are there any uses allowed by state law we do not currently allow that we would like to see? What are the impacts of those new uses?
- Is the soil capability class data up to date?

- What is our total number of agricultural acres? What are the dominant and emergent crops?
- Does the demographic of farmers (aging, in particular) impact future of farm land?

## Goal 4 **Forest Lands**

- Are there specific wildfire considerations in forest lands that should be included?
- How do we ensure for coordination with State agencies?
- What are our policies related to dwellings in the forest zones?
- What other resource, aside from timber, do our forest lands contain? How do we protect these assets?
- We conducted ownership analysis to understand public/private holding and the potential impacts

## Goal 5 **Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, Open Spaces**

- Resource Inventories
  - Is our historical/cultural/archaeological inventory up to date with the National Historic Register?
  - Do we need any amendments or analysis to ensure protections of Oregon State Scenic Waterways or the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers?
  - Are all inventories in the plan and up to date?
  - Have any new areas been designated a critical groundwater area?

- Are our protections for riparian areas/wetlands consistent with state law? Where are there references to the National Wetland Inventory that need to be revised to the State Wetland Inventory?
- Have new Oregon Recreation Trails been designated in our community?
- Have there been any amendments to the Oregon State Register of Natural Heritage Resources?
- With commercial energy facilities, have we inventoried facilities as a significant energy source?
- Do we need to amend open space or scenic views/sites inventories? How are we implementing protections for these spaces?

➔ ESEE Analysis (See Appendix I for a template)

- Can the ESEE analysis be leveraged to also look at diversity, equity and inclusion?
- Does the ESEE analysis consider natural hazards and resiliency?
- How do energy considerations get reconciled with resource protections?
- How will the ESEE analysis be shared?
- Are there Ordinance or Code amendments that need to happen as the result of the ESEE Analysis/Plan for Protection?

➔ Adjusting Goal 5 resources from OAR 660 Division 16 to 23

➔ Did we address all resources in OAR 660 23?

➔ Are corresponding maps up to date, and consistent with agency partner maps (like ODFW or DSL State Wetland Inventory)?

➔ If we update maps, are there corresponding criteria or regulations that also need revision?

➔ Are the references up to date?

## CASE STUDY: GOAL 5 UPDATES

During work plan development for periodic review, DLCD specialists will provide a review of the current Comprehensive Plan and make recommendations for consistency with current rules. For Wasco County, Goal 5 needed updates for consistency. In most cases, these were minor adjustments to terms or references. However, the most controversial issue Wasco County faced during its Comprehensive Plan Update was an update to the Sensitive Wildlife (Deer and Elk) Map and Overlay Zone.

The map amendments had been made in 2012 by ODFW, so there were mandatory changes that for transparency that needed to be adopted into the Wasco County Comprehensive Plan Zoning Map. The mandatory nature of the amendments did not lessen the considerable concern of residents. To help reduce adverse impacts to property owners, Wasco County staff worked for several years with ODFW to find “wins” that would reduce adverse impact based on our ESEE analysis.

The most significant change was the inclusion of a considerable amount of EFU rangeland that had previously been excluded because of the large minimum parcel size (160 acres). However, commercial energy projects and other conditional use developments, considered by ODFW to be substantial conversion, rendered the protections of a large parcel size ineffective. Coupled with developers often being surprised at later stages of development that the Wasco County Sensitive Wildlife Map and ODFW map diverged, Wasco County recognized the need to make the maps consistent.

Because the majority of EFU uses have been considered to have no impacts to wildlife habitat, Wasco County was able to add in new exemptions for farm uses. This not only kept much of the newly included area at status quo, but also was a benefit to other property owners who used to be subject to additional review for farm uses. This, along with the concept that CUPs in Wasco County are always reviewed by ODFW regardless of the map, formed the basis of very strong and succinct messaging to the public that the impacts should be minimal. Wasco County staff worked in tandem with ODFW to develop this messaging so it could be communicated via handouts, project website, drafts, and during meetings. ODFW attended several events alongside Wasco County Planning to support the messaging and answer specific questions.

There were some residents who felt any change was a threat to their property rights and were very vocal during the legislative process. One of the biggest frustrations was the amount and length of materials. People also felt blindsided, despite several years of advanced warning about the proposed revision, and over six months of public process to provide comment.

