



# ***Benton Believes***

## **Benton County Comprehensive Plan Project**

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Community Comprehensive Plan Advisory Group (CCPAG)  
Meeting #3

May 8th, 2025



**Benton  
County**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT**

# Welcome

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Jen Brown, Project Coordinator

Petra Schuetz, Interim Community Development Director

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**Recap and Progress Report**

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**Getting to Voluntary Periodic Review**

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**Periodic Review Findings**

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**Draft Work Plan**

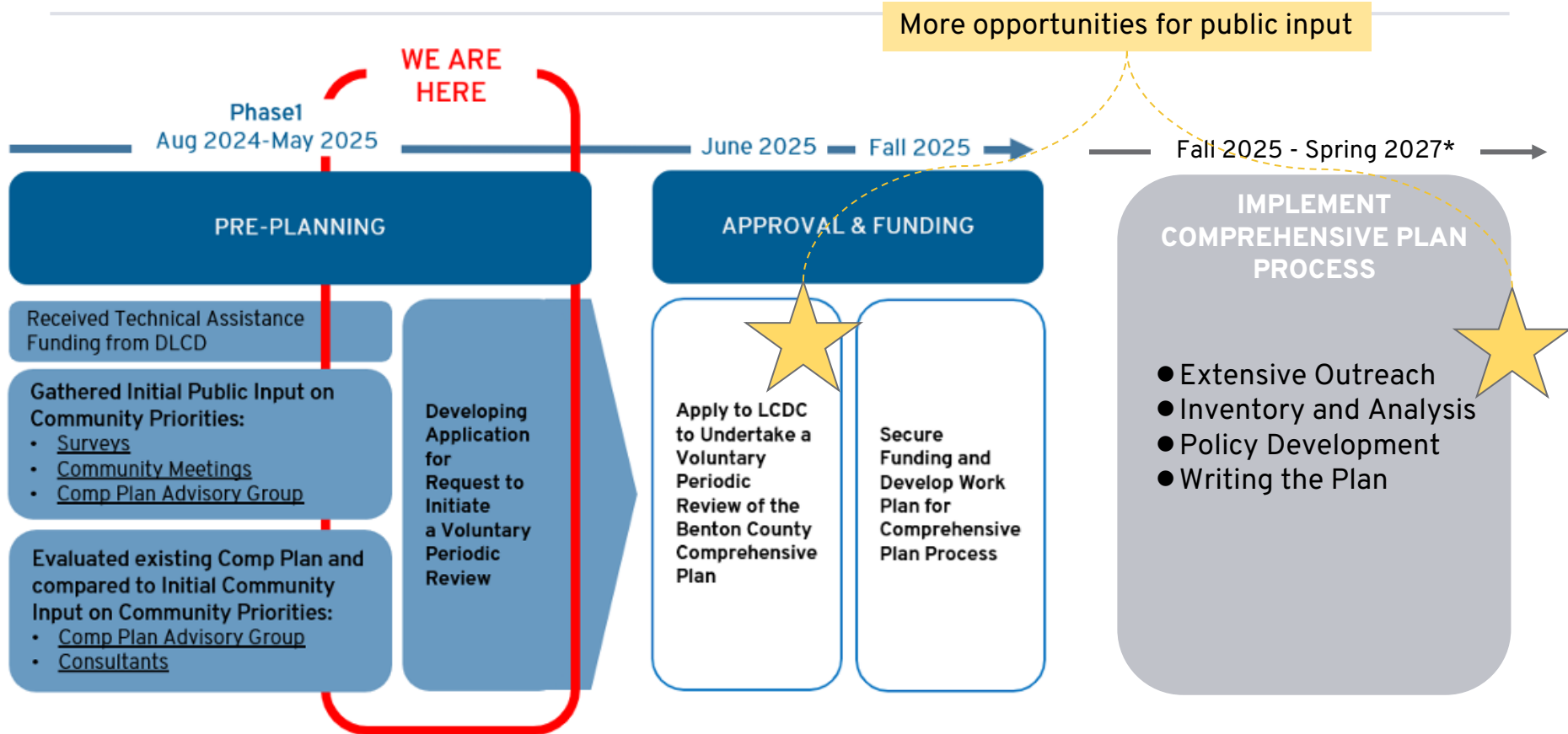
**05**

**Next Steps**

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# Project Recap and Progress Report

# Process Timeline



*\*Pending approval and funding*

# Outreach as of May 2025

## CPAG Meetings

*Comprehensive Plan Advisory Group*

3 workshops to create an outreach plan

3 workshops to identify:

