

PROJECT MEMO



TO: Wes McCart, Planning and Economic Development Director

DATE: May 27, 2026

FROM: MillieAnne VanDevender
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PROJECT NO.: 2240941.30

PROJECT NAME: Franklin County Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update

SUBJECT: Open House Events - Summary

Franklin County, with support from AHBL, held a series of open house events designed as part of the ongoing effort to provide multiple opportunities for public participation throughout the comprehensive plan update effort. These events served as one of several outreach strategies prescribed in the County's Public Participation Plan.

In this memo we detail what was accomplished and summarize the meetings coordinated by Franklin County Planning and Economic Development staff and the consultant team. The open house events occurred on Thursday April 23 at Pasco High School, Tuesday April 28 at Connel High School, and on Thursday April 30, 2026 at Markham Elementary School and all the events were held from 6:00 to 7:30 pm.

The purpose of the open house events was to provide a forum for public input on the update, and included informational posters, informal discussions, participatory exercises, and other techniques to solicit stakeholder feedback. Identification of key regulatory concerns for rural residents was also a primary purpose of these workshops.

ADVERTISING AND MEDIA COVERAGE

The meetings were advertised by the following methods:

- **3/31/2026:** Press release posted on the Franklin County WA Planning & Economic Development facebook page in English and Spanish.
- **4/14/2026:** Senior Planner Alex Hall sent an email with a press release to the project distribution list.
- **4/15/2026:** KVEW Apple Valley News interviewed Director Wes McCart regarding public involvement opportunities for the 2026 update to the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations.
- **4/16/2026:** The County advertised the open houses as inserts (with the English and Spanish fliers) in the Franklin County Graphic.
- **4/23/2026:** The Franklin County Graphic published an article regarding public involvement opportunities for the 2026 update to the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations.
- **4/27/2026:** Aiden Whitaker from KEPR Action News interviewed Director McCart regarding public involvement opportunities for the 2026 update to the Franklin County Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations.

OPEN HOUSE LOCATIONS

Franklin County's public meetings traditionally take place in the Franklin County Courthouse in Pasco. The predominantly rural population of the county must therefore travel many miles in some cases to attend and contribute to the public process. In order to provide outreach, County staff and AHBL chose to hold three open house events in three locations in the county to provide opportunities to a broader audience that may not otherwise be able to attend because of distance or time commitments. As a result, 21 people attended the events: five people attended the meeting at Pasco High School, six at Connell High School, and 10 at Markham Elementary School.

MEETING FORMAT

The County staff and consultant team were able to tailor the format of each event for the community members who attended.

First, participants were invited to visit an information table where staff and/or consultants welcomed them and invited them to fill out sign-in sheets with their name, email address, how they heard of the event, and they had the option to list an organization they represent. This first stop provided a chance to pick up a hard copy of the survey (in English or Spanish) or to use a mobile device to capture a QR code designed to take the user to the webpage for the project and eventually, the online survey. Further handouts included an informational flyer explaining the comprehensive plan and advertising the open house events, blank comment forms, the Director's business card, and a character worksheet to fill out in-person or to take home and bring back.



Figure 1: Open House at Connell High School

Next, those who attended were invited to enjoy refreshments that included bottled water, cookies, and chips and to explore the posters placed in a semi-circle around the area of each meeting space. AHBL created the following four informational boards for the events:

1. A poster providing facts and figures such as population growth and demographics.
2. An informative poster providing basic information about the purpose of a comprehensive plan.
3. A poster illustrating what was happening 20 years ago to inspire readers to think 20 years into the future.
4. The 2018 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map.

AHBL also created two interactive boards: an aerial map of the county, and a character chart. Participants were invited to place a star-shaped sticker on the aerial map in the general location of their home, business, or neighborhood. Staff observed several conversations were sparked when one attendee noticed where another placed their sticker.

The GMA requires the County to include a rural element in its Comprehensive Plan (RCW 36.70A.070(5)) and to define rural character to guide the development of the rural element and implementing development regulations. The purpose of the interactive character chart was to ask the community what character means to them. Attendees were asked to place thumb-shaped stickers in an up or down position on a poster listing character traits indicating they agree or disagree that the character of the county exemplifies a specific listed trait.