Here are some lessons learned from that experience:

- Having one or two sheet summaries are really helpful to citizens, especially if written in an easy to understand way
- For controversial topics, spend a lot of time on outreach and find champions.
- Give citizens frequent reminders on how to participate in land use proceedings/provide comment.
- Make sure to prepare a summary for leadership and interested citizens on the nexus of proposed revisions to state or federal law
- Legislative processes do not fall under ex parte, so leadership should be prepared with how to handle public comment/contact

## Goal 6

**Air, Water, and Land Resource Quality**

- TMDL Implementation Plans
- DEQ Resources
  - Air Quality Index
  - Water Quality Reports
  - Drinking Water Protection Information
  - Brownfield Assessments
- Other issues like noxious weeds, outdoor lighting/dark skies, waste water management, and landfill/solid waste

## Goal 7

**Natural Hazards**

- Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- Evacuation/Response Plan
- Relevant Transportation Plans
- Cascadia Plan
- Are natural hazards plans up to date?
- If we more frequently update our natural hazards plan, how can we develop more “evergreen” policies in the Comp Plan that reflect our natural hazard work?
- Is our data up to date?
- Floodplain or other hazard maps

## Goal 8

**Recreational Needs**

- Regional or local parks master plans or surveys
- Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
- Recreation trails designated through Goal 5
- Events occurring on transportation network that impact adjacent uses (Cycle Oregon or other biking activities, car races or expositions)
- Open space requirements or needs
- Illegal access of private property for recreation

## Goal 9

**Economic Development**

- Economic Opportunities Analysis
- Buildable Lands Inventory
- Strategic Plans/Local or Regional Economic Development Plans
- What are emergent trends for agriculture and forestry?

## Goal 10

**Housing**

- Housing Needs Analysis
- Buildable Lands Inventory
- Census Data/Population Forecast
- Housing Strategy Reports (Urban Areas)
- Statewide Housing Summit/Initiatives

## Goal 11

**Public Facilities**

- Rural Service Center Waste Water or Water Plans
- Public Facilities Plans
- Community Public Facilities Plans

## Goal 12

**Transportation**

- Transportation Systems Plan
- Transportation Planning Rule (OAR 660-012-0060)
- Transit Plans

## Goal 13

**Energy Conservation**

- Energy Facility Assessments or Plans
- Energy Facility Inventories
- Climate Change Plans/Resiliency Plans or Visions

## Goal 14

**Urbanization**

- Population Forecasts
- Urban Area Expansion Proposals/Buildable Lands Inventories
- What communities might we expect to grow? How would they grow?
- Will rural service centers/unincorporated communities need to grow? Would they qualify for Goal 11/14 exceptions?

While we do not address Goals 15-19 here, it's conceivable if those Goals impact your jurisdiction you will already have a strong sense of the types of analysis, inventories, and documents you will need to evaluate to prepare for an update.

The outcome of this data compilation and research was, in some cases, further data analysis. Data analysis across categories generally consisted of one of five techniques:

- Mapping, including projection analysis
- ESEE or Alternatives Analysis
- Mind mapping to understand interconnectivity of solutions or concepts
- Projections based on base data sets
- Comparative analysis

More broadly, there are four key types of data analytics: descriptive, diagnostic, predictive, and prescriptive. Descriptive analytics describe what has happened, diagnostic analytics describe why something has happened, predictive analytics project future happenings, and prescriptive analytics inform our future action.

Descriptive analytics were helpful to set a foundation for past and current conditions. Mapping and simple quantitative data analysis presented in easy to digest formats like infographics, word clouds, or one page summaries helped to give a background that stakeholders and citizens could leverage against questions or new ideas. An example was preparing an infographic on alternative housing types with definitions, limitations, and future potential.  We also prepared high level infographic primers for all of our zones to help remind people of the purpose and intent, as well as current conditions like total acreage or ownership patterns.

We used comparative analysis and mapping, or diagnostic analytic techniques, to help us better understand how past action had impact current conditions.  For example, the public noted a decrease in housing affordability during a certain time period.  While we understood that a lot of global, national, and regional forces influence affordability, we also were able to identify some key changes to land use plans that had an impact including changes to minimum parcel sizes, aging infrastructure, and a prohibition on certain types of manufactured homes.

Predictive analytics, like projections or mind maps, were utilized to take ideas or suggestions and play them out so that people could respond to outcomes.  One example of this that was very popular was an analysis we ran using GIS, which we then disseminated via infographic, about the potential new lots in farm and forest zones given current regulations with no revisions.  We included a density map of where these new lots could be concentrated.  This was helpful in dispelling the myth that our land use plans eliminated the potential for new, buildable lots.

