

# Whitman County

## Comprehensive Plan Update

### Virtual Public Meeting/Planning Commission



**March 10, 2021**



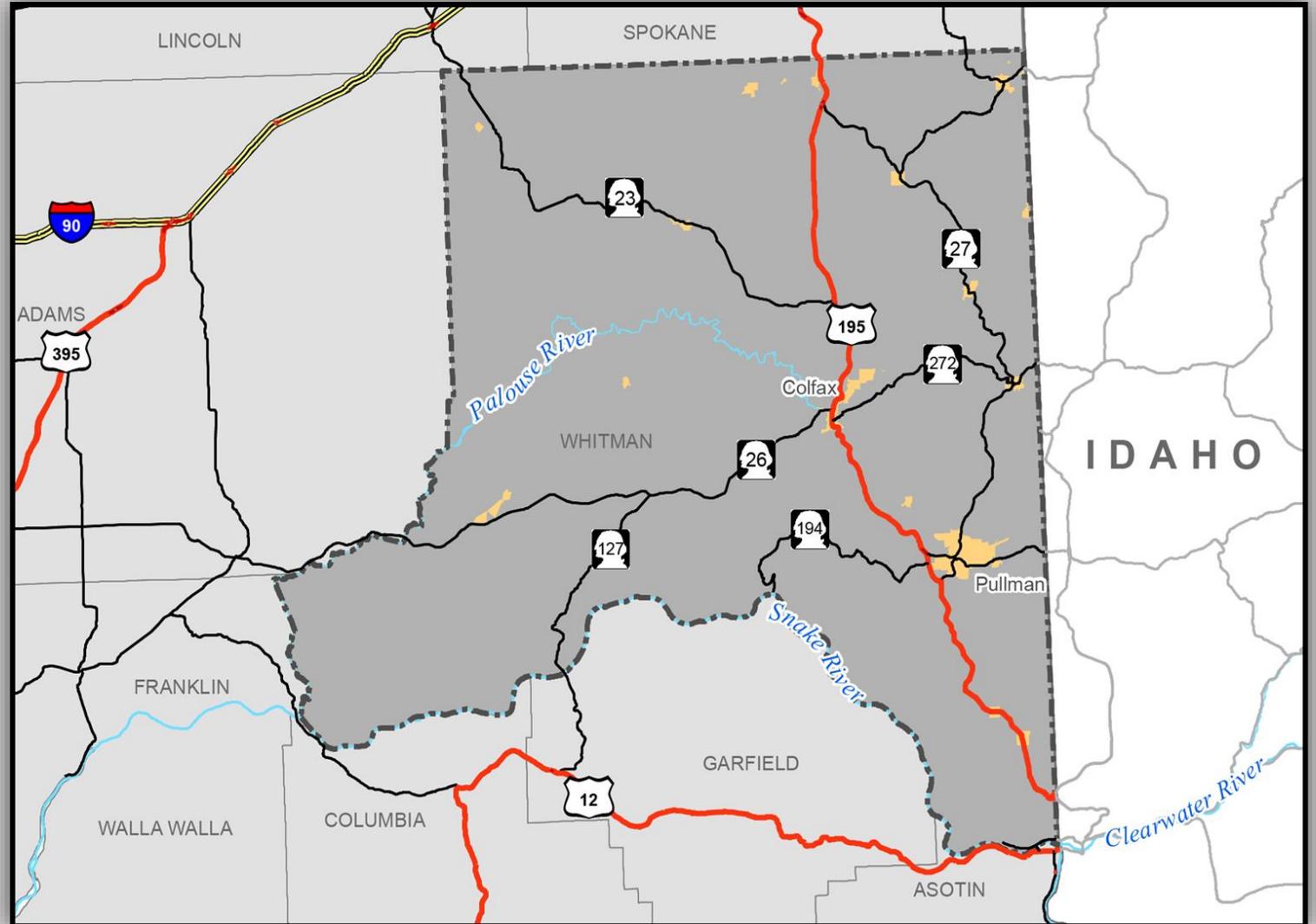
# Welcome!

## Introductions:

- Todd Hall, Planning Manager
- Matt Covert, Planner
- Sami Adams, Associate Planner
  
- Alan Thomson, County Planner
- Mark Storey, County Public Works Director

**LDC**

Surveying  
Engineering  
Planning



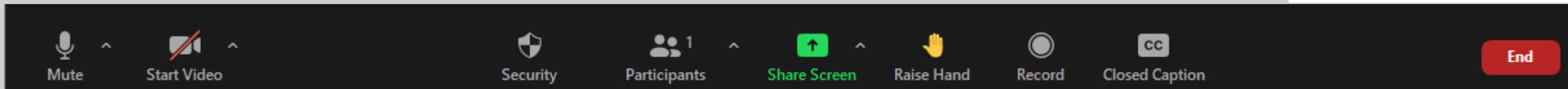
# Thank you for joining

## Basic Zoom Meeting Instructions

To mute yourself, click this **Microphone Icon**. Please mute yourself while not talking to reduce background noise & feedback.

