

Outreach & Engagement Plan

City of Wenatchee 2026 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update & EIS
January 2025

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Overview

The City of Wenatchee is experiencing substantial change and growth, prompting a reimagining of its long-term future and vision for the next twenty years. Updates to the Comprehensive Plan will meet requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). The City is committed to a robust, inclusive engagement process that encourages community-wide input through targeted outreach and relationship building. This Outreach & Engagement Plan outlines objectives and strategies for community involvement to ensure the Comprehensive Plan reflects the full range of community values and addresses priorities and needs. We will continue to revisit our engagement plan throughout the update process and will reassess and adjust our approach if needed to ensure we are fulfilling our engagement goals.

Purpose & Objectives of the Engagement

The City of Wenatchee is embarking on a major update to its Comprehensive Plan, with consulting teams coordinating strategies for visioning as well as the Housing, Transportation, and Climate elements, while City staff lead updates to the other elements. The Comprehensive update will:

- Identify and implement the community’s vision, values, and priorities
- Extend the Comprehensive Plan 20-year planning horizon to 2046
- Comply with the State’s Growth Management Act and regional planning requirements, including revisions to requirements since the last major update

This Outreach & Engagement Plan provides an overview of core engagement strategies the City plans to implement, ensuring coordination across the various elements of the planning process. Both traditional and creative targeted approaches will be used to engage the community at large as well as key groups identified for targeted outreach. Objectives of this engagement plan include:

- Raising awareness of the planning effort and engaging the full community, with specific focus on those historically underrepresented or less frequently engaged.
- Offering diverse, convenient ways to participate, such as meeting communities where they are, collaborating with community-based organizations, joining existing events, and leveraging the City’s networks and initiatives.
- Building long-term relationships and trust with groups and organizations not previously engaged, opening doors for future partnerships with the City.
- Applying culturally relevant and equitable engagement practices to ensure that key audiences’ voices and perspectives are integrated into the Plan.
- Updating the Comprehensive Plan recommendations to reflect the community’s priorities, concerns, and aspirations.

Community Profile & Key Audiences

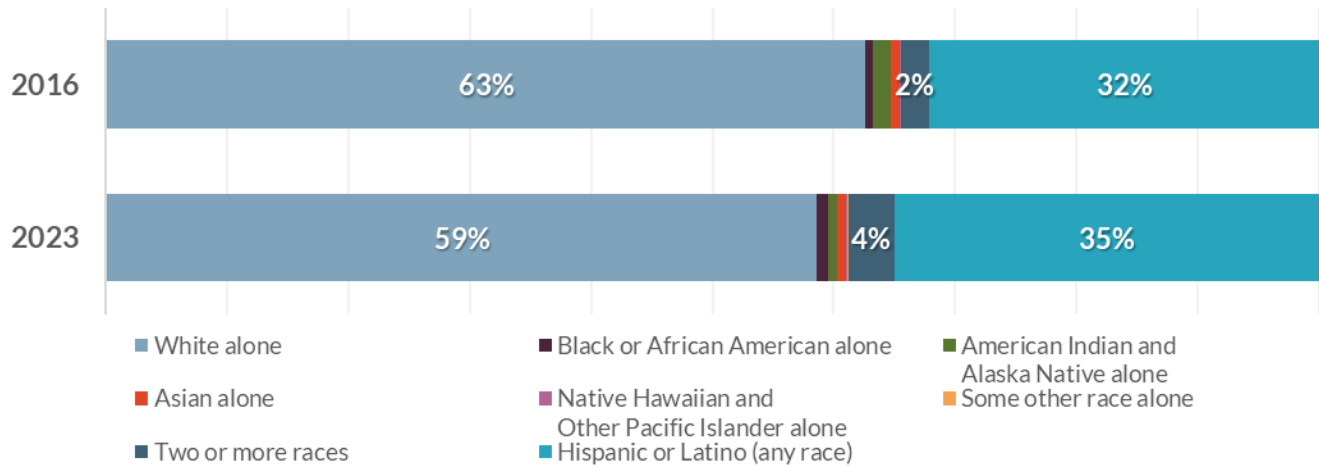
Demographic & Household Characteristics

Wenatchee is a cultural and economic hub in North Central Washington with a strong local identity and diverse community, including a significant Hispanic and Latinx population. The city is situated in the fertile valley at the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia River and draws residents, workers, and visitors from around the state. As of 2024, the Wenatchee Urban Growth Area (UGA) had an estimated population of 41,467 with 36,040 residents in city limits, an increase of 8.5% in the city’s population and 6.8% in the full UGA since 2014.¹ This growth is expected to continue, with the Wenatchee UGA projected to reach approximately 49,660 residents by the year 2046. Wenatchee’s demographic makeup

¹ OFM April 1 Population Estimates, 2024.