The placement of stickers indicate that attendees believe that the character traits of the county include being *close to nature*, *rustic or traditional*, and *countryside or agricultural*. The tally of the participants' votes includes the following:



Figure 2: Interactive Aerial Photo

Character Trait	# of participants who agree	# of participants who disagree
<i>Close to Nature</i>	5	0
<i>Not rushed-not busy</i>	2	0
<i>Close-knit</i>	2	0
<i>Self-Reliant</i>	1	0
<i>Rustic or Traditional</i>	4	0
<i>Countryside or Agricultural</i>	4	0
<i>Not intensely developed</i>	2	0
<i>Other</i>	Love, friendship, and community	

Figure 3: Character Traits Tally

After these initial similarities the course of each event varied, depending on the interests of the participants. At the event held at Pasco High School on April 23, 2026, the attendees said they would like to hear a brief explanation of the Comprehensive Plan and the process for updating it. Director McCart provided the requested information, the group asked a lot of questions, made comments, and an informal discussion ensued. The comments included the following:

- Allow multi-family housing in LAMIRDS. This would reduce VMT. For instance, a four plex in a LAMIRD on a 1-acre property could be good.
- Pro-growth is the goal.
- Concentrate development in certain areas and leave other parts of the county open. Suggest cluster development along the Snake River, with limitations.
- Generally in favor of TDR.
- A question about the essence of the GMA.
- Beware of unintended growth due to a North Richland Bridge that would cross the Columbia into Franklin County.
- A request to allow event centers in the county's rural areas.

The event at Connell High School on April 28, 2026, followed a drop-in format with attendees arriving at different times, staying for a few brief minutes or for the remainder of the event, and small informal conversations. It was a good opportunity for the community to ask questions about the comprehensive plan, rural planning in general, and GMA requirements. The comments included the following:

- A suggestion to update the Plan by section as conditions change.
- A concern about the State Bill regarding low income / high density housing and the compatibility of those uses with certain areas.

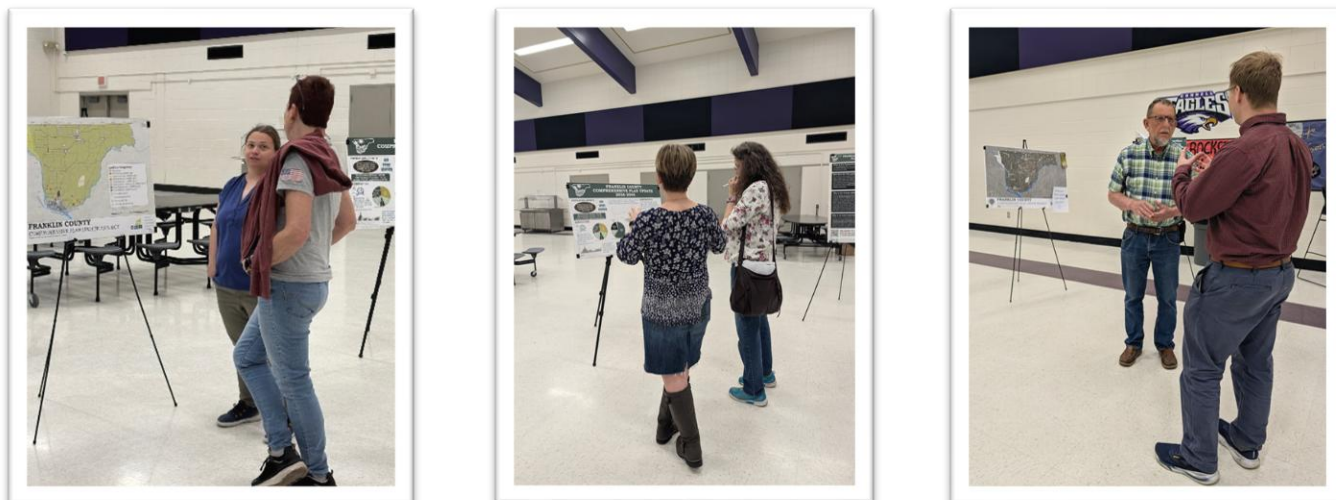


Figure 3: Small conversations at Connell High School

The event held at Markham Elementary School on April 30, 2026, followed a similar format as the one held at Pasco High School. Participants spent less time perusing the posters and more time listening to an explanation of the Comprehensive Plan and development code updates and process. There were also many comments as well as questions that the director, staff, and consultants answered. The comments included the following:

- It is important to speak up now rather than waiting for a project you don't like.
- Keep Kau Trail closed until Pasco improves it.
- A representative from Save Our Shorelines (SOS) attended and commented that they would like the Comprehensive Plan to ensure public access to the Columbia River and preservation of bird habitat and plants that provide filtering for the river.
- There was a discussion about dairies.
 - One person said dairies are thoroughly regulated by the State so they would not limit the number of cattle as long as the operation meets State requirements.
 - Another person commented that they don't want to see a situation like Easterday Farms where an agricultural operation is permitted and later revoked.
- 5-acre lot minimums for certain LAMIRDs are too big. A better definition of rural would be 1.25-acre to 2.5-acre lots.
- More housing / duplexes in rural areas.
- More parks in the county and Pasco.
- Where are RV Parks allowed in the county?
- The Plan needs to be solution oriented, not preventative.



Figure 4: Group conversation at Markham Elementary School

COMMENTS

The County received 32 comments from participants. Some of the comments were written on comment cards and returned to staff and some were verbally conveyed during the events. The following provides the date of the event where staff collected the comment, the name of the commenter, and a summary of each comment.

	Date of Comment	Name	Summary
1.	04/23/2026	Flo Sayre	Traffic: Road 68 exit from I-182 westbound, there needs to be a split of the off ramp to deliver the east-bound Burden Rd. traffic onto Convention Way.
2.	04/23/2026	Flo Sayre	The Comprehensive Plan needs to be updated to allow event centers in the rural areas where there is already a functioning facility in place.
3.	04/23/2026	Martel Rotschy - Old Apostolic Lutheran Church. (OALC)	Update the Comprehensive Plan to allow event centers as an acceptable use in Franklin County. There is a need, there are existing buildings that could be used, there is currently uncaptured tax revenue, breweries and wineries are already allowed, existing facilities cause existing traffic and event centers would not add to this, and impacts would be mitigated through the CUP process.
4.	04/23/2026	Marla Marvin – Save Our Shorelines (SOS)	Don't cap open space regulations at 5 acres or more. If any amount of land meets the criteria, allow it.
5.	04/23/2026	Marla Marvin – SOS	Charge developers a lot more to increase the Park Fund. With this, establish criteria for spending the funds.
6.	04/23/2026	Marla Marvin – SOS	Do not develop the (Richland) USACE Bend Habitat Management Unit in the UGA if it is reconveyed to Franklin County. The comp. plan should require significant work to change the land use if currently designated as habitat.
7.	04/23/2026	Marla Marvin – SOS	Recognize that the Broadmoor Plan cannot do what it should, especially in the Bend.
8.	04/23/2026	Marla Marvin – SOS	If USACE lands are reconveyed to Franklin County, establish a plan that includes public involvement in decisions about which lands the