**What are drivers of change?**

**What are robust preparation strategies?**

**Why does Benton County need to update the Comprehensive Plan?**

## Public Survey

- Open from March 3th to April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- Offered in English and Spanish
- Received 409 responses

*Asked Benton County:*  
**What is most important for Benton County to plan for?**

## Public Workshops

4 meetings held between March 3th to April 4<sup>th</sup> 2025 in:

- Wren, NW Benton & Mid-Benton
- South Benton
- North Benton
- Alsea

*Asked Benton County:*  
**What should Benton County keep and what should change?**

# Meeting #1 Recap

## DRAFTED FUTURE HEADLINES

*In the future, what might headlines about these drivers of change say?*

ISSUE, XVII JANUARY 30TH, 2050

**BENTON BELIEVES**  
COMMUNITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

COMMUNITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY GROUP (CCPAG) • MEETING #1

DRIVER OF CHANGE

DRIVER OF CHANGE

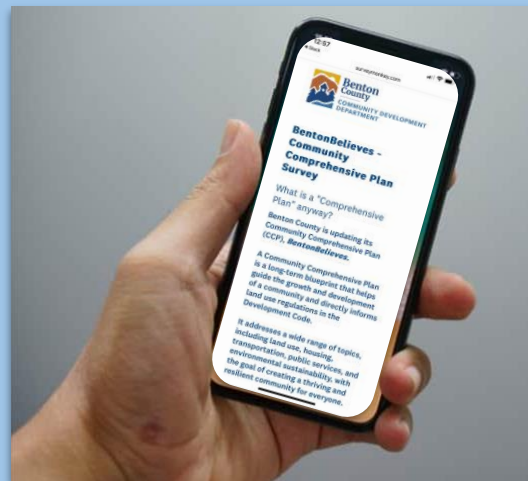
DRIVER OF CHANGE

DRIVER OF CHANGE



## SUMMARIZED KEY THEMES & CREATED A SURVEY

*Which of these scenarios do you think is most important to prepare for?*

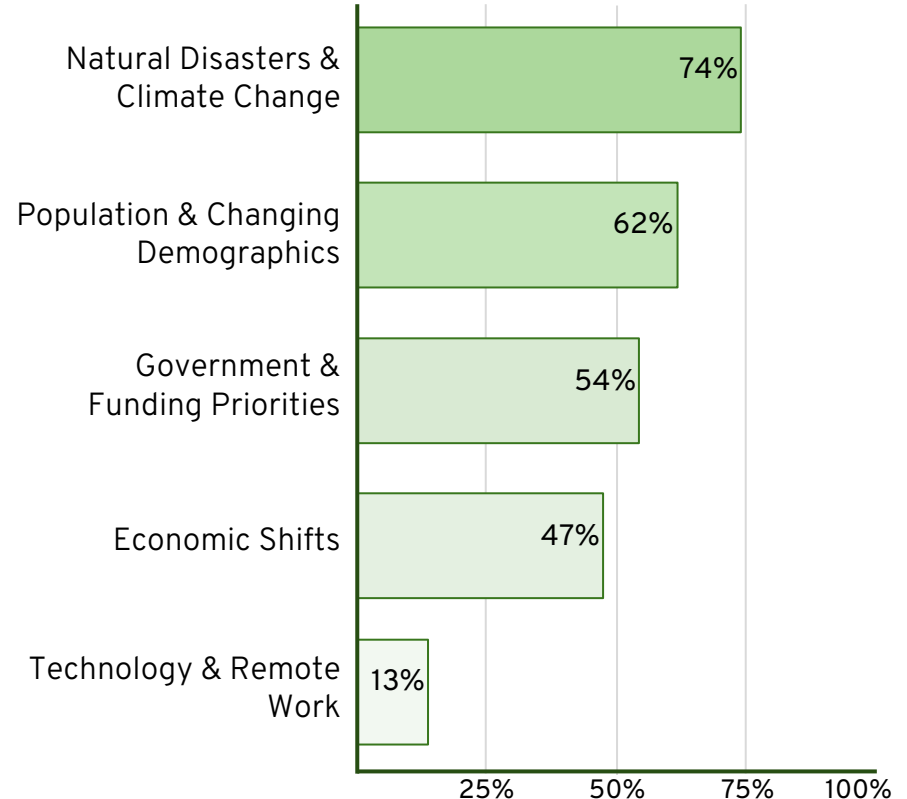


# Public Survey

The public survey asked **what is most important for Benton County to plan for?**

Respondents prioritized both broad topic areas as well as sub areas within those topics. Their top priorities included:

- **Natural Disasters & Climate Change**
  - Natural Resource Management
- **Population & Changing Demographics**
  - Housing Availability & Affordability
- **Government & Funding Priorities**
  - Strengthening Public Engagement





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## Meeting #2 Recap

How prepared is Benton County to address public priorities?