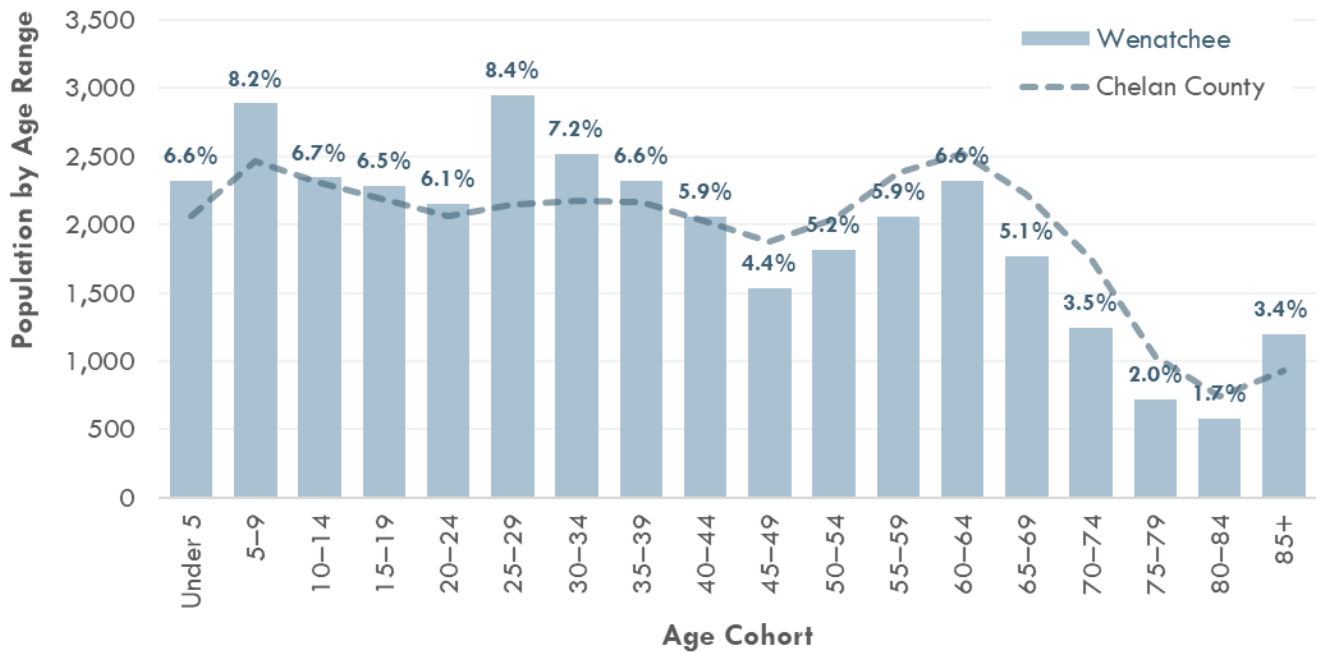
is also evolving. Since 2016, the percentage of the population who identify as Hispanic or Latino or non-Hispanic persons who identify as two or more races grew while the percentage of White, non-Hispanic persons declined (**Exhibit 1**). Wenatchee also has a larger share of children aged 9 and under and adults aged 25 to 39, a lower share of adults aged 45 to 84, and a somewhat greater share of older adults aged 85 and above than Chelan County as a whole (**Exhibit 2**).

Exhibit 1. Share of Population by Race and Ethnicity, City of Wenatchee (2016 and 2023)



Note: With the exception of Hispanic or Latino, all groups are exclusive of persons who identify as Hispanic or Latino.
Sources: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 and 2019-2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates; BERK, 2024.