Finally, prescriptive analytics were critical for our Goal 5 issues.  We used all of the five techniques above to direct policy and implementation measures of the draft.  Beyond Goal 5, we also used prescriptive analytics for things like understanding how changing certain regulations would have an impact on staff case load or permit timelines.

It can be helpful to break out analysis into these buckets when you are trying to determine the best technique or method. Similarly, it can be helpful to identify a clear process for data analysis that is replicable.  Too often we found past staff analysis was hard to recreate because we either had no breadcrumbs about the research question or the analysis was overly complicated.  Keeping the general principles of the scientific method in mind can reduce current and future confusion.

Our analysis consisted of the same basic steps:

- ✓ Define a research question
- ✓ Establish a hypothesis or prediction

- [x] Identify and collect data
- [x] Data analysis, including truthing the data
- [x] Interpret the results and draw conclusions

The research questions often run the gamut between very specific and very broad, but it does help to break off aspects of a larger question into smaller pieces in order to ensure you can develop data. Many citizens early on identified concerns over water quantity and quality. Based on this, we identified a specific research question of what interventions might we put in place to maintain or secure water quantity and quality. The data involved a literature review which we verified with subject experts. The result was to produce a report with recommendations on possible tools or regulations that the community could then respond to.

Another theme we heard a lot about during the visioning phase were constraints in our unincorporated lands on development. This was expressed both as challenges and perceived opportunities. From those challenges and opportunities, we posed the question about potential land use planning solutions and drafted a mind map to show the inter-relationship of challenges, opportunities, and possible solutions:

In this instance, the goal was not to solve for the problems individually, but to identify best possible solutions that might work for a multitude of challenges and opportunities. We shared this mind map with the public to show the connection between their issues and land use planning techniques and had them rank these solutions for future work. That priority ranking is included in a policy under Goal 14 that talks about alternative approaches, ahead of UGB expansions, to meeting development needs.

Data analysis is complex and specialized. During your update, making sure you have the time to respond to stakeholder, public, and decision maker questions and comments with well-grounded solutions or conclusions is an important investment. In the next section, we cover some basic strategies for analysis of public comments which can also provide a feedback loop on how well your data analysis was received. One of the biggest takeaways from our Comprehensive Plan update process was that citizens wanted us to use the best available data to make decisions, and that the way we went about analysis and presenting those findings mattered.

## Public Input

A solid public participation plan will have addressed how public input will be managed and analyzed. For our purposes, we held many work sessions outside of the legislative process and compiled comments into extensive annual outreach reports to capture all feedback and ensure decision makers could review that information in one aggregated data set. We used a variety of tools to tease out key themes during the visioning phase, like word clouds, dot exercises, and priority ranking. During the work program phase, we tailored our public input methods to the topic, but found the most success when using poll/ranking schemes.

We used simple survey designs to reduce the amount of qualitative analysis needed to be conducted, focusing instead on closed ended or rating questions to produce quantitative results. However, we also encouraged small and large group discussions, as well as comment card submittals that created a large amount of qualitative data for us to make meaningful.

Analysis for open ended questions or comments is helpful for identifying emergent themes or feedback. This is done through the technique, common with qualitative analysis, of categorizing or coding data. Essentially, you produce a list of preset categories for input and can identify numbers of responses to replicate quantitative results.

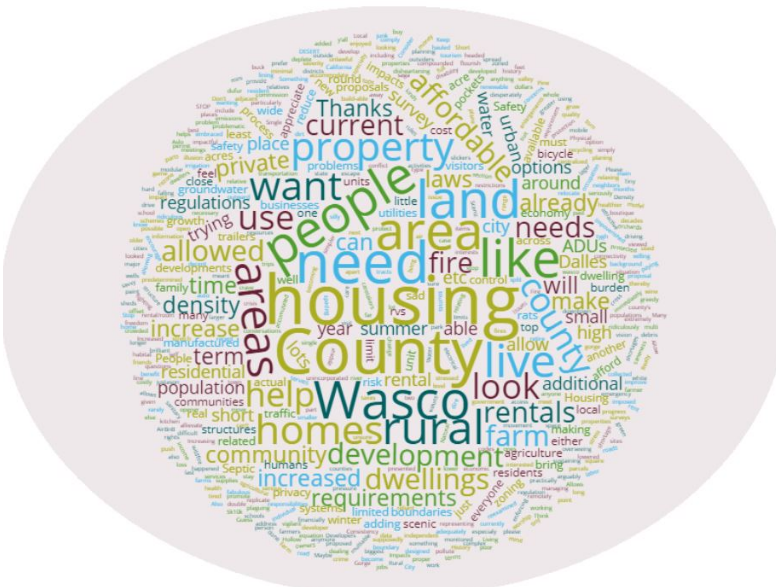
For example, we were interested in learning about public concerns related to some various housing opportunities and parcel size. We captured notes from large group discussions and then categorized them by the broad topics.