How can Benton County be more prepared?

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 **Natural Resource Management**

- Proactive mitigate concerns
- Better communicate emergency plans

 **Housing Availability & Affordability**

- Promote housing development at all price points
- Address land use constraints

**Strengthening Public Engagement**

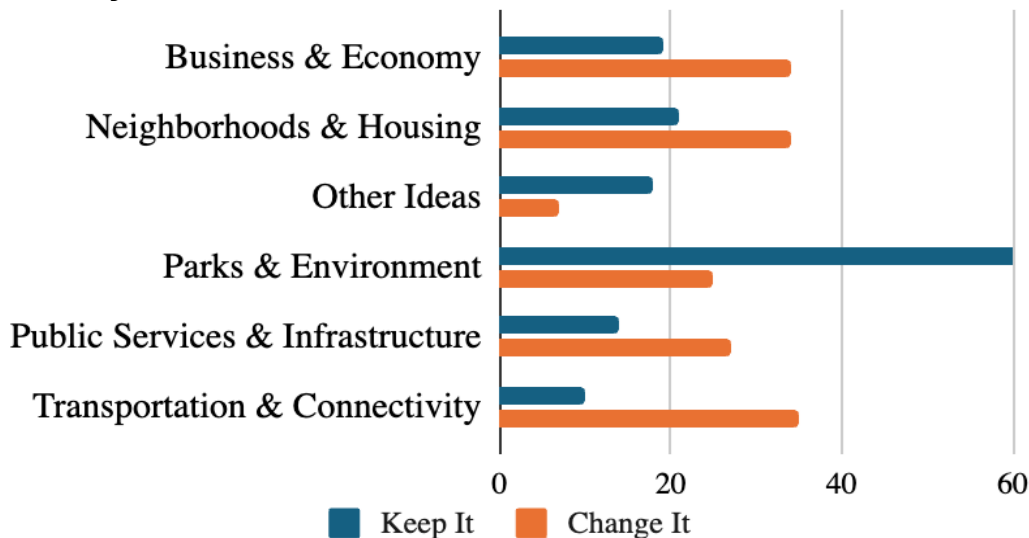
- Improve communication with non english speaking residents

**Land Use & Business Growth**

- Address zoning, periminting, and land use development hurdles

# Community Priority Workshops

At the community priority workshops, residents were invited to reflect on features of Benton County that they want to see preserved or change. Comments were grouped by category areas and tallied by “Keep it” or “Change it”.



## 🏠 Neighborhoods & Housing 🏠

Keep it

*What makes Benton County a special, unique, or enjoyable place?*

“Rural community feel”

Change it

*What is missing or could be improved in Benton County?*

“Incredibly high cost of living”

# Community Priority Workshops

Common Ideas	Keep It	Change It
Business & Economy	Protect local businesses, locally owned farms, commercial nodes	Big box stores, living wage jobs, more businesses to support county communities
Neighborhoods & Housing	Walkable, low density, community fabric	Housing cost and diversity of options, unhoused population, local control
Transportation & Connectivity	Small town feel, rural	Cultural activities, gov't outreach to citizens
Parks & Environment	Green space, access, farm and forest land, county parks	Trailhead parking, more trails, community rec - local parks and playgrounds
Public Services & Infrastructure	County library, rural fire dept	Broadband, more resilient electric, water storage for wildfire suppression, rural medical care
	Low traffic, lack of congestion	Rural transportation options (bike, bus, etc), growing traffic / freight

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# Getting to Voluntary Periodic Review

- Starting the Voluntary Periodic Review (VPR) Process

## **Voluntary Periodic Review (VPR)**

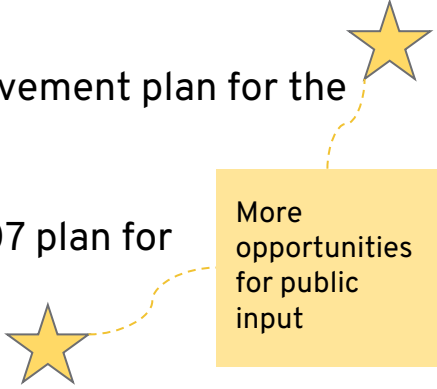
Periodic Review is Oregon's process for ensuring comprehensive plans are continually updated and consistent with the statewide planning goals. Periodic review is optional for County comprehensive plans, and jurisdictions within UGBs have traditionally been prioritized for technical assistance funding. Counties, however, are not immune to many of the same issues facing incorporated cities - housing shortages, complex economies, and the need for community services and facilities. In addition, they must also grapple with sensitive resource issues related to natural, farm, and forest lands.