			County receives. The County should not get all without a parks department.
9.	04/23/2026	Marla Marvin – SOS	Reference Chiawana Water Trail's existence. See saveourshorelinepasco.com .
10.	04/23/2026	Marla Marvin – SOS	How is the plan addressing the proposed loop road and new bridge way north of Pasco?
11.	04/23/2026	Marla Marvin – SOS	Encourage shoreline developers to build access trails to the Columbia and Snake Rivers.
12.	04/23/2026	Marla Marvin – SOS	Note view of the Columbia and Snake Rivers are important and encourage developments to consider neighborhood views.
13.	04/23/2026	Marla Marvin – SOS	Are water and sewer addressed in new developments?
14.	04/23/2026	Marla Marvin – SOS	Call out Selph Landing primitive boat launch as a model.
15.	04/28/2026	Anonymous	The commenter said they live on a five-acre parcel and would like to sell the existing home and buildings and then subdivide a separate one-acre parcel to build a smaller house to live in.
16.	04/30/2026	Nat Cruzen	There needs to be a light, a turn lane, and a finished road eastbound at Rd. 68 and Burns Rd.
17.	04/30/2026	Nat Cruzen	Rd. 68/ Taylor Flats/Columbia Rd./Clark Rd./Dent all need giant truck and semi-truck-sized roundabout. Too many accidents happen there.
18.	04/30/2026	Nat Cruzen	There needs to be a method to reduce the size of 5-acre lots in LAMIRDs to divide into minimum 1-acre lots.
19.	04/30/2026	Nat Cruzen	Solar farms should not be allowed in any part of the irrigated farming area.
20.	04/30/2026	Nat Cruzen	Create zoning for home occupations in residential and agricultural areas to allow signage for the business, with limitations on size, position, and content.
21.	04/30/2026	Nat Cruzen	Improve the rural roads and widen major bridges for farm traffic.
22.	04/30/2026	Nat Cruzen	Consider including Dial-A-Ride service to at least Selph Landing Rd.
23.	04/30/2026	SOS	Thank you for soliciting our thoughts!
24.	04/30/2026	SOS	Environmentally sound access to the river that is supportive of natural areas.
25.	04/30/2026	SOS	Preserve the Bend HMU as is. It has unique and special bird, animal, plant, and riparian habitat.
26.	04/30/2026	SOS	We need a large park to accommodate Pasco's population growth to the east of the Columbia River with a ¼ mile buffer between.
27.	04/30/2026	SOS	Ensure access to Selph Landing.
28.	04/30/2026	SOS	More non-motorized shoulders and designated lanes for east/west and north/south non-motorized travel.
29.	04/30/2026	Flo Sayre	Allow more multifamily dwelling units in LAMIRD areas such as four-plex stacked units on 1-acre each.
30.	04/30/2026	Flo Sayre	There is a need for RV Parks in the county.
31.	04/30/2026	Flo Sayre	A senior living facility with individual manufactured homes could be located in the rural-urban area on the outskirts of the UGA to allow for down-sizing and independent senior living.
32.	04/30/2026	Flo Sayre	Road and bridge updates are badly needed.

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ATTACHMENTS



ACTUALIZACIÓN DEL PLAN INTEGRAL DEL CONDADO DE FRANKLIN 2026-2046

El Condado de Franklin está en proceso de actualizar su Plan Integral. La actualización se centrará principalmente en la vivienda y la infraestructura, como lo exige la Ley de Gestión del Crecimiento del estado y nuevas orientaciones reglamentarias, pero también incluirá actualizaciones generales para reflejar mejor la visión actual del Condado y de los residentes.

¿Qué es el Plan Integral?
El Plan Integral es una hoja de ruta para los próximos 20 años que guía el crecimiento, el desarrollo y las políticas de uso de la tierra dentro del Condado y ayuda a lograr la visión comunitaria deseada que asegurará que el Condado de Franklin siga siendo un gran lugar para vivir, trabajar y disfrutar en 2046. El Plan aborda temas como la vivienda, el transporte, el medio ambiente natural y las comodidades comunitarias y ayuda al Condado a determinar los servicios, instalaciones y comodidades necesarias.

Formas de Participar Reuniones Públicas
La participación pública es una parte clave del proceso de actualización del Plan Integral, y habrá múltiples oportunidades para proporcionar comentarios, incluidas reuniones públicas.

¡Evento de Exhibición – Tres Ubicaciones!
Acompáñenos en un formato de Casa Abierta en las siguientes ubicaciones. Todos los eventos se llevarán a cabo de **6:00 p. m. a 7:30 p. m.**, y puede pasar en cualquier momento con preguntas o para obtener más información sobre el proyecto.

