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CITY OF NEWPORT 2027 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE

August 11, 2025

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN (PEP)

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Project Background

The City of Newport is undertaking a periodic update to its Comprehensive Plan, consistent with the requirements of Washington State’s Growth Management Act (GMA). This update must be completed by June 30, 2027, and is intended to guide long-range planning decisions related to land use, housing, economic development, transportation, utilities, and natural resources over the next 20 years.

Unlike previous efforts, which involved limited public participation, this update presents an opportunity to meaningfully engage the community throughout the process. Public input will help shape policies that reflect local values, concerns, and aspirations—especially in light of shifting conditions such as vacant commercial land, housing demand, infrastructure needs, and opportunities for revitalization.

To support this effort, the City has developed a Public Engagement Plan (PEP) that outlines targeted strategies to reach a broad cross-section of the community. Engagement activities will aim to build public understanding of the planning process, foster trust, and provide early and ongoing opportunities for residents, businesses, and partners to help shape the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Engagement Goals

The public engagement strategy for the Newport Comprehensive Plan update is shaped by the recognition that most community members have not had a meaningful opportunity to participate in large-scale planning efforts. This update is not only a legal requirement—it is a chance to connect with residents, businesses, and stakeholders who live, work, or spend time in Newport and want their voices reflected in the city’s future.

This Public Engagement Plan aims to:

- **Create a welcoming entry point into the planning process**, particularly for those who may be unfamiliar with city planning or have not previously participated.
- **Offer targeted engagement** opportunities for different groups—including businesses, youth, seniors, low-income households, and artists—using approaches that speak to their interests and concerns.
- **Build public understanding** of how the Comprehensive Plan works, including its scope, legal limitations, and what can and cannot be changed through this process.
- **Ensure input is well-documented** and can serve as a reference for future implementation efforts, even beyond this planning cycle.
- **Foster trust and transparency** through open communication, guided questions, and listening sessions that respect community input and reflect it back through real-time adjustments and long-term strategies.

Through this process, the City hopes to build lasting civic relationships and give Newport residents a clear sense that their contributions matter—not just for this plan, but for the years that follow.

Public Engagement Overview

The City of Newport’s approach to public engagement is built around the belief that community involvement should be practical, accessible, and purposeful. This plan outlines how engagement will be structured to align with each phase of the Comprehensive Plan update—starting with early visioning and continuing through draft review and adoption.

Engagement efforts will focus on creating opportunities for meaningful input rather than overwhelming the public with generic requests for feedback. The outreach strategy is grounded in guided conversations, storytelling, and targeted questions that make it easier for people to share ideas and understand how their voices contribute to real outcomes.

This process is also an opportunity to shift how the community experiences planning. For many residents, business owners, and youth, this may be their first time interacting with a long-range planning process. That makes it especially important to approach each interaction with clarity, patience, and a sense of shared purpose.

Engagement will be adapted by audience and by topic. **For example:**

- Business outreach will include targeted discussions focused on zoning, signage, and infrastructure needs.
- General public outreach will be guided by interactive materials and tools that explain how the plan will shape everyday life—from parks to housing to traffic.
- Youth engagement will be integrated into school-based activities in the fall.
- Local events will serve as key touchpoints for gathering informal feedback and building awareness.

This tiered approach ensures that each participant has a meaningful role, even if their time or interest is limited. The City’s goal is not to check a box—but to build a plan that reflects Newport’s lived experiences, values, and vision for the future.

Methods and Tactics

To reach a broad and representative cross-section of the Newport community, a variety of engagement methods will be deployed throughout the Comprehensive Plan update. These methods are intentionally designed to meet people where they are—whether at a public event, online, or in one-on-one conversations. The City’s strategy combines in-person interaction, digital tools, and low-barrier outreach to maximize participation and build understanding over time.

Engagement tactics will include:

- **Project Branding: “Newport Reimagined”**
Outreach materials will be unified under a consistent project identity to help increase recognition and credibility throughout the process. The “Newport Reimagined” brand will be featured across print, digital, and in-person formats to signal continuity and encourage participation.
- **In-Person Workshops and Listening Sessions**
Facilitated discussions that allow residents to engage with plan concepts, provide input,

and ask questions in a structured format. Listening sessions will be held at key points to gather targeted feedback from underrepresented groups.

- **Pop-Up Engagement at Community Events**
Outreach will occur at familiar community events such as National Night Out (August 5), Halloween trick-or-treating (October 31), and the Rodeo (June 2026). These events offer informal opportunities for brief but meaningful interaction.
- **Online Surveys**
Digital surveys hosted through platforms like SurveyMonkey will be used to gather broad input on specific plan topics. These tools have already proven successful in past City efforts.
- **Targeted Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups**
One-on-one or small-group conversations will be used to engage business owners, youth leaders, creative professionals, and service providers. These guided interviews will help the City better understand detailed priorities and tailor policy decisions in light of community desires.
- **Printed Materials and Mailers**
Utility bill inserts (1/3-sheet colored flyers) will be distributed 3–4 times during the process. Mailers will be used to announce key milestones, community survey(s) and encourage participation among residents who may not access online tools.
- **Project Website and Call-In Line**
A dedicated page will be created and linked to the City’s website and will serve as the central information hub. A call-in number (repurposed from a City-owned line) will allow residents to leave recorded messages with input or questions.
- **Youth Engagement Activities**
City staff and consultants will coordinate with local schools in Fall 2025 to engage students through classroom activities or presentations, with a focus on understanding what future Newport should look like for younger generations.