**Here is an example from one work session with approximately 30 attendees:**

| CATEGORY | NO. OF RESPONSES |
|---|---|
| **Concerned about development impact on:** | |
| Water | 9 |
| Fire | 10 |
| Public facilities/services | 9 |
| Roads/transportation | 4 |
| Emergency services/response | 5 |
| Commercial agriculture | 6 |
| Commercial forestry | 1 |
| Habitat | 4 |
| *Do not want additional development* | 3 |
| **Development would benefit:** | |
| Housing | 3 |
| Telecommunications | 1 |
| Jobs | 1 |
| Taxes/funding for public services | 1 |

This simple categorization helped to tease out a recurrent theme during our public conversations—regardless of region within our County or general world perspective; all of our residents were concerned about wildfire impacts to their lives and property. This encouraged us to initiate, outside the Comprehensive Plan process, additional wildfire planning efforts.

If you have a large amount of written text, for instance submitted via online methods, you can also use word clouds as a simple, automated “counting” method of common keywords and their frequencies.




Word clouds are also a visually impactful tool to share back with the public to demonstrate common concerns, values, challenges, and opportunities. Most word cloud tools will need some manipulation, for instance removing common words like “the” “and” and “it”. You will also have to decide whether or not to combine words with common meaning, for instance small and little. Finally, it’s most helpful to provide the context in which feedback was responding to. In the example above, we were analyzing written comments about Goal 10. As you can see, there is a lot of noise in the above example. However, we were able to tease out interest in ADUs, short term rentals, and looking for affordable housing solutions.

For quantitative data, we used our outreach report to tell a compelling story through infographics and charts. This was helpful not only for decision makers but also members of the public to understand how their feedback related to other community feedback. We also included all submitted written comments in an appendix so citizens were assured their comments were incorporated into our planning efforts; this was a simple way to ensure a feedback loop with participants so they knew we were listening and using their comments in our analysis.

Other aspects we highlighted in our outreach report were engagements we had on social media, the number of participants at events and online, media coverage, and any other interactions we had with the public or stakeholders on the topics.

To improve our outreach moving forward, we also consistently asked demographic questions including where participants found out about news/events on all surveys, and were sure to leverage any contact to encourage sign up to our email notification list. This data can be used to also produce maps that show where your respondents are concentrated.

Below are some resources we utilized to prepare our outreach report and conduct analysis.

**Public Input Resources:**

***Qualitative Data Analysis***

- https://www.megaputer.com/wp-content/uploads/text-mining-analyzing-public-input.pdf
- https://ace.wsu.edu/documents/2015/03/qualitative-data-analysis.pdf/
- https://deltastate.edu/docs/irp/Analyzing%20Qualitative%20Data.pdf
- https://www.surveypractice.org/article/25699-what-to-do-with-all-those-open-ended-responses-data-visualization-techniques-for-survey-researchers
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292432218_A_Step-By-Step_Guide_To_Qualitative_Data_Analysis
- https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/7f617c55-1b01-41a5-96a4-966394f28b32/Methodological%20document%20-%20qualitative%20methods%20for%20pretesting.pdf

*Outreach Reports Examples*

- https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/Seattle%27sComprehensivePlan/ComprehensivePlanRacialEquityAnalysisEngagementSummary.pdf
- https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/SeattlesComprehensivePlan/ComprehensivePlanReportonPubilcEngagement.pdf
- https://assets.lawrenceks.org/pds/planning/plan-2040/Public_Input_Analysis_Report_Final_2014_08_18.pdf
- https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/CommunityPoliceCommission/CPC_Outreach_Report.pdf
- https://prosperportland.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Community-Engagement-Report.pdf
- https://www.anaheim.net/DocumentCenter/View/45194/Appendix-A_Public-Outreach-Report_PublicReviewDraft
- https://jamescitycountyva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/28007/B-Round-1-Public-Engagement-Summary-Report-PDF

## Drafting

The Comprehensive Plan generally consists of policies and implementation measures for each goal. It also includes inventories, plan revision requirements, and information about goal exceptions. Many jurisdictions also find it helpful to have sections about the history of the planning program, community values or vision, and additional information that better ties implementation plans into the overall community long range objectives.