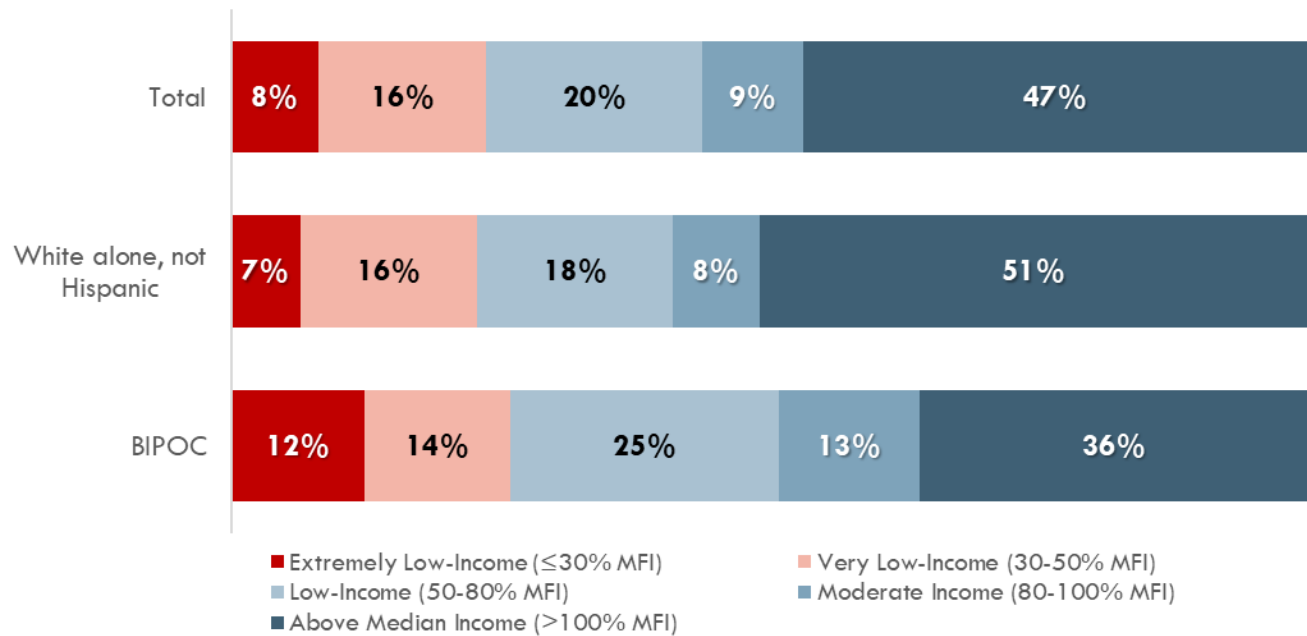
Exhibit 2. Population by Age Range in City of Wenatchee, 2021



Sources: US Census Bureau, 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; BERK, 2023.

As of 2022, there were an estimated 13,926 households in the city of which approximately 55% owned and 45% rented their home. Nearly two thirds (65%) of all households have only one or two members with one-person households somewhat more commonly renters and two-person households more commonly homeowners.² Chelan County’s HUD-area median family income (MFI) was \$69,400 in 2020 and \$100,300 in 2024,³ which represents the median income of a 4-person household. As of 2020, more White households in Wenatchee had incomes above MFI compared to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) households (**Exhibit 3**).

Exhibit 3. Proportion of Households by Income Level and Race/Ethnicity in City of Wenatchee, 2020



Sources: US HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, 2016–2020; BERK, 2023.

² US Census Bureau, 2018-2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates (Tables B25009,

³ HUD [Income Limits](#), 2024. Affordable housing policies often classify all households by income level relative to MFI. Note that MFI is a different measure than median household income—the median household income in Wenatchee was \$66,143 in 2022, which is slightly lower than the countywide median of \$71,876 (US Census Bureau, 2018-2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1901). They are not comparable because median household income includes all households, not just family households. When classifying households by income level, HUD makes adjustments for household size. So, for example, the threshold for determining 80% MFI is lower for a two-person household than it is for a four-person household.

Key Audiences

The City’s demographic profile highlights key audiences for public engagement in addition to the community at large. This engagement process will focus on intentional outreach to groups such as people of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, Spanish speakers, tribal communities, persons with disabilities, those with higher access needs, families with young children, those with transportation limitations, and youth. See **Exhibit 4**.

In addition to these identified groups, the following list identifies specific communities likely to be impacted by policy changes or priority topics in the Comprehensive Plan. Broadly, these audiences fall into the following categories:

- Groups vulnerable to or overburdened by climate related hazards (i.e. fire and smoke, extreme heat, flash flooding).
- Groups impacted by housing and potential changes in zoning.