To unmute your microphone, click the icon again. Make sure there is **not** a slash through the microphone.

To turn on/off your video camera, click this **Video Icon**. Same as above symbols, **Slash** means off, **no Slash** means on.

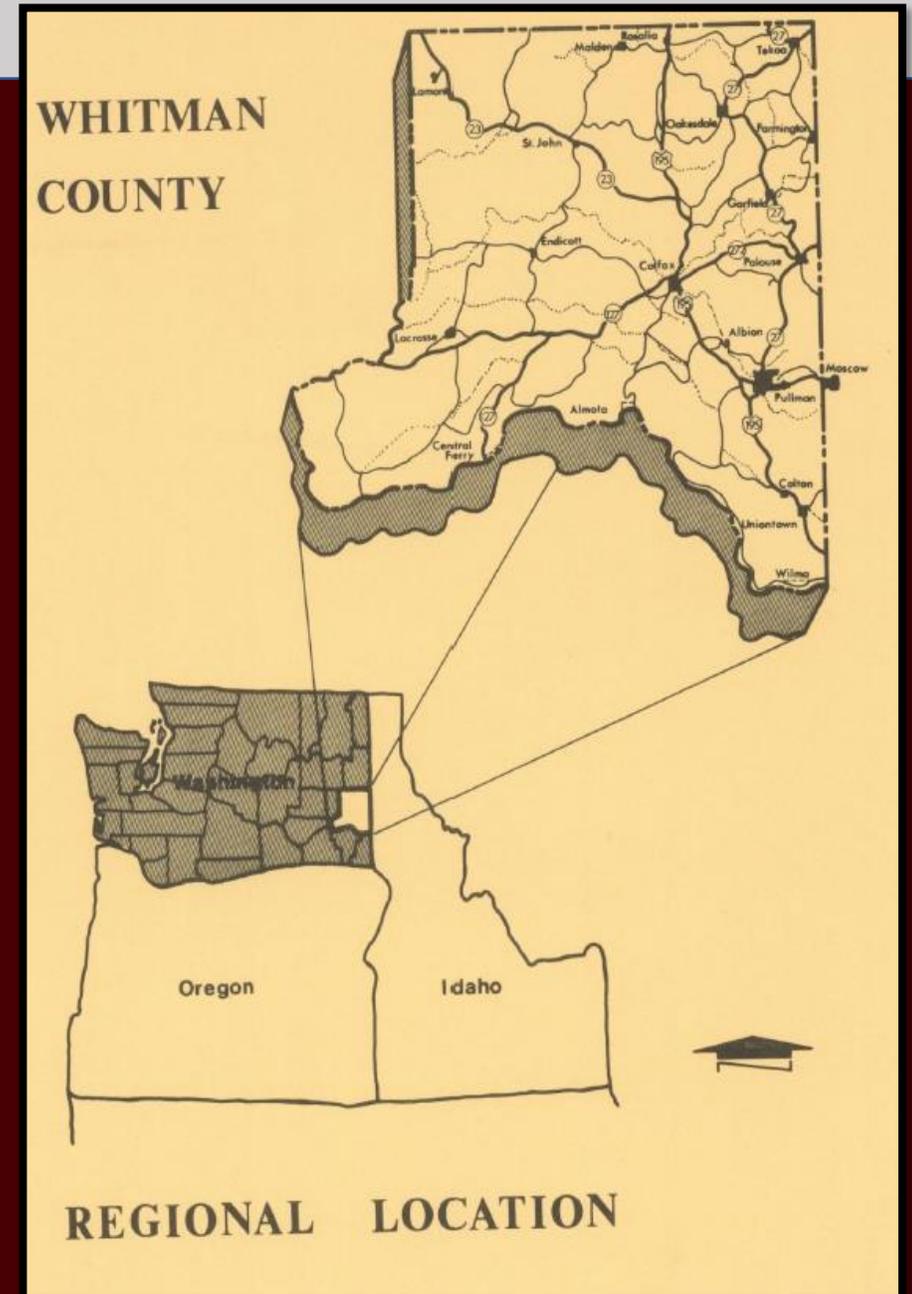


During a comment period, click the **Raise Hand Icon** and someone will call on your when ready.

To leave the meeting at any time, click **End**.