An emergent theme during our Comprehensive Plan process was how little stakeholders, the public and even planning staff interacted with the Comprehensive Plan. This was partially due to it being out of date. But we also learned that many did not understand the nexus to other plans, the format, or even how to use the data.

## Making the Plan Accessible

While not initially in our scope, we developed a comprehensive introduction section to our plan that became part of the "document organization and clean up" task we scheduled for the end of our update process. Historically, our introduction was only a few pages and featured a historical narrative, a general planning process and intent overview, a definition of comprehensive plan, and a community involvement commitment statement.

It was apparent this was not helpful to our average user, and that the data as presented became easily dated. Staff decided the introduction section provided a great opportunity to make the Comprehensive Plan a tool or reference that maintained relevancy and was effective. Specifically, we gathered a sense of why stakeholders, public, and planning staff weren't using the document; out of date data and information, difficulty of understanding the layout of information or finding what you need; hard to navigate for historical information; and a lack of summary about the adoption process or maps/plans adopted by reference were all reasons cited for not using the Comprehensive Plan.

**As one of our largest Chapters, the introduction includes the following:**

- ✓ the update process history and overview
- ✓ history of our County planning program and zoning history
- ✓ legal framework (i.e. state law) for Comprehensive Plans and the rules guiding the update process
- ✓ components of the plan
- ✓ the plan development process
- ✓ how to use the plan with detailed overview about major components
- ✓ map data and inventories

- future updates
- plans adopted by reference
- values and vision of the County organization
- definitions
- executive summary

The How to Use section is most direct in guiding the audience for the key components of the plan. It includes definitions for key structural components of the draft and explains how staff uses this information in their work.

**How to Use:**

## Policies

**1.1.1** Encourage involvement of citizens and property owners in the land use planning process.

**Implementation for Policy 1.1.1:**

a. Direct notification of land use planning processes shall be provided to property owners, neighborhood groups, community organizations, and interest groups consistent with ORS 197.763, 215.060, 215.223, and 215.503. Furthermore, it is desirable to provide direct notification beyond these minimum standards when it would create greater citizen involvement. Wasco County will strive to do this whenever possible[iii].

b. Provide for continuity of citizen participation in all phases of the planning process[iii].

c. Foster citizen involvement using a range of available media including mailings, emails, the website and social media, meetings, newspapers and radio.

d. Present information used to reach decisions in a simple and straightforward manner to help citizens comprehend the issues. When relevant, use the best available data to support information.

Policy statement: A policy is a clear statement guiding a specific course of action or actions to achieve a desired goal. Policies are regulatory.

Implementation measures: Strategy statements guiding a specific course of actions to achieve the policy. These are regulatory and may be codified in the Land Use and Development Ordinance or as part of a Department policy or procedure.

Most of the other components are useful at providing a historical framework, research foundation, and ensuring for shared language and concept of the process. Although not explicit, the history, process, and values sections also shed light on the guiding social, cultural, and other forces that impacted the plan update.

Having this extensive of an introduction has already delivered dividends with new staff, stakeholders, and residents just a few years later. Because one of our guiding principles was to make our Comprehensive Plan an active reference or tool, this one section is perhaps one of the most useful investments of time we made. As such, we recommend during your initial scoping phase you similarly ask the question of how your stakeholders or planners use the Comprehensive Plan, and if they don’t, why not.

It may be that accessibility, particularly as you aim for equity and inclusion, looks different for your plan.  This might include plain language, using format/font/colors that follow ADA recommendations, or including implementation strategies under Goal 1 to make meetings, decisions, and materials accessible for all.

## Organizing Your Plan

We chose the Statewide Land Use Planning Goals as a framework for the general layout of our Comprehensive Plan. Previously, it had been grouped loosely around the goals which added to it being hard to navigate for all users, including planning staff. However, in conversations with other jurisdictions, it’s evident some programs benefit from grouping policies by broader values. This may be something you pre-determine in the plan evaluation phase or it may be an emergent theme, and will depend on whether your update is comprehensive or focused on just a few goals.