Exhibit 4. Audiences and Outreach Strategy Matrix

| Key Audience | Outreach Strategy (including events, partnerships, contacts) |
|--|---|
| <i>Audiences & demographics</i> | |
| People of Hispanic or Latinx Ethnicity and Spanish speaking communities | <p>Potential partners: Café, La Nueva 103.3 FM radio, KPQ 101.7 FM radio, South Wenatchee Neighborhood Group, Hispanic Business Council, Hand in Hand Immigration Services</p> <p>Engagement ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In partnership with CBO host a dedicated Spanish speaking meeting (using the Meeting-in-a-box materials) with interpreters and translated materials. ▪ Radio partnership and broadcast ▪ Pop up tabling at community event or community gathering space in South Wenatchee with dedicated Spanish speakers ▪ In partnership with CBO host a community group discussion |
| Tribal communities | <p>Potential partners: Colville Confederated Nations, Yakima Nation</p> <p>Engagement idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interview ▪ Community discussion/tribal consultation at key plan phases |
| Persons with disabilities | <p>Potential partners: Lilac Services for the Blind, hospitals, (additional partners TBD)</p> <p>Engagement idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community group discussion |
| Families with young children | <p>Potential partners: NCW Libraries, preschool or school district, Chelan-Douglas 4H (WSU Extension)</p> <p>Engagement idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pop up tabling at a NCW library |
| Youth (13–18-year-olds) | <p>Potential partners: Chelan-Douglas Child Services Association (Head Start), YMCA, 4H, school district, City Parks & Rec, other camps/care</p> <p>Engagement idea:</p> |

| Key Audience | Outreach Strategy (including events, partnerships, contacts) |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interview teachers and principals ▪ Youth engagement in classroom or at YMCA after school programming |
| Those with transportation limitations | <p>Potential partners: Link Transit, (additional partners TBD)</p> <p>Engagement idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flyers with link to survey/website comment portal |
| <p><i>Planning topics *Note: Audiences (above) and planning topics (below) are interconnected. Outreach will bridge these areas to ensure all targeted audiences are included in relevant discussions and not siloed from specific topics.</i></p> | |
| Groups impacted by climate related hazards | <p>Potential partners: Chelan-Douglas Health District (CDCH), Our Valley Our Future (OCOV)- Post Carbon Economy or Climate Group</p> <p>Engagement ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrated with other comp plan engagement through focus groups, interviews, and pop-up tabling. ▪ Attend a monthly climate group meeting such as OVOF Post Carbon Economy or Climate group meeting ▪ Climate Policy Advisory Team. May include organizations, tribal representatives, staff members, and community members with expertise or lived experience related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agriculture & food systems - Energy systems, water infrastructure, and waste management - Cultural resources and practices (including tribal resources, historic resources, and parks and recreation) - Economic development - Ecosystems - Emergency management - Health and wellbeing - Transportation - Zoning and development, including residential and commercial buildings, industrial areas, and government-owned facilities (including schools) - Communities most vulnerable to climate change ▪ Engage organizations that serve individuals more likely to be vulnerable to climate change, such as those with the following lived experiences (through the Climate Policy Advisory Team or other methods) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individuals with disabilities (see above) - BIPOC communities (see above) - Communities that primarily speak a language other than English (see above) - Youth and families with young children (see above) - Households with low incomes - Industries where workers work outdoors (ex. construction, agriculture) - Individuals without health insurance - Individuals with asthma and cardiovascular health concerns - Older adults |

| Key Audience | Outreach Strategy (including events, partnerships, contacts) |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Households that live in or own residences in disrepair or without proper insulation, AC or air filtering. |
| Groups impacted by access to affordable housing | <p>Potential partners: Chelan-Douglas Community Action, Chelan-Douglas Health District, Columbia Valley Community Health (CVCH) Behavioral Medicine, Community Action Council, Community Housing Network, Grace House, Hope Source, Our Valley Our Future (OCOV)- Housing Game Changer, Rental Association of Wenatchee Valley, SAGE, Columbia River Homeless Housing Taskforce</p> <p>Engagement Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 housing focused interviews ▪ 2-3 housing focus groups hosted by local and regional community partners |
| Development Community | <p>Potential partners: TBD</p> <p>Engagement Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus group with developers |
| Local Government and Economic Development Partners | <p>Potential partners: Local Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Association, Port District</p> <p>Engagement Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus groups and interviews |

Sources: City of Wenatchee, 2025; BERK, 2025.