- Escuela Secundaria Pasco (biblioteca – acceso por la Entrada de Visitantes en N 10th Avenue): Jueves, 23 de abril
- Escuela Secundaria Connell (cafetería): Martes, 28 de abril
- Escuela Primaria Markham (biblioteca): Jueves, 30 de abril

Encuesta Comunitaria
La Encuesta Comunitaria cubre temas como demografía, esperanzas y preocupaciones para el Condado de Franklin, y revisión de la Declaración de Visión actual. La Encuesta Comunitaria estará abierta hasta el 8 de mayo de 2026 y se puede acceder en el sitio web del proyecto: <https://engage.ahbl.com/Franklin2046/S>

¡Visite el sitio web del proyecto para inscribirse en actualizaciones y revisar materiales informativos!

La actualización del Plan Integral del Condado de Franklin cuenta con el respaldo del financiamiento proveniente de la Ley de Compromiso Climático de Washington. La CCA (Climate Commitment Act, Ley de Compromiso Climático) apoya los esfuerzos de acción climática de Washington y utiliza el dinero del programa de límite e inversión para reducir la contaminación climática, crear empleos y mejorar la salud pública. Para obtener información sobre la CCA, visite www.climate.wa.gov.

CLIMATE COMMITMENT ACT

FRANKLIN COUNTY AHBL



FRANKLIN COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2026-2046

Franklin County is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. The update will be largely focused on housing and infrastructure, as required by the state's Growth Management Act and new regulatory guidance, and will include general updates better reflecting the current vision of the County and residents.

What is the Comprehensive Plan?
The Comprehensive Plan is a roadmap for the next 20 years which guides growth, development, and land use policies within the County and helps to achieve the desired community vision that will ensure Franklin County continues to be a great place to live, work, and play in 2046. The Plan addresses topics such as housing, transportation, the natural environment, and community amenities and helps the County determine needed services, facilities, and amenities.

Ways to Get Involved
Public Meetings
Public participation is a key part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, and there will be multiple opportunities to provide input, including public meetings.

Open House Events - Three Locations!
Join us in an Open House setting at the following locations. All events will be held from **6:00 pm to 7:30 pm** and you can drop by any time with questions or to find out more about the project.

- Pasco High School (library - access through the Visitors Entrance on N 10th Avenue): **Thursday, April 23**
- Connell High School (cafeteria): **Tuesday, April 28**
- Markham Elementary School (library): **Thursday, April 30**

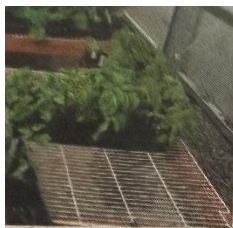
Community Survey
The Community Survey covers topics such as demographics, hopes and concerns for Franklin County, and review of the current Vision Statement. The Community Survey is open until May 8, 2026 and you can access it at the project website: <https://engage.ahbl.com/Franklin2046/S>

Visit the project website to sign up for updates, take the survey, and review informational materials!

The Franklin County Comprehensive Plan Update is supported with funding from Washington's Climate Commitment Act. The CCA supports Washington's climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at <http://www.climate.wa.gov>.

CLIMATE COMMITMENT ACT

FRANKLIN COUNTY AHBL



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Franklin County residents asked to help shape future of County

By: Katherine Trowbridge

Franklin County officials announced they are asking the community to weigh in on the future direction of the county as the county is currently in the process of updating the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Counties across the state are required to update the comprehensive plan once every 10 years under Washington State's Growth Management Act.

Franklin County will be working on the plan, gathering community input, and setting policy to guide the county with the goal of adopting the final plan by the end of 2026. Officials said this revised plan will guide development and policy decisions through the year 2046.

The Comprehensive

Plan is a long-range policy document adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. It provides a framework for growth, infrastructure investment, and land use decisions over the next 20 years. The updated plan will articulate a shared vision for how Franklin County should look, feel, and function by 2046. It will include goals and policies for housing, land use, transportation, economic development, natural environment, as well as public services and facilities.

Wes McCart, Franklin County Planning and Economic Development Director, emphasized the plan's importance as he shared, "This comprehensive plan update will incorporate current data,

land use trends, and infrastructure needs to guide future growth, protect agricultural lands, and direct public investment. Our goal is to meet all state planning requirements in a clear and accessible way."

This important effort relies on broad public input to shape the future of Franklin County. Community members — including residents, business owners, property owners, students, and civic groups — are encouraged to participate in this open and collaborative process.

Franklin County invites all interested par-

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