Once we had completed citizen involvement for each work task, ahead of the legislative process, staff drafted the related chapters or sections. Our goal-focused-chapters included an overview, excerpts from the OAR on the specific goal, cross references to other goals (for instance where policies or implementation measures had relevancy to other goals); our policies and implementation measures; and an appendix. We used footnotes to add notes related to public input, the process, or governing rules for policies and implementation measures, and also included any references we used to develop policies. The appendices varied, but included inventories and analysis, relevant maps or other documents, and any additional information, like history. Some of these elements were stylistic choices we made for consistency and to make the plan accessible, but you may choose a different framework that works for your community and stakeholders.

The most critical elements of each goal focused chapter were policies and implementation measures and the appendix materials. The policies and implementation measures, Goal 2 required elements, were the focus of the majority of work and citizen involvement. Our goal in revising, removing, or adding new policies and implementation measures was to keep in mind the general twenty year horizon of the Comprehensive Plan. We also thought about how planners, stakeholders, and citizens might use these policies and implementation measures. Did they, for instance, explain regulations within our ordinance, suggest process improvements for permitting, or make broader recommendations for collaboration among partners? These elements were a critical link between our program and state law requirements, often bridging the gap to showcase how state law might be leveraged to reach community objectives.

**As the vision or driving force, policies were drafted by considering several key criteria:**

1 intended audience and/or owner for the policy

2 relationship to the Statewide program/law/federal law

3 relationship to the existing program/rules/other plans

4 intended outcome or impact

To support these policies, implementation measures were then crafted in support. Implementation measures were crafted using the SMART model, and were also intended to be grounded in fact or citizen input.

## WRITING ACTIONABLE GOALS AND POLICIES – MAKING THIS A USEFUL DOCUMENT

A guiding force behind our update was to make an outdated plan fresh, relevant, and a good resource. In addition to our introduction and data sets, we also wanted to draft policies and implementation measures that were meaningful and effective.

All policies are typically driven by community vision or goals, but the outcome of those policies may vary according to how they are written. One of the things we discovered during our update process was that policies generally fall into one of two categories: aspirational and broad or intentional and specific. The intentional and specific were often specific policy directives to be implemented through our land use and development ordinance, maps, or other plans. Aspirational were more broad statements meant to share community values or rationale behind existing implementation strategies.

The *American Planning Association has a Scoring Matrix* for comprehensive plan standards that can be used both as a tool to evaluate your current comprehensive plan and to evaluate proposed policy and implementation measures. We used the SMART framework (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based) to also support our work, particularly for those intentional and specific policies.

The SMART framework was also helpful in guiding the development of our implementation measures, that Goal 2 requires as the “means used to carry out the plan.” DLCD defines two general types of implementation measures: (1) management implementation measures such as ordinances, regulations or project plans, and (2) site or area specific implementation measures such as permits and grants for construction. We have included a SMART worksheet in Appendix J.

You can also use S.W.O.T. analysis, similar to what we shared in Chapter 2, to help develop policies and implementation measures or an Action Plan Template similar to what we have included in Appendix D.

Finally, we added footnotes for many new policies or implementation measures to share the impetus, nexus, or additional information. We intended that by using these frameworks and techniques, our Comprehensive Plan will be effective and actionable.

Appendices were also crafted to be clear, fact based, and used as future reference for our program. Whether illustrative or inventory, these data points also served to establish a baseline for future plan evaluation.

Beyond the introduction and goal related work, there were also additional considerations for the Comprehensive Plan that took some staff analysis. The Plan Revision section was easy enough to ensure consistency with state requirements, but needed to be folded into the plan in a way that was consistent and easily accessible.

Another critical element to the Comprehensive Plan was the goal exceptions/committed lands inventory. For Wasco County, this involved a significant amount of historical research, remapping, and formatting the data for ease of use by planners and the public.

You may also have additional elements to your Comprehensive Plan, like references or full text of Joint Management Agreements or Intergovernmental Agreements, other jurisdiction plans, unincorporated community plans, transportation or natural hazard plans, or maps. How you chose to fold these into your plan will depend on your overall framework and timeline, but drafting is another opportunity to think strategically about how all these elements will be utilized or referenced in the future.

In summation, the drafting portion of your plan update will be guided both by citizen input and organizational intent. It’s up to you to decide how you might balance aspirational and more specific policies, and to think about how those policies might be best implemented. If you establish a foundation or process for this work early on, it will be an asset to messaging as well as staff engaged in the actual policy making.