Key Messages & Anticipated Challenges

The following are key messages and anticipated challenges to address during the Periodic Update:

- **New state requirements.** The GMA goals and Comprehensive Plan element requirements were amended in recent years to require jurisdictions to plan for and accommodate housing that is affordable to all economic segments of the population (HB 1220), to identify and address racially disparate impacts (HB 1220), to expand housing options by easing barriers for ADUs (HB 1337), to increase middle housing opportunities (HB 1110), to adopt multimodal level of service standards for transportation (HB 1181), and to plan for climate change and resiliency (HB 1181). All of these will be key drivers of proposed revisions during the Periodic Update. The City has already addressed some of these requirements prior to the Periodic Update (namely middle housing and ADU code revisions).
- **Promote informed and inclusive dialogue,** empowering community stakeholders, decision-makers, planners, and developers to shape a thriving, inclusive, and connected urban future for Wenatchee.
- **Educating and engaging on future of city form.**
 - Emphasize the possibilities and choices for increased residential density and a wider range of housing options.
 - Consider a range of commercial opportunities to support the changing needs in the community as well as supporting economic development partnerships for sustainable community growth.
 - Consider City and regional services and infrastructure necessary to enable the community vision.

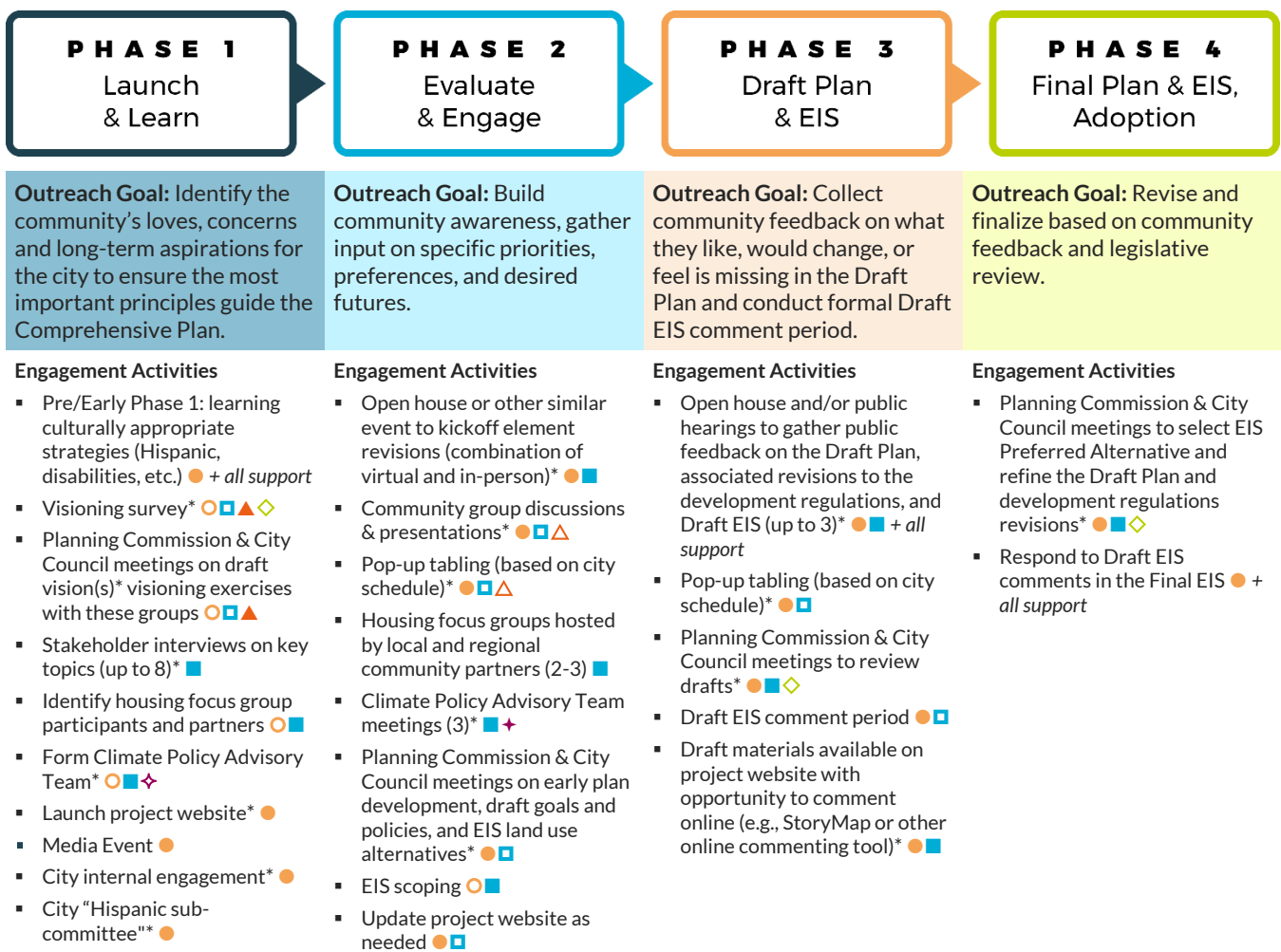
- Connect these planning discussions to key issues such as housing affordability, climate resilience, transportation, economic development, and placemaking, focusing on integrated and sustainable solutions.
- **Utilize historical knowledge in Visioning.** Leverage groups with historic knowledge (Historic societies, Museum, Wenatchee World, Genealogical Society, Tribes, etc.) to tell “our story.” Who is Wenatchee, where have we been, what are our struggles, how have we worked to address challenges? Wenatchee will be 150 years old during this next phase. Develop materials to discuss this story at tabling, interviews, on the webpage, at open houses and events.
- **Building Community Relationships.** While the City has been effective in facilitating participation in community planning events, it has faced challenges in achieving equitable representation from its increasingly diverse population, including lower turnout among Hispanic and Spanish-speaking residents, people with disabilities, and younger residents, highlighting opportunities to build lasting relationships and trust with these groups.
- **Responding to Community Feedback.** Acknowledge prior feedback received from the community and communicate how the City plans to address or build upon those concerns.
- **Engaging Impacted Communities.** A key challenge is identifying those most affected by climate and housing issues, and existing and new policies, and engaging with them in culturally appropriate and meaningful ways.