Draft content for these documents are the products of phase 1!

## The VPR Process

- ❑ Submit **official request for VPR** to LCDC
- ❑ The request must meet certain statutory requirements (OAR 660-025-0035 and ORS 197.629)
- ❑ Upon approval, County and CPAG review and update the public involvement plan for the comprehensive planning process
- ❑ DLCD's Periodic Review Assistance Team (PRAT) will review the 2007 plan for inconsistencies with state law
- ❑ The County engages the public and CPAG in finalizing the work plan
- ❑ County must produce a **work program** outlining tasks needed to complete periodic review - this must be approved by DLCD



More opportunities for public input

## **The VPR Process**

The VPR request must address the following:

- A. Substantial change in circumstances impacting economic development, needed housing, transportation, public facilities, etc.
- B. Decisions based on acknowledged comprehensive plan and land use regulations are inconsistent with statewide planning goals
- C. Issues of regional or statewide significance must be addressed
- D. Existing plan is failing to achieve local and statewide planning goals

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# Changing Circumstances

*ORS 197.628(3)(a)*

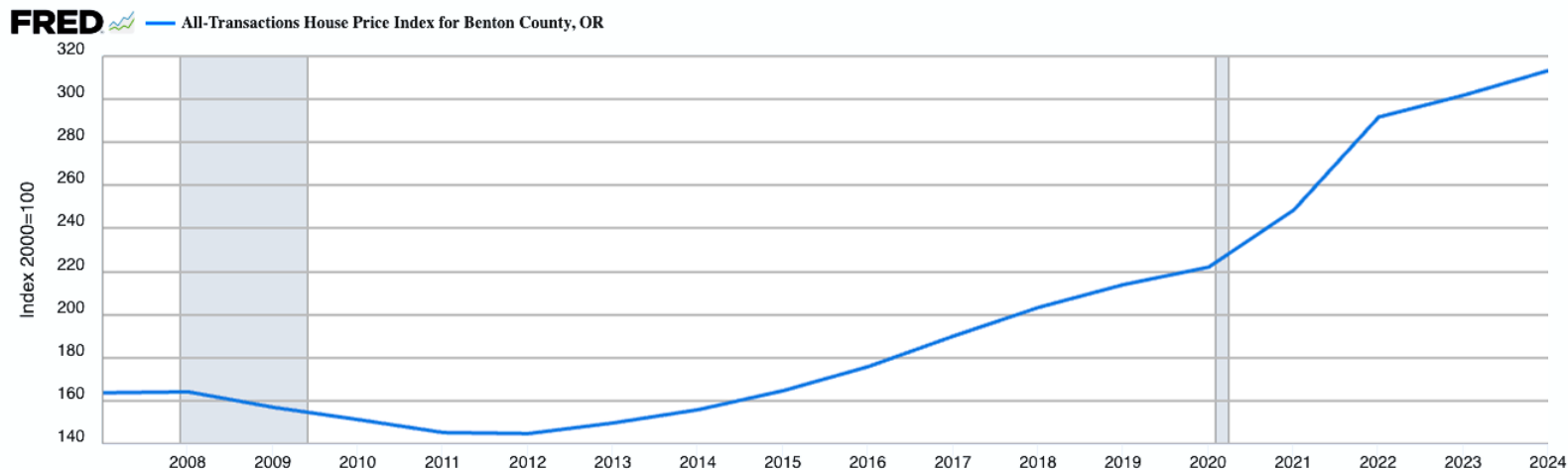
*There has been a substantial change in circumstances including but not limited to the conditions, findings, or assumptions upon which the comprehensive plan or land use regulations were based, so that the comprehensive plan or land use regulations do not comply with the statewide planning goals relating to economic development, needed housing, transportation, public facilities and services and urbanization*



## Housing Affordability

The Housing Price Index (HPI) in Benton County has nearly doubled since 2007, when the current Comprehensive Plan was implemented, demonstrating a substantial increase in housing costs.

HPI is how the Federal Housing Finance Agency measures the changes in single family homes prices



Source: U.S. Federal Housing Finance Agency via FRED®  
Shaded areas indicate U.S. recessions.

## Forestry and Agriculture Industries

Oregon's timber industry has seen many changes in recent history, both before and after the 2007 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. Particularly, increased protections of public land, climate impacts, increased automation, and large timber corporations driving out smaller timberers have reduced jobs provided and taxes generated by the timber industry.