## Legislative Process

2012 DLCD *The Complete Planner’s Guide to Periodic Review* has helpful guidance on the Periodic Review process. The rules governing Periodic Review can be found in OAR 660-025. Some of these criteria and regulations, with plan revision information in your existing Comprehensive Plan, will be relevant for your staff report. The DLCD website has a list of all necessary forms, access to PAPAOnline, and other information necessary for submitted a PAPA. The rules governing Post-Acknowledgment Amendments are in OAR 660-018. Some of these criteria and regulations, with plan revision information in your existing Comprehensive Plan, will be relevant for your staff report.

**The legislative process is likely to vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, but here are a few reminders about state required procedural elements and deadlines:**

- Public Notice (ORS 215.503) is required at least 20, but no more than 40, days before the first evidentiary hearing for updates to a Comprehensive Plan
- Periodic review requires notice at least 30 days prior to the update.
- Proposed amendments to plans are required (ORS 197.610) to be noticed to DLCD using Form 1 at least 35 days before the first evidentiary hearing.
- Public hearing notice in newspaper (ORS 215.223) should be published 10 days ahead of the public hearing.
- 20 days after adoption, you are required to submit the amendments to DLCD.

***The most helpful thing we did was to translate deadlines and some of the steps into an overall timeline to keep us on track. A template example is included in Appendix K.***

If you are updating through Periodic Review, DLCD will send official notice of acknowledged and completed work tasks after the appeal period expires and staff has reviewed the work. If updating via PAPA, you should track the number of appeal days after submittal; if you are not notified of an appeal, your plan amendment has been acknowledged.  That can be verified through PAPAOnline or with your Regional Representative.

One of our work tasks was appealed to DLCD, and our regional representative was responsible for drafting a staff report to determine whether the objection was valid. The objection was ultimately dismissed, but DLCD coordinated throughout the process.

CHAPTER FOUR

# Next Steps and Lessons Learned

**Our final work tasks were challenging, including Goal 5 work and the overall clean-up of the Comprehensive Plan to prepare it for use. After the tremendous amount of work and engagement, it was our goal to make the Comprehensive Plan effective, efficient, and beautiful to look at to incentivize citizens, stakeholders, and planners to engage with it on a more frequent basis.**

## Next Steps

We were fortunate, at the close of Periodic Review, to allocate some resources to having a graphic artist pull together our work and put the finishing touches on our Comprehensive Plan. Once that was completed, we circulated copies, sent out a press release announcing its completion, and started the next phase of our overall plan to begin updating our land use/zoning ordinance in conjunction with Comprehensive Plan revisions.

Staff also had the opportunity to share with LCDC our experience and emphasize the importance of LCDC and DLCD giving support to counties for comprehensive plan updates. We also continued our efforts to share our experiences and takeaways as part of one of our goals to support other County programs in long range planning efforts.

Long term, we have made a commitment to implement annual plan reviews and revisions as needed, particularly when they are non-substantive or reflect changes to state law. In particular, for those SMART implementation measures with a clear timeline, we will be returning in five years to re-evaluate the effectiveness of our plan and updating it accordingly. Finally, we intentionally titled our plan with a twenty year future date to ensure future planners revisit, reframe, and rewrite the plan, essentially building in an expiration date.

**Whatever your plans are for your Comprehensive Plan update completion, here are some strategies or milestones we recommend considering:**

1

Close the loop with your community. Their investment in time and input is worth celebrating, but more importantly you want to make sure citizens know they were heard. During Periodic Review, we tried to celebrate these milestones throughout the process, which was helpful as our final celebration was impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. Were things different, it would have been ideal to have an in person open house event where we shared the final product, messaged next steps to citizens with our Ordinance Update, and encouraged people to continue their involvement. We supplemented with online messaging on our project website.

2

Say thanks to stakeholders, decision makers, and staff. We produced some small mementos to thank our Planning Commission, for example, for all their efforts. We also shared personalized notes of thanks with many stakeholders and staff.

3

Make sure citizens, stakeholders, and others know how to access the updated Plan and also know how to continue to submit feedback.

4

Review updates with staff, stakeholders, and decision makers and talk over how it will impact their work.  Long range staff produced a primer, for instance, for current planning staff so that they were aware of new policies/implementation measures, their effective date, and how it would impact permitting. Staff also shared new references, resources, and uses for the plan. If you have a small staff that was involved in the update, it still may be helpful to produce similar documentation for future staff.