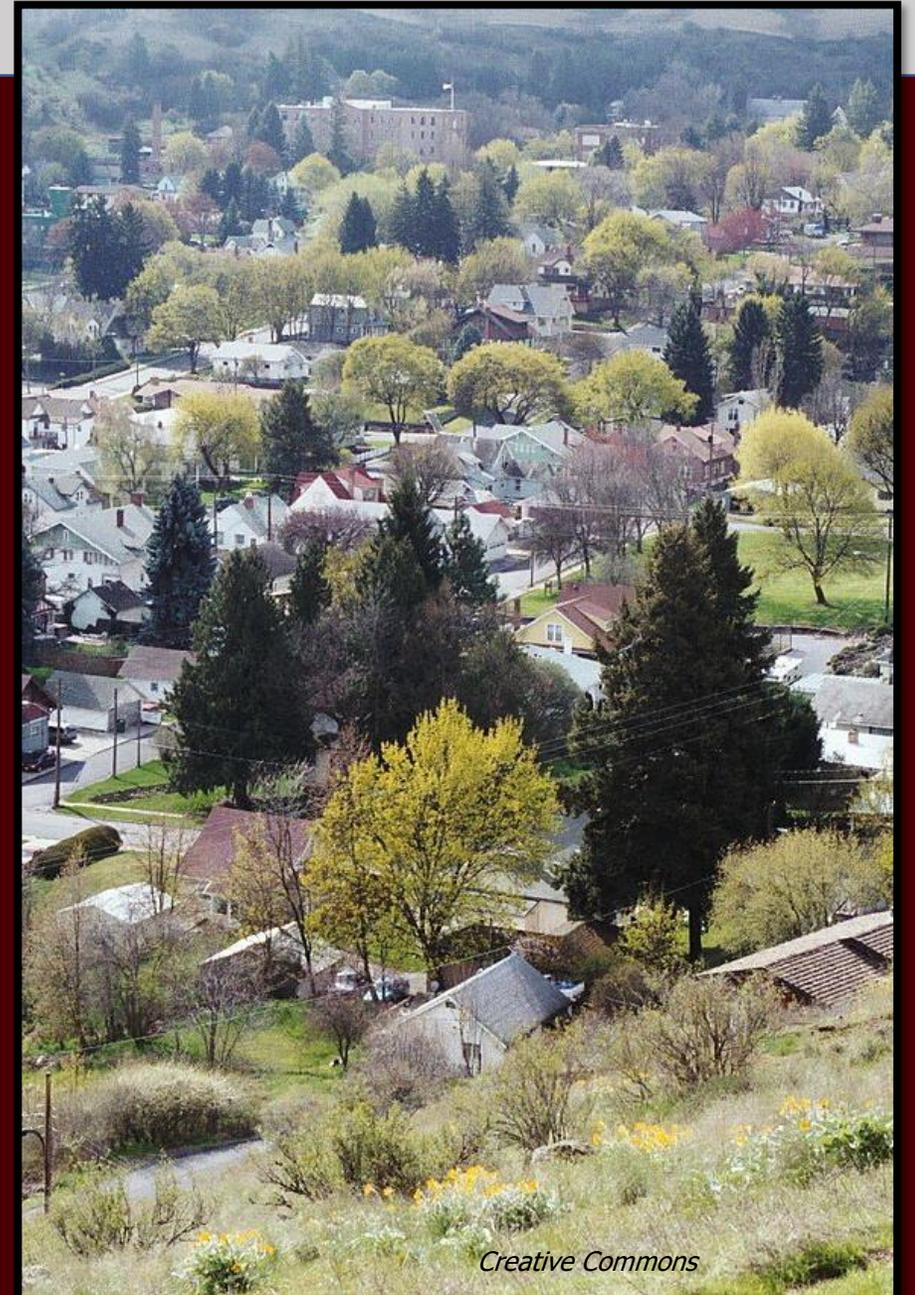
# Why are we here?

- The current Whitman County Comprehensive Plan dates from 1978 and has not seen a **full update** since that time.
- Changes in **public attitudes, needs, and experiences**, as well as changes in **demographics, economy, and resource use**.
- Comprehensive Plan Update will give the County opportunity to –
  - **Take inventory** of what has changed and what remains relevant
  - Identify **current and emerging issues** that require attention
  - Identify **new goals and priorities** based on community feedback



