Comprehensive Plan Basics

What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan is a guiding policy document that reflects a community's future vision. The comprehensive planning process allows a community to understand existing conditions, self-evaluate needs and issues, and prioritize a clear roadmap for accomplishing shared goals. The comprehensive plan is an essential step in a continuous process that is designed to be flexible and adaptable. In this way, a comprehensive plan provides guidance for citizens and decision-makers on how a community should change over time.

How is a comprehensive plan organized?

State law requires all comprehensive plans contain at least nine chapters, or elements:

 Population 	 Cultural Resources 	 Land Use
 Economic Development 	 Community Facilities 	 Transportation
 Natural Resources 	 Housing 	 Priority Investment

Each element must contain an inventory of existing conditions, a statement of needs and goals, and implementation strategies with time frames. All planning elements detailed in a comprehensive plan represent the Planning Commission's official recommendations to County Council regarding wise and efficient use of public funds, future growth, development, redevelopment, and the fiscal impact of the planning elements on property owners.

How often does the County complete a comprehensive plan?

State law allows a jurisdiction to review the comprehensive plan or any of the nine elements as often as necessary; however, the jurisdiction must review the plan at least every five years and update the plan at least every ten years. Major changes within a jurisdiction can also dictate if or when a review is necessary.

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Project Schedule

Phase 1 Understand and Engage

Tasks

- Project Launch & Work Plan
- Background Review & Research
- Project Identity & Communications Plan

Deliverables

- Project Identity Package
- Community Engagement Plan
- Community Outreach Toolkit
- Statistically-Valid Telephone Survey
- Summary Baseline Conditions Report

Meetings

Project Kickoff

DEC

Community Tour & Audit

Existing Conditions Analysis

- ReWa Coordination
- Advisory Committee Meetings #1 & #2
- Stakeholder Roundtable Interviews
- Community Meetings #1

Phase 2 Explore and Develop

Tasks

- Draft Project Vision & Goals
- Strategic Planning Framework
- Best Practices & Benchmarking
- Land Use Concepts & Alternatives
- Policy Alternatives
- Land Use & Policy Alternatives Evaluation

Deliverables

- Vision & Goals Statement
- Issues Summaries & Reports
- Strategic Planning Framework
- Land Use Concepts & Alternatives
- Policy Alternatives
- Economic Evaluation of Land Use & Policy Alternatives
- Report of Input from Phase 2 Community Meetings

Meetings

- ReWa Coordination
- Advisory Committee Meetings #3
- Community Meetings #2

Phase 3

SEP

OCT

Tasks

- Policy & Land Use Plan Development
- Draft Plan Development
- Plan Refinement
- Final Plan Development
- Final Plan Adoption

Deliverables

- Draft Land Use Plan & Future Land Use Map
- Economic Evaluation of Draft Land Use Map
- Summary of Public Engagement Activities & Community Input
- Draft Plan Document
- Final Plan Document
- Executive Summary Document

Meetings

- ReWa Coordination
- Advisory Committee Meeting #4
- Community Meetings #3
- Presentation to Planning Commission
- Presentation to County Council

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