Public Engagement Strategies

Engagement by Phase

The Comprehensive Plan update will be completed and adopted by June 30, 2026 over the course of four phases. Each phase and its associated likely engagement activities are summarized in **Exhibit 5** with leads and primary support identified. Additional details on the specific activities are described in the next section.

Exhibit 5. Wenatchee Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update Project Phase Chart and Engagement Activities



*These engagement methods will integrate the topic of climate resiliency.

City of Wenatchee: ● = lead, ○ = support

BERK Consulting: ■ = lead, □ = support

MAKERS: ▲ = lead, △ = support

Transpo: ◆ = lead, ◇ = support

Parametrix: ◆ = lead, ◇ = support

Sources: City of Wenatchee, 2025; BERK, 2025.

Description of Engagement Activities

Below is a summary of the key engagement activities currently planned for the Periodic Update (see Exhibit 5 above for the phases).

- **Cohesive brand – All Phases.** The Comprehensive Plan will maintain a cohesive brand throughout all phases of community engagement events and activities. This branding will feature consistent visuals, a unified tagline, and a clear voice and language, ensuring seamless communication and easy recognition for the public.
- **Project website – All Phases.** A robust and clear project website will allow people to participate in plan development at their own time and pace throughout the process. The website will feature project background, goals, schedules, and a repository for documents and event details. This platform will enhance transparency, facilitate communication, and serve as a resource for community questions and additional information. The website will also provide information about the engagement process and participation options and either host or link to any online engagement activities. The City’s social media accounts will also be used to strategically promote and highlight engagement opportunities, generally directing people to the project website for more detailed information.
- **Online Vision Survey (1) – Phase 1 and 2.** An online survey will be developed to update the citywide vision statement and subarea visions, inviting public input on their “loves,” “concerns,” and long-term “hopes” for Wenatchee. The survey will also likely include strategic questions related to quality of life, economy, climate, and housing. Distribution of survey to include interviews, tabling, flyers (with QR code), news media. Location question to be a map where you can click on where you live (including City, UGA, Wenatchee mailing address, Chelan/Douglas counties, etc).
- **Planning Commission & City Council meetings – All Phases.** Planning Commission and City Council meetings will take place throughout the process. Early meetings will focus on visioning, preliminary draft plan development and priorities, and development of EIS alternatives. Later meetings will focus on discussing draft revisions to the goals, policies, and development regulation, reviewing public feedback, identifying a preferred alternative for the Final EIS, and ultimately finalizing revisions to the Comprehensive Plan and associated development regulations.
- **Community group discussions (4-5) – Phases 1 and 2.** In partnership with the City and its existing relationships with community organizations, the team will facilitate focus groups to engage individuals in conversations about specific topics of interest. These may include presentations or one-on-one meetings with local groups and advocates to understand how they can be involved in the Plan update. This effort aims to foster trust and collaboration with organizations, leaders, and community members, ensuring a culturally sensitive and reciprocal approach to gathering insights, and may inform partnership opportunities for future implementation. These events would ideally occur early in the process (prior to or during preliminary draft revisions to the elements) but may be spread out. A small stipend will be provided to the community group or organization in recognition of their assistance and input.