# Why do we plan?

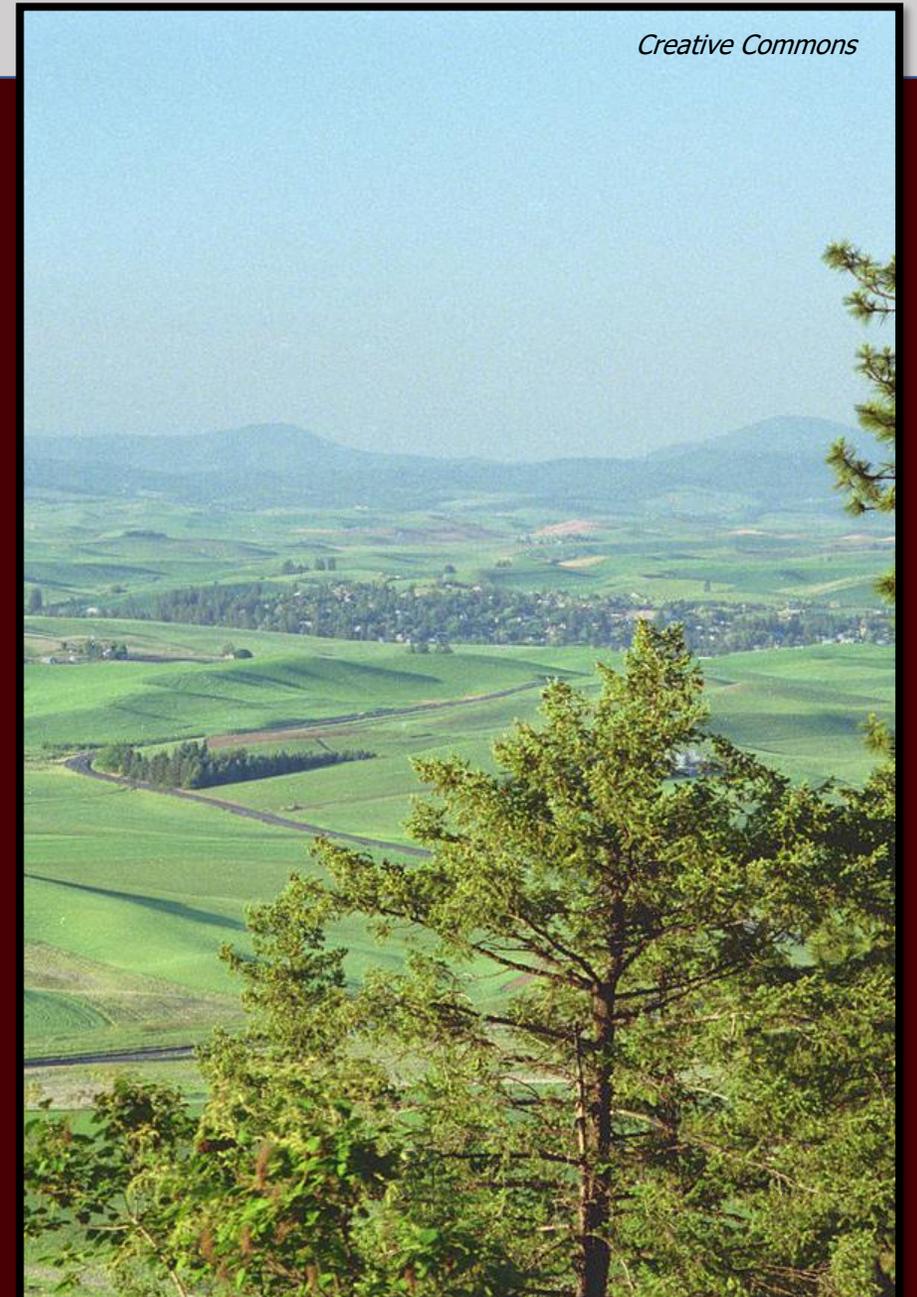
- Enhances public decision making
- Coordinates community investments
- Mitigates negative impacts of development and activity
- Improves community outcomes – policies and regulations that support the community's vision and goals are more likely to be supported by the public and be successful!



*Creative Commons*

# What is Comprehensive Planning?

- **Comprehensive Planning** = Goals, Objectives, Policies, Actions
- Provides the community with an **opportunity to express its VISION** for the future of Whitman County.
- **Collaborative effort** - community members, key stakeholders, elected officials, regional organizations and local jurisdictions.
- The result is a **guiding document** for all the County's planning efforts.



*Creative Commons*

# Why does Whitman County need a Comprehensive Plan?

- Washington State Growth Management Act (1990) (RCW 36.70A) – management of land and resources
- Whitman County is **NOT** a fully planning county under the GMA. Only **required** plan topics are **Critical Areas and Natural Resource Lands**.
- Critical Areas (Environmental Quality) = Wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife conservation areas, climate change, etc.
- Natural Resource and Agricultural Conservation = forestry, agriculture, fisheries, and mining
  
- By choice, Whitman County is also planning for the following elements:
  - Land Use
  - Transportation
  - Economic Development
  - Public Services
  - Facilities & Utilities (including renewable energy)
  - Parks, Trails, & Recreation