While Benton County's agriculture industry has remained fairly stable, there have been challenges in recent years in regards to costs, land, and labor. This results in fewer potential farmers able to afford the land to start a farm, and fewer farms able to function financially feasibly.



## Wildfire and Drought Risk

Studies from Oregon State University project an **increasing risk of wildfires** in the coming years. Since 2007, the impacts of wildfires have had worsening effects in the Pacific Northwest including more acres burnt and worsening air quality from smoke.

Additionally, changes to precipitation, temperature, soil moisture, and snowmelt indicate an **ongoing mega drought** across Oregon that impacts water supply, ecosystems, and wildfires.



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# Inconsistency with Statewide Goals

*ORS 197.628(3)(b)*

*Decisions based on acknowledged comprehensive plan and land use regulations are inconsistent with the goals relating to economic development, needed housing, transportation, public facilities and services and urbanization*

## Farm and Forestry Land Protections

Benton County's 2007 Comprehensive Plan prioritized the protection and preservation of forest and farm land. While this is aligned with many community goals, it may have had an unintended consequence of exacerbating rural housing shortages.

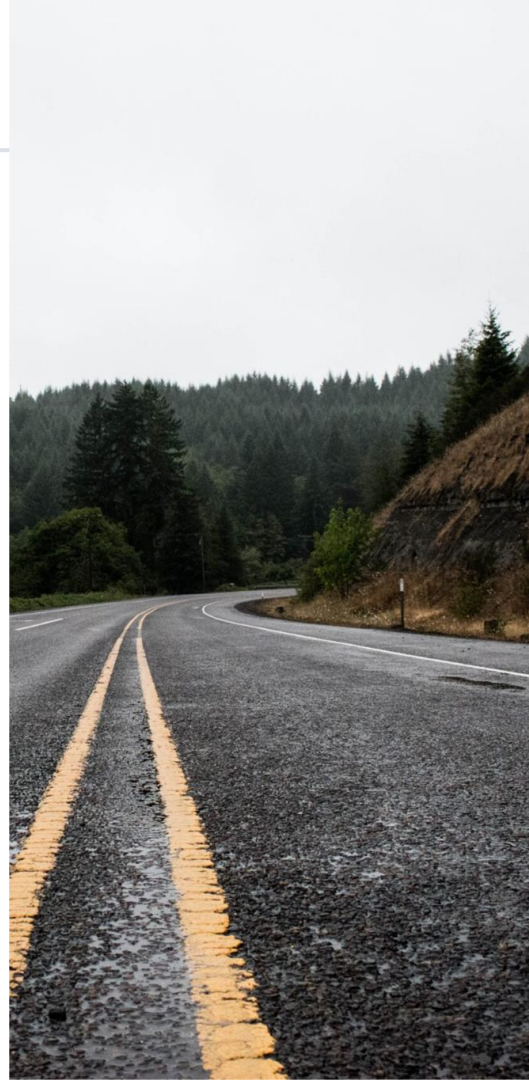
**Benton County should examine how its own zoning and land use policies might be hindering housing development**

### **Goal 2.1.4 of Benton County's 2007 Comprehensive Plan:**

*In order to preserve farm and forest land, Benton County shall limit rural residential development to areas where goal exceptions have been allowed.*

## **Updates to the Transportation Planning Rule (Goal 12)**

Benton County's Transportation System Plan (TSP) was last updated in 2019. Subsequent to that update (in 2022), the state made amendments to the transportation planning rule (Goal 12). These changes need to be reflected in the TSP and should also be reflected in the Comprehensive Plan.



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# Issues of Regional Significance

*ORS 197.628(3)(c)*

*There are issues of regional or statewide significance, intergovernmental coordination, or state agency plans or programs affecting land use which must be addressed in order to bring comprehensive plans and land use regulations into compliance with the goals relating to economic development, needed housing, transportation, public facilities and services and urbanization*

## Coffin Butte Landfill Expansion Proposal

The County is currently developing in a Sustainable Materials Management Plan (SMMP) that will generate new policies and recommendations to address Coffin Butte and waste management more generally. The Comprehensive Plan should incorporate these policies and provide a venue for the public to weigh in more broadly.

### ***Key questions the plan does not adequately address:***

- Policies that will emerge from the SMMP process
- How to manage transportation, services, housing, and economic conflicts if expansion moves forward
- How to reduce Benton County's contribution to the waste stream



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# Failure to Achieve Goals

*ORS 197.628(3)(d)*

*The local government, commission or department determines that the existing comprehensive plan and land use regulations are not achieving the statewide planning goals relating to economic development, needed housing, transportation, public facilities and services and urbanization*

## Community Priorities: Survey

In March, Benton County circulated a public survey asking the community what they feel is most important for the Comprehensive Plan to focus on.