Stakeholders

Engaging a broad and representative mix of stakeholders is critical to ensuring that the Comprehensive Plan reflects the full range of voices in Newport. While outreach will be open to all, certain groups have been identified for more targeted engagement based on their influence, perspectives, or historically limited participation in planning processes.

Businesses

Local businesses will be engaged to understand their needs related to zoning, signage, parking, infrastructure, and future development. Engagement will include a mix of business-specific interviews, surveys, and presence at community events. Targeted **stakeholders include:**

- **Newport Chamber of Commerce**
- **Downtown business owners**
- **Local vendors and service providers**
- **Arts and culture businesses**
- **Local Developers**

General Public

The general public will be reached through a range of methods, including open houses, online surveys, and pop-up events. Engagement will aim to be inclusive of all community members—especially those who may be less familiar with planning processes. **Key audiences and partners include:**

- Youth and students
- Seniors and elderly residents
- Low-income residents
- Families
- Community members at large

Agency Partners

Coordination with agency partners and local institutions will ensure that the Comprehensive Plan reflects regional priorities and aligns with other planning documents or capital investments. **Key partners include:**

- Kalispel Tribe of Indians
- PUD
- Port of Pend Oreille
- Newport Hospital and Health Services
- Tri-County Health Department
- South Pend Oreille Fire and Rescue
- Newport Public Library
- YES (Youth Emergency Services)
- Newport School District
- City of Oldtown, Idaho
- Pend Oreille County
- Greater Newport Area Chamber of Commerce
- WA Department of Ecology
- WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
- WA Department of Natural Resources
- WA Department of Transportation
- WA State Parks and Recreation
- WA Department of Commerce

Engagement Schedule

Public engagement will occur in phases that correspond with key points in the planning process—from early awareness-building to final plan adoption. The table below summarizes when and how engagement will take place, what activities are planned, and how they relate to the development of the Comprehensive Plan. This schedule is designed to be flexible, allowing the City to adapt outreach methods as needed based on participation levels and community feedback.

Phase	Timeline	Engagement Activities
Project Launch	Summer 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch project branding ('Newport Reimagined') • Website and social media rollout • Tabling at National Night Out • Begin stakeholder interviews • Utility bill insert • Phone number rollout • Planning Commission meetings throughout the process
Visioning & Priority Setting	Fall 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public workshops • Public survey • Utility bill insert • Youth engagement at schools • Halloween tabling • Online and paper surveys • Continue stakeholder outreach
Draft Plan Development	Winter-Spring 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and agency focus groups • Listening sessions/Pop-up events • Planning Commission briefings • Content posted to project website
Public Review of Draft Plan	Spring 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open house • Survey or comment form • Utility bill insert • Continue agency coordination • Integrate feedback into final plan draft
Plan Adoption & Implementation	Summer 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public hearing promotion • Tabling at the Rodeo • Share summary of engagement outcomes/plan • Planning Commission and City Council hearings • Final Public Engagement Report

Barriers

To ensure that public engagement efforts are inclusive and accessible, the City of Newport has identified several barriers that may prevent some residents from participating in the Comprehensive Plan process. These include challenges related to geography, technology, time, and trust. The table below outlines each anticipated barrier and the strategy that will be used to reduce or eliminate it.

Barrier	Strategy to Address
Limited Internet or Digital Access	Distribute printed materials (utility bill inserts, flyers); use in-person events and a public call-in line.
Low Familiarity with the Planning Process	Develop plain-language materials, infographics, and FAQs to explain what the plan is and how input will be used.
Rural Isolation or Transportation Access	Hold pop-ups at community spaces and public events that residents already attend to reduce the need for travel.
Lack of Trust or Previous Involvement	Facilitate guided conversations and listening sessions; clearly document input and show how it's being used.
Busy Families or Working Adults	Offer flexible engagement tools like drop-in events, brief surveys, and participation at community events.

Climate Planning Engagement Coordination (New Comprehensive Plan Element)

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the City of Newport will develop a new Climate Element in alignment with Washington State’s HB 1181 requirements. This effort will involve the formation of a dedicated Climate Advisory Committee, composed of community members, technical experts, agency partners, and stakeholders with an interest in climate resilience, adaptation, and emissions reduction. While this advisory group will guide the development of the Climate Element, coordination with the broader Comprehensive Plan engagement process will be essential to ensure alignment and avoid duplicative outreach.

Where possible, public engagement activities—such as workshops, surveys, and pop-up events—will be designed to gather input that informs both the Comprehensive Plan and the Climate Element. The planning team will also work closely with the Climate Advisory Committee to share findings, identify overlapping community priorities (e.g., emergency preparedness, fire resilience, energy resilience), and ensure the final plans reflect a unified vision for Newport’s future.

The role of the advisory group will guide the planning process outlined as follows:

Data Collection and Analysis

The following types of questions will be used in the early phase of engagement for the climate element:

- What is the community’s recent experience with climate related hazards?
- What climate events are residents most concerned about and why?
- Where are residents experiencing impacts from climate related events?
- What are the most important assets to residents?
- What climate-related policies are most pressing to residents? (i.e. water quality, greenhouse gas emission reductions, renewable energy, etc.)

Plan Drafting

- Explore policy options and provide updates to the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. This will happen concurrently with the other comprehensive plan elements.
- The project team will seek to understand early opinions from the community around climate related policies.

Final Plan Drafting

- The final climate element will be presented at the final open houses and then proceed through the public hearing process with the Comprehensive Plan.