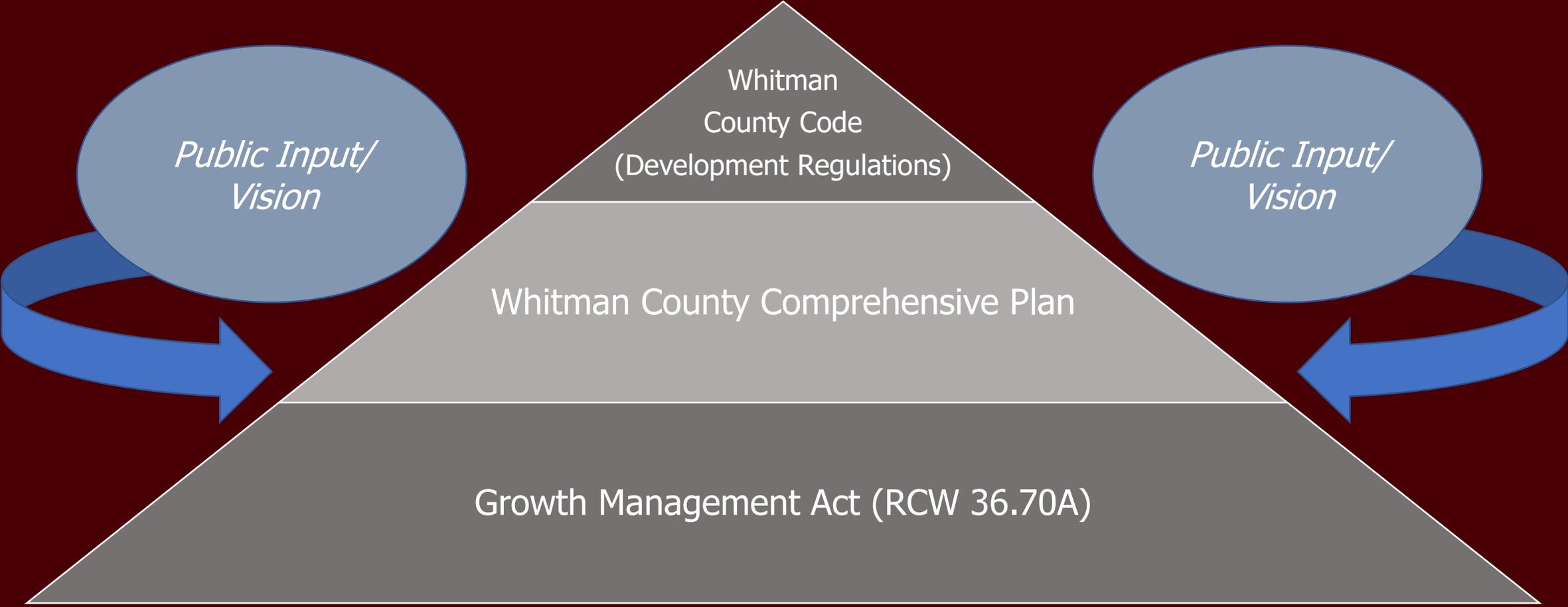
Washington State  
Department of  
**Commerce**

# What is a Vision?

- Encompasses what County citizens value the most about their community
- Captures the shared image of what community members want the County to become in 20 years
- Community members work together to achieve the vision
- Goals and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan are then based on the vision



# Plan Relationship with Other Documents



Whitman  
County Code  
(Development Regulations)

Whitman County Comprehensive Plan

Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A)

*Public Input/  
Vision*

*Public Input/  
Vision*

# What issues are included in the Comprehensive Plan?

Land Use



Environmental Quality and Natural Resources



Economic Development



Parks, Trails, and Recreation



Public Services

Facilities and Utilities

Transportation

# Land Use

**Goals, objectives, policies, and actions supporting the kinds of uses that should be protected, emphasized, and encouraged as the county changes over the next 20 years**

## **Analysis of existing population and land use:**

- Agriculture
- Rural residential
- Urban residential
- Industrial
- Commercial

## **Analysis of future development and uses:**

- Future of cluster zoning in Pullman area
- Siting of renewable energy facilities
- Further development of Pullman/Moscow corridor
- Commercial uses within ag zone



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# Environmental Quality and Natural Resources

**RCW 36.70A.050** – Guidelines to classify agriculture, forest, and mineral land and critical areas.

- In coordination with the Department of Natural Resources regarding forest and mineral lands, and the Department of Ecology regarding critical areas, Whitman County uses the best available science to identify and preserve sensitive areas.
- Whitman County Code of Ordinances – Title 9 covers all environmental regulations that must be followed by jurisdictions of the County.

## **Critical areas include:**

- Wetlands
- Aquifer recharge areas
- Fish & wildlife habitat conservation areas
- Frequently flooded areas
- Geologically hazardous areas

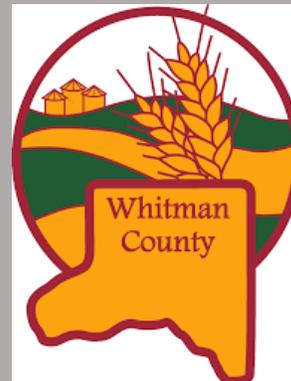


*WA Department of Ecology*

# Economic Development



Source: Port of Whitman County



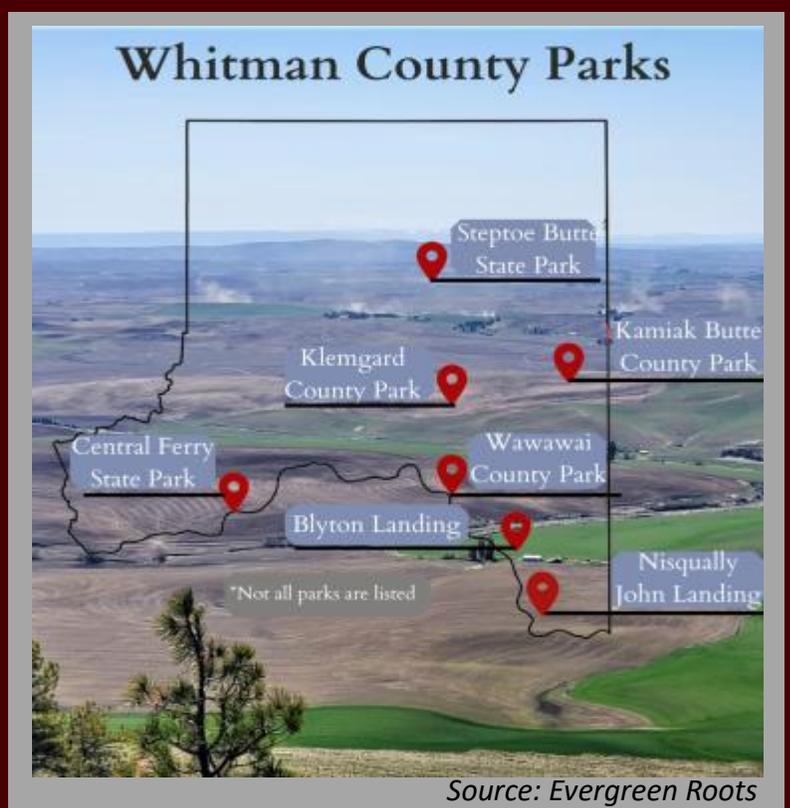
**Economic activity** = creates jobs & supports County government