5

Think about when/where/why/how you will evaluate and update your Comprehensive Plan, continue to track needed updates, and leverage other opportunities to make small, meaningful changes to your plan. A key part of this work is establishing metrics or ways to measure the effectiveness of your plan.

## Measuring Success

Part of the SMART model of goal building is to think about metrics or ways to measure success. While much of the academic literature on Comprehensive Plan policy evaluation focuses on specific outcomes, there are consistent themes that emerge about plan evaluation. Consistently, plan evaluations focus on outcomes or impacts of policy. How we measure those outcomes or impacts will vary depending on the specificity, availability of baseline data, and future data sources.

Here are some different potential analysis frameworks to consider when building in policy and implementation measure evaluation to your Comprehensive Plan:

The T in SMART stands for Time-based. Giving implementation measures intended to carry out policies a temporal component is an easy way to ensure completion—or to re-evaluate the strategy.

Does the plan measure up to plan quality study metrics (detailed, fact based, clear, established nexus, inspiring/engaging)?

Data analysis is particularly powerful for policies or measures that aim to maintain a status quo or change the status quo, particularly if your Comprehensive Plan captures a baseline. For instance, if you may have a policy to reduce conversion of agricultural land to residential land, an established base of agricultural land can later be compared to future agricultural land data to understand how effective the policy was. Think about data easily accessible to you: population data, GIS data, permit data, hazard information, ecological markers, and census data.

For broader, aspirational goals, it may require checking in with members of the public to ask: How Are We Doing? Qualitative analysis is one approach to evaluate policies that may reach beyond the SMART framework.

## Lessons Learned

While we have sprinkled case studies and lessons learned throughout this guidebook, there are a few additional points we would like to share for planners undertaking a Comprehensive Plan update.

- Agency partners can be tremendous assets to your update.
- Over the life of the update, you will see turnover with your Periodic Review Assistance Team (PRAT) or with agency partners. It was very helpful to have clear documentation, an “elevator pitch,” timelines, and other ways for partners to jump in to the update. The Interagency Cooperative Agreements can be utilized to remind stakeholders of partnership agreements and your DLCD Regional Representative can be an invaluable champion with state agency coordination.
- Having a set scope with rigid deadlines was foundational to avoid scope creep. However, when we did need to revise our work plan, DLCD staff was very helpful.
- One of the most critical things you can do as a team is to have consistent and clear messaging. Having an “elevator pitch” for all updates or tasks will save you a lot of time (and your elected officials a lot of headaches). We also developed a branded image and title we could use over all documentation so participants immediately recognized it correlated to the Comprehensive Plan update.
- Having information broken down in visually interesting and easy to understand one or two page documents (and also having the same information accessible in audio or video format) can dramatically improve public engagement and reduce public frustration.
- Many citizens are used to code updates, having text revisions they can react to and give thumbs up or down

response. Much of the feedback we received had us revise conversations or questions we asked to be specific and allow for people to either rank priorities or respond negatively or favorably. This dramatically increased participation.

Maps and infographics are worth a thousand words. Visual story telling or translating text into visuals can engage people who are turned off by too much text. But visuals can also a hindrance if there are unintended messages people interpret from the graphics you use. It’s also hard to minimize with words or explanations the visual impact of a map, so be prepared to have to work very hard to temper knee jerk reactions when proposed changes seem more dramatic to the eye than they are in reality.

We leveraged a lot of free or low cost communications, marketing, and project management tools to support our efforts. A compiled list of resources is available in Appendix H.

Any time we used mark-up drafts to demonstrate change we discovered citizens preferred we flag any mandatory (state or federally required) language separate from optional language. This allowed citizens to focus on what they had the ability to influence.

Many citizens were interested in the impetus behind various changes, so we also used draft cover sheets to highlight changes to state law, public input, or other reasons for a proposed change. After doing a lot of “detective work” in old files to understand why some of our existing rules were adopted, we realized this documentation will also be invaluable to “planners of the future.”

Updates can go a long way to build relationships and goodwill for your program (and the statewide program).

Work immediately and intently to assemble a good, established e-mail list for citizens (but make sure you let folks know their email could be subject to a public records request).

Balancing live and on demand events or meetings can be helpful for citizens who have limited time.

Leverage the County home page or partner websites to drive traffic to project website, in addition to social media and QR codes on printed media.