The survey received over 400 responses and identified these priorities.

### **1. Natural Disasters & Climate Change**

*Sub Priority:* Natural Resource Management

### **2. Population & Changing Demographics**

*Sub Priority:* Housing Availability & Affordability

### **3. Government & Funding Priorities**

*Sub Priority:* Strengthening Public Engagement

### **4. Economic Shifts**

*Sub Priority:* Land Use & Business Growth

### **5. Technology & Remote Work**

*Sub Priority:* Rural Housing & Economy

## Where is the Comprehensive Plan Falling Short?



### **Housing and Development**

Despite being a recurring top priority in throughout community engagement, housing policies are just a brief mention in the current Comprehensive Plan



### **Climate and Natural Hazards**

Environmental policies make up a substantial portion of the Comprehensive Plan, yet there are shortcomings in proactively preparing for uncertain future conditions



### **Community Engagement and Resilience**

The Comprehensive Plan plans for engagement through advisory committees, however, there aren't strategies for reaching additional and multilingual residents

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# Work Program

# Developing the Work Program

- ❑ County sends VPR request letter to LCDC for review (late May 2025)
- ❑ County uses Cascadia-developed work program as a starting point
- ❑ County has 6 months to submit a locally adopted work program



This process involves extensive public and CPAG engagement

Group #	Task #	Goal / Statement	Task Name	Product Description	Need	Process	Status
1	A	Goal 1: Citizen Involvement	Notice of county resolution of intent	Measure 50 notice of intent	County Resolution	In Progress	In Progress
	B	Goal 1: Citizen Involvement	Stakeholder identification	Stakeholder meeting	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	C	Goal 1: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
2	A	Goal 2: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	B	Goal 2: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	C	Goal 2: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
3	A	Goal 3: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	B	Goal 3: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	C	Goal 3: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
4	A	Goal 4: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	B	Goal 4: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	C	Goal 4: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
5	A	Goal 5: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	B	Goal 5: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	C	Goal 5: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
6	A	Goal 6: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	B	Goal 6: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	C	Goal 6: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
7	A	Goal 7: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	B	Goal 7: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	C	Goal 7: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
8	A	Goal 8: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	B	Goal 8: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	C	Goal 8: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
9	A	Goal 9: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	B	Goal 9: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed
	C	Goal 9: Citizen Involvement	Public Participation Plan	Public Participation Plan	County Resolution	Completed	Completed

CP has developed a draft work program. This will be the starting point for further discussion.

## Work Program

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Group and Task #	Statewide Goal	Task Name	Description
1 - Community Involvement	Goals 1 - 15	High level task name	Description of task or subtasks
2 - Inventory and Analysis - Overall			
3 - Inventory and Analysis - Goal Specific			
4 - Policy Choices			
5 - Implementing the Plan			

## Work Program

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### Need

Statutorily Required

Public Priority

Best Practice

Future-Proofing

### Process

Public

Advisory Committee

Internal / PMT

### Status

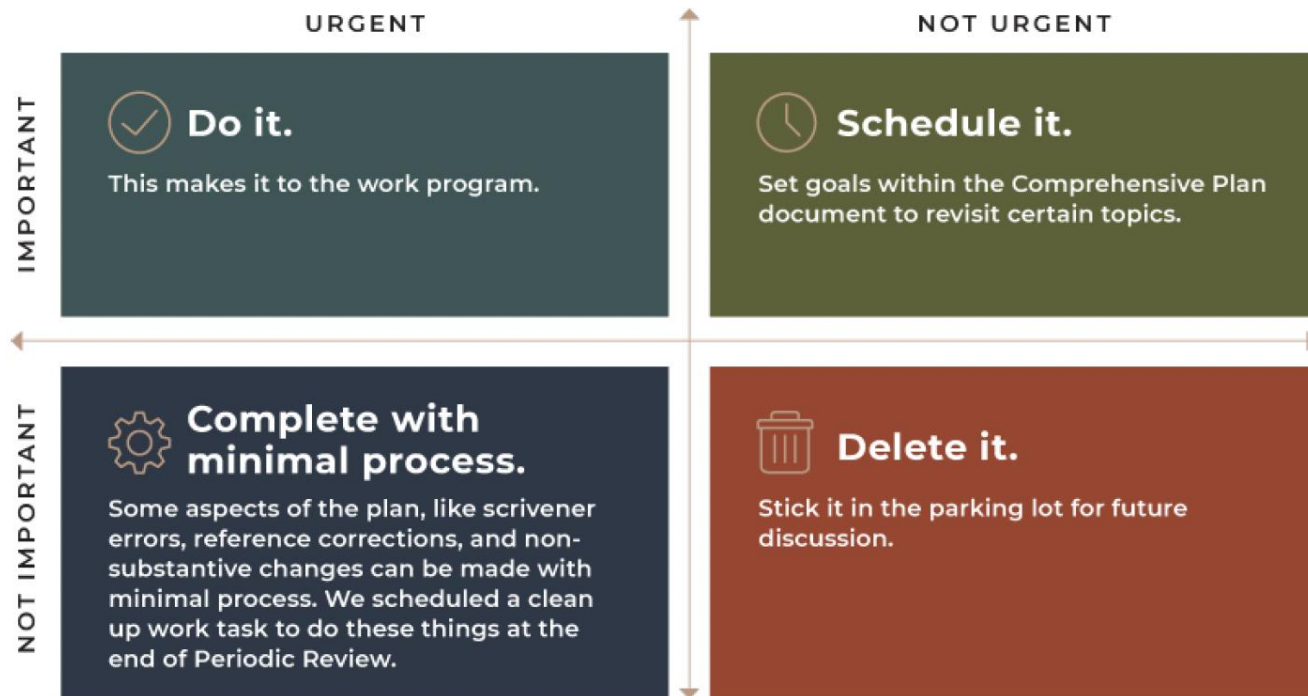
Not Started

In Progress

Interim Product

Complete

## Eisenhower Matrix (Wasco County)



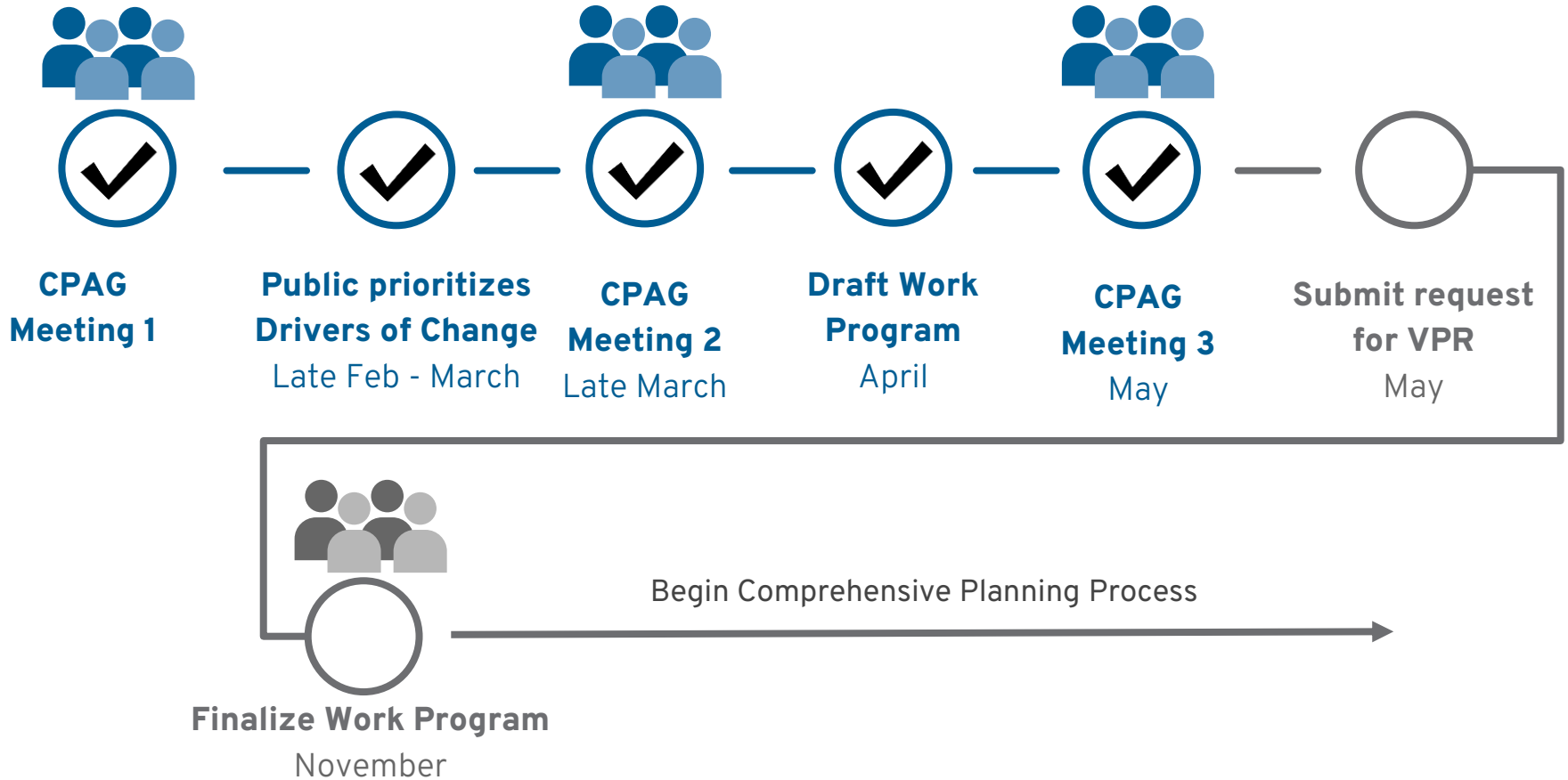
***Time and funding are finite - Benton County should apply something like this Eisenhower Matrix to help prioritize and right-size the Comprehensive Plan update effort.***