- Business environment is influenced by government activities as well as availability and condition of local infrastructure (road, air, water)
- Collaboration between County, Port of Whitman County, SEWEDA and other local chambers of commerce is key
- Develop policies that focus on:
  - Supply of suitable lands
  - Job creation and retention
  - Identification/funding for key infrastructure improvements
  - Identification/execute partnerships
  - Economic development programs (education/funding)

# Importance of Parks & Recreation

Parks and recreational opportunities provide a number of benefits to County residents -

- **Health Benefits** – improves overall well-being
- **Social Benefits** – quality of life
- **Economic Value** – Improves tax base, local property values, encourages business retention and attraction



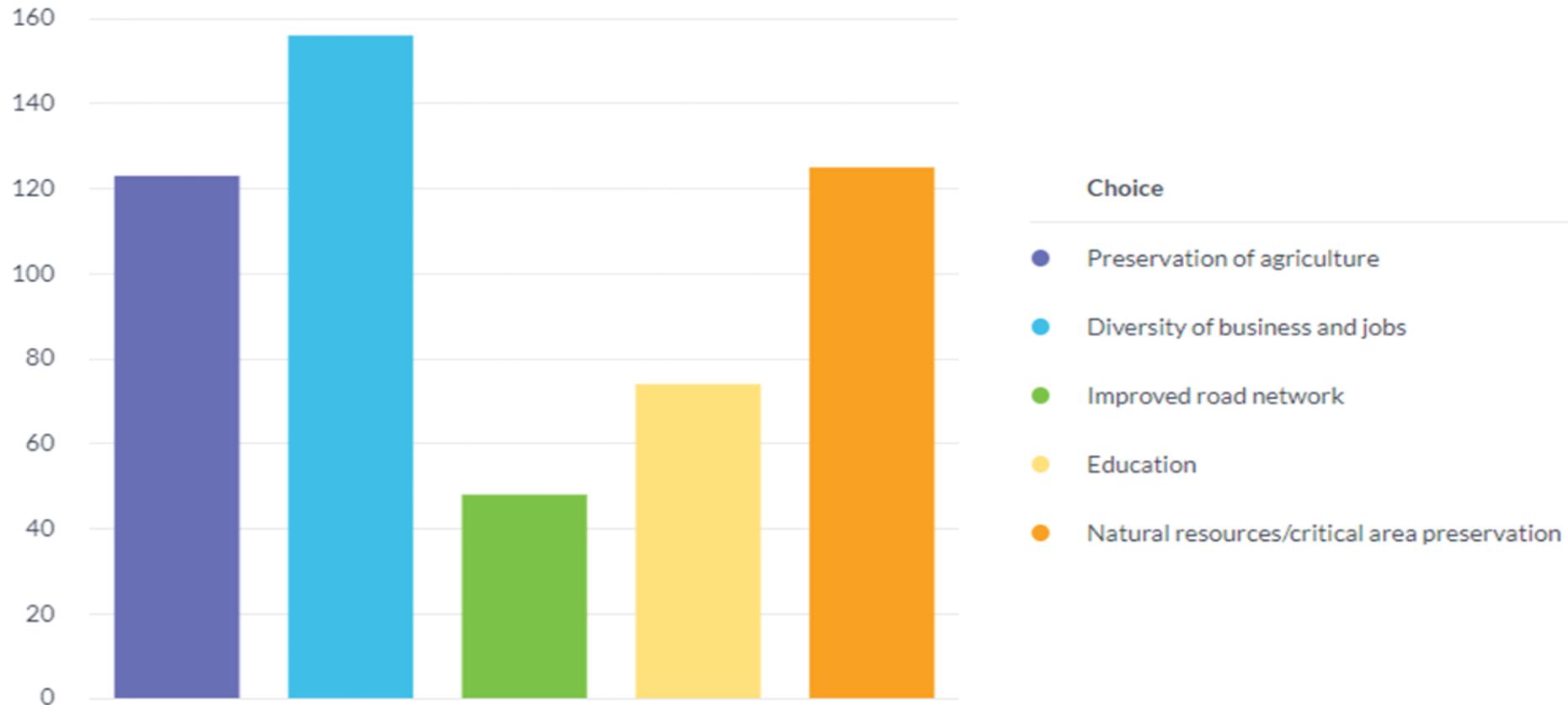
# Involved stakeholders

LDC, Inc. and Whitman County staff have worked together to create a robust and representative list of organizations involved in spreading word about the Comprehensive Plan update process - below is a snapshot of that list.

