

Phase 4 – Public Engagement Plan

Purpose and Role in the Planning Process

Phase 4 of the Comprehensive Plan Update focuses on engaging the Priest River community in reviewing and responding to the draft Comprehensive Plan. This phase builds on the technical analysis and internal review completed during earlier phases and is intended to validate community priorities, gather focused feedback, and inform final revisions prior to adoption.

Public engagement during this phase emphasizes accessibility, transparency, and documentation. The intent is not to reopen foundational policy decisions, but to ensure the draft plan reflects community values, identifies areas of concern, and provides a clear public record demonstrating how input was considered.

Public Engagement Objectives

The Phase 4 public engagement process is guided by the following objectives:

- Provide clear and understandable information about the draft Comprehensive Plan and its purpose.
- Offer opportunities for residents, stakeholders, and agencies to provide input.
- Confirm community priorities related to growth, land use, housing, infrastructure, and community character.
- Identify areas of general support as well as topics requiring clarification or refinement.
- Document public input and its relationship to subsequent plan revisions.

Engagement Methods

Public Survey

A community-wide public survey will be conducted to collect broad input on the draft Comprehensive Plan.

The survey will be administered primarily through a digital platform, with a paper option available to ensure accessibility. The survey will be designed to be concise and focused, prioritizing clarity and usability.

The survey will:

- Ask participants to identify key community priorities over the next 20 years.
- Gather general feedback on growth, land use, housing, and infrastructure.
- Include a limited number of open-ended questions to capture qualitative input.

Survey responses will be summarized thematically and incorporated into a Public Engagement Summary and Community Vision Report.

Online Comment Portal

An online comment portal will be provided to allow residents and stakeholders to submit written comments on the draft Comprehensive Plan.

The portal will include:

- Access to the draft Comprehensive Plan
- A high-quality Future Land Use Map in PDF format
- Clear instructions regarding how comments will be reviewed and documented

All comments received will be logged and summarized thematically.

Community Open Houses

The City will host community open houses to provide opportunities for in-person engagement and discussion.

Open houses will be conducted in an informal, drop-in format and will include informational displays, draft plan summaries, and maps. City staff will be available to answer questions and receive comments.

Public notice and outreach will include the City website, social media, local newspaper notices, and posted flyers at public locations.

Stakeholder and Agency Review

Public agencies, service districts, and stakeholder organizations will be invited to review the draft Comprehensive Plan.

Following City Council review, the draft plan will be posted on the City website and shared with partner agencies. Agencies will be provided with a defined review period and invited to submit written comments related to service coordination, jurisdictional considerations, or factual accuracy.

Agency input will be summarized and documented as part of the Public Engagement Summary and Community Vision Report.

Youth and School Engagement

The City will make reasonable efforts to engage youth and school representatives as part of the public engagement process.

Outreach will include contacting local schools and educators to offer classroom presentations or visioning activities related to land use and community planning. Where participation occurs, feedback will be summarized. Where participation is limited, outreach efforts will be documented to demonstrate good-faith engagement.

Documentation and Deliverables

The primary deliverable for Phase 4 will be the Public Engagement Summary and Community Vision Report. This report will document:

- Engagement methods used
- Participation levels
- Key themes and priorities identified through public input
- A summary of the community vision expressed during engagement
- How public input informed revisions to the draft plan

Supporting materials, including survey instruments, meeting dates, and comment summaries, will be included as appendices.

Relationship to Plan Adoption

Phase 4 public engagement is a critical step in refining the draft Comprehensive Plan prior to formal adoption. Input gathered during this phase will inform Phase 5 revisions and support a transparent and defensible decision-making process.