- **Pop-up tabling – Phases 2 and 3.** To engage community members who may not regularly provide feedback or be aware of the Comprehensive Plan, the team will coordinate and participate in pop-up events at existing gatherings, such as community meetings and local events. These activities will inform attendees about the Comprehensive Plan update and invite their input on specific topics. Refer

to Appendix A (to be added at a later date) for a list of events based on capacity and target audience; City staff may participate without the consultant team as needed.

- **Meeting-in-a-box – Phase 1 and 2.** The purpose of the “Meeting in a Box” model is to allow City staff, partners, and consultants to have a set of materials to inform the community on the Comprehensive Plan’s process, goals and deliverables. The team will put together materials including Comprehensive Plan 101, example activity, and questions that can be adapted appropriately to various audiences.
- **Stakeholder Interviews (8) – Phase 1.** The team will organize in-person and/or virtual interviews with decision-makers, community leaders, and representatives from community-based organizations. These interviews will facilitate in-depth discussions on current issues, opportunities, and community priorities. The goal is to build trust and relationships through culturally sensitive and reciprocal dialogues, allowing us to inform, listen, and share back what we learn. Up to 5 of these interviews will be housing focused interviews with stakeholders.
- **Housing focus groups (2-3) – Phases 1 and 2.** The objective of these focus group conversations is to understand pull factors and barriers residents face in finding housing that meets their needs, to help inform housing strategies, and to review preliminary results of the displacement and RDI analysis. We anticipate these focus groups will be comprised of approximately 10-12 residents, developers, and representatives from local advocacy groups or impacted communities. A small stipend will be provided to participants or the organization in recognition of their assistance and input.
- **Climate Policy Advisory Team Meetings (3) – Phases 1 through 3.** The team will convene a Climate Policy Advisory Team to provide input on the climate resiliency planning process at key milestones. This team will ensure representation from a broad range of perspectives, including city commission members, interagency partners, planners, public works and other City staff, local community organizations, community members, and leaders from overburdened communities disproportionately impacted by climate change.
- **City “Hispanic sub-committee” (name to be determined).** As a city lead initiative, the purpose is to meet early to identify possible relationships for Hispanic population engagement with a goal of learning culturally appropriate engagement methods and developing a stakeholder team. This feedback will be used to incorporate effective forms of outreach, communication, and engagement methods in Phase 1-3. The City hopes to build upon the successes of the South Wenatchee Action Plan in bringing key stakeholders to community decision making. Multiple meetings may be necessary in the first initial phases to monitor and modify as necessary engagement approaches to be successful.
- **City Internal Engagement – All Phases.** Staff will ensure understanding of the comprehensive plan process amongst department directors and managers and the City Council and Planning Commission (Comp Plan 101). Efforts will include building interdepartmental connections for co-hosting engagement, developing a process for staff feedback, ensuring collaboration between departments for translating engagement into policy, and developing a process for collaboration between element policy development. Staff will also ensure the Council and Planning Commission are invited to all public events.

Commitment to Iterating Our Engagement Efforts

This plan will be continuously refined based on findings and feedback. We are committed to the outlined engagement objectives and will adapt as needed throughout the process to ensure we effectively engage historically underrepresented people and those impacted by climate, housing, and existing and new policies. If we are not achieving our goals or receiving input from groups we aim to reach, we will reassess and adjust our approach to better fulfill this commitment.