Economic Development	Public Health/ Social Services	Agriculture/ Farming	Natural Resources/ Critical Areas	Transportation	Parks, Trails & Recreation	Cities/Schools
Port of Whitman County	Department of Social and Health Services	Whitman County Farm Bureau	Whitman County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)	Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Org. (PRTPO)	Palouse to Cascades Trail Coalition	Colfax, Palouse, Pullman, Tekoa
Ritzville Warehouse  Whitman County Assoc. of Relators	Community Action Center	WA Wheat Growers Assoc.	Department of Natural Resources	Coast Public Transportation	Chipman Trail Committee	Albion, Colton, Endicott, Farmington, Garfield, La Crosse, Steptoe
Schweitzer Engineering	Council on Aging (COA)	Whitman County Cattlemen's Assoc.	Whitman, Palouse, Palouse-Rock Lake & Pine Creek Conservation District	Pullman Transit	WSDOT Rails Division	Lamont, Malden, Oaksdale, Rosalia, St. John, Uniontown
Southeast WA Economic Dev. Assoc.	Zipty Fiber, Verizon, Inland Cellular	The McGregor Co.	Washington NRCS	Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport	Pullman Civic Trust	Belmont, Diamond, Dusty, Ewan, Hay, Hooper, Johnson, Thornton, Winona

# Survey results

What are the top priorities you believe Whitman County should focus on over the next 20 years?



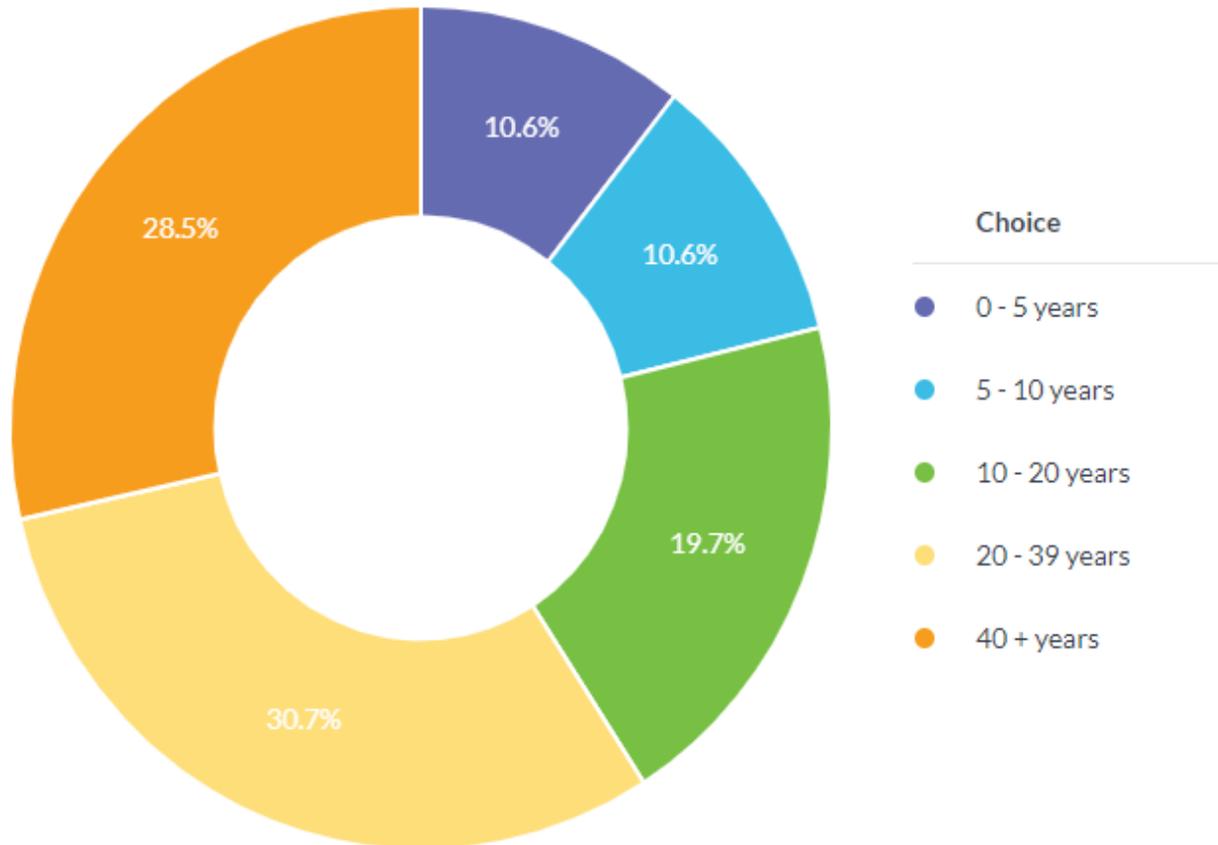
Public Survey available since January 19<sup>th</sup>  
**280 responses received so far**

Go to the County's **Planning Division - Comprehensive Plan Webpage** to access the survey.