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## Next Steps

# Next Steps



# Benton County Community Comprehensive Plan Project

## CCPAG Meeting #3 Summary

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**DATE:** Thur, May 8th

**TIME:** 3:00p-4:00p

**LOCATION:** Virtual

**ATTENDANCE:** 15 participants (including project staff)

### **PURPOSE AND GOALS:**

The focus of the Community Comprehensive Plan Advisory Group (CCPAG) Meeting #3 was to review the outreach that has been done to date and the findings of the engagement process thus far. Additionally, CCPAG Meeting #3 included an overview of the Voluntary Periodic Review (VPR) process, why Benton County is requesting to enter VPR, and a look at the draft work program. The goals of this meeting were:

1. *CCPAG members will receive an overview of engagement done to date.*
2. *CCPAG members will learn about the VPR process and the specific reasons Benton County is requesting to enter VPR.*
3. *CCPAG members will review the draft work program*

### **CCPAG MEETING #3 OUTCOMES:**

CCPAG participants learned about the VPR process and why Benton County is requesting to enter VPR:

#### **VPR**

Periodic Review is Oregon's process for ensuring comprehensive plans are continually updated and consistent with the statewide planning goals. Periodic review is optional for County comprehensive plans, and jurisdictions within UGBs have traditionally been prioritized for technical assistance funding. Counties, however, are not immune to many of the same issues facing incorporated cities - housing shortages, complex economies, and the need for community services and facilities. In addition, they must also grapple with sensitive resource issues related to natural, farm, and forest lands.

#### **VPR Process**

Benton County must submit a request to LCDC that addresses the following areas, demonstrating why Benton County needs to review their Comprehensive Plan.

1. **Changing Circumstances**
  - a. Housing Affordability
  - b. Forestry and Agriculture Industries

- c. Wildfire and Drought Risk
- 2. Inconsistency with Statewide Goals**
  - a. Farm and Forestry Land Protections
  - b. Updates to the Transportation Planning Rule (Goal 12)
- 3. Issues of Regional Significance**
  - a. Coffin Butte Landfill Expansion Proposal
- 4. Failure to Achieve Goals**
  - a. Community Priorities: Survey
  - b. Comprehensive Plan Falling Short

Upon review of the public identified priorities and the VPR process, CCPAG members identified the following concerns:

*Issues of focus for the Comp Plan*

The issue of housing affordability and availability was a recurring concern throughout the public engagement done to date. Additionally, it is a condition that has changed substantially since the 2007 Comp Plan was adopted. However, some CCPAG members feel that this topic is not a rural issue but rather a city issue and is being over emphasized.

The objective at this stage of the project is to identify issues that need to be explored deeper. Housing is an identified issue, but potential solutions should be the focus of future discussions. Concerns such as where housing is located (county vs within UGBs) should be explored later in the Comp Plan update process.

*Alternatives to updating the Comp Plan*

Some CCPAG members feel that the Comp Plan does not need a full update and that its issues can be addressed through a Post Adoption Plan Amendment (PAPA).

*Funding a Comp Plan update*

Some CCPAG members are skeptical that DLCD will have the funding for this Comp Plan update. While DLCD has seen no indication that funding won't be available, their budget has not yet been finalized. Some CCPAG members would also prefer to see this work done in house rather than by hiring a consultant team with state funds. The Benton County planning department, however, does not have the staff capacity to take a Comp Plan update in house.