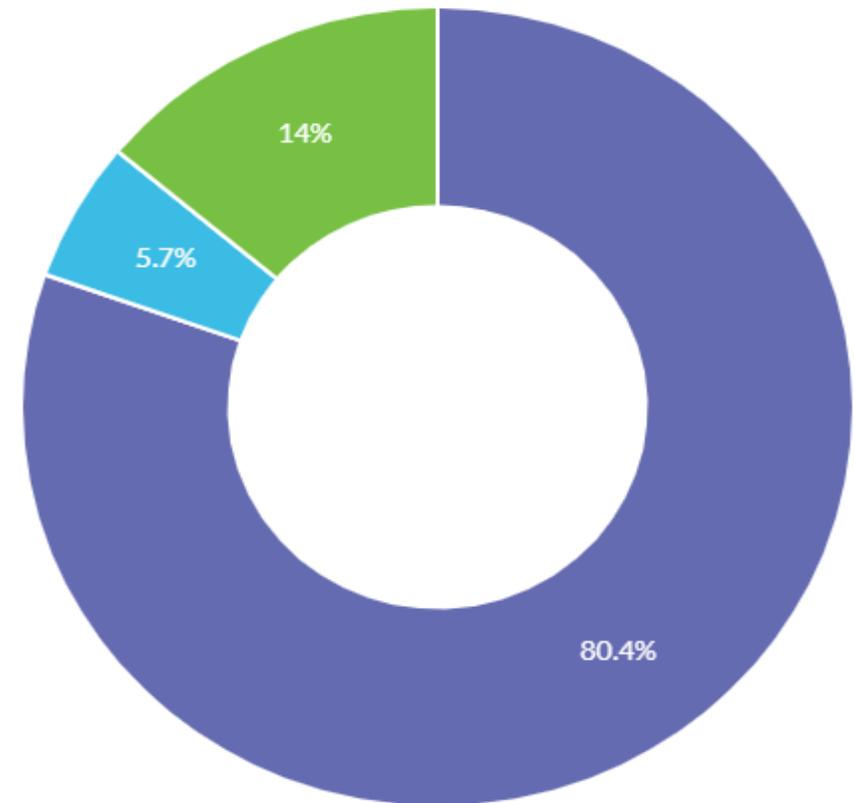
(Websearch = Whitman County Comprehensive Plan)

# Survey results continued...

How long have you lived in Whitman County?

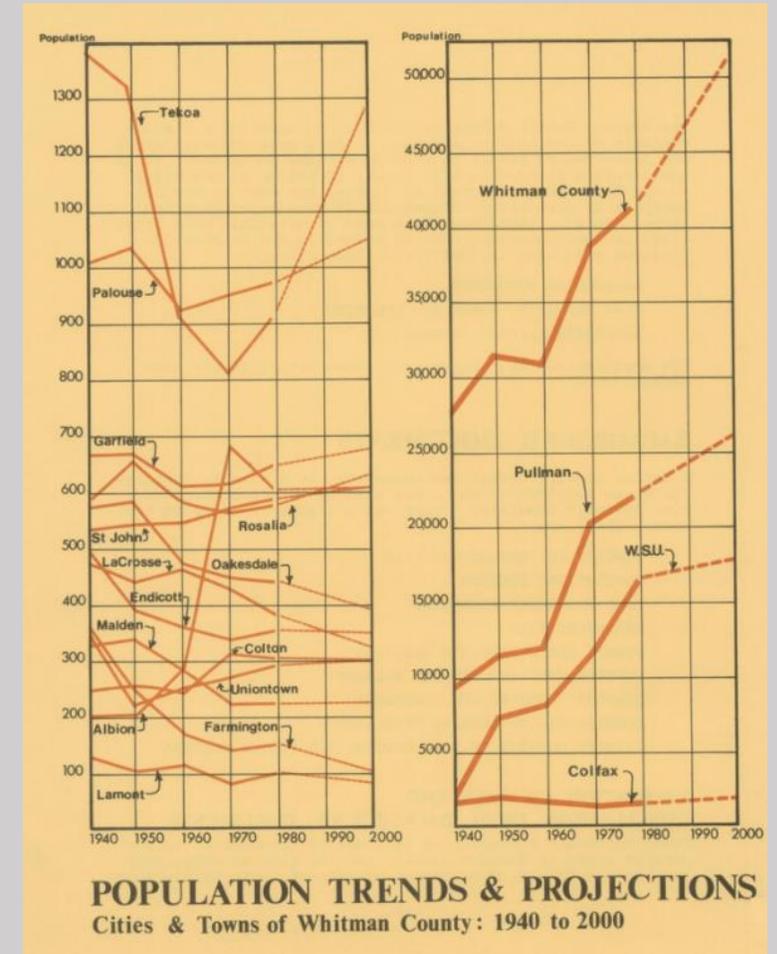


Is preservation of natural resources important to the future of the County?



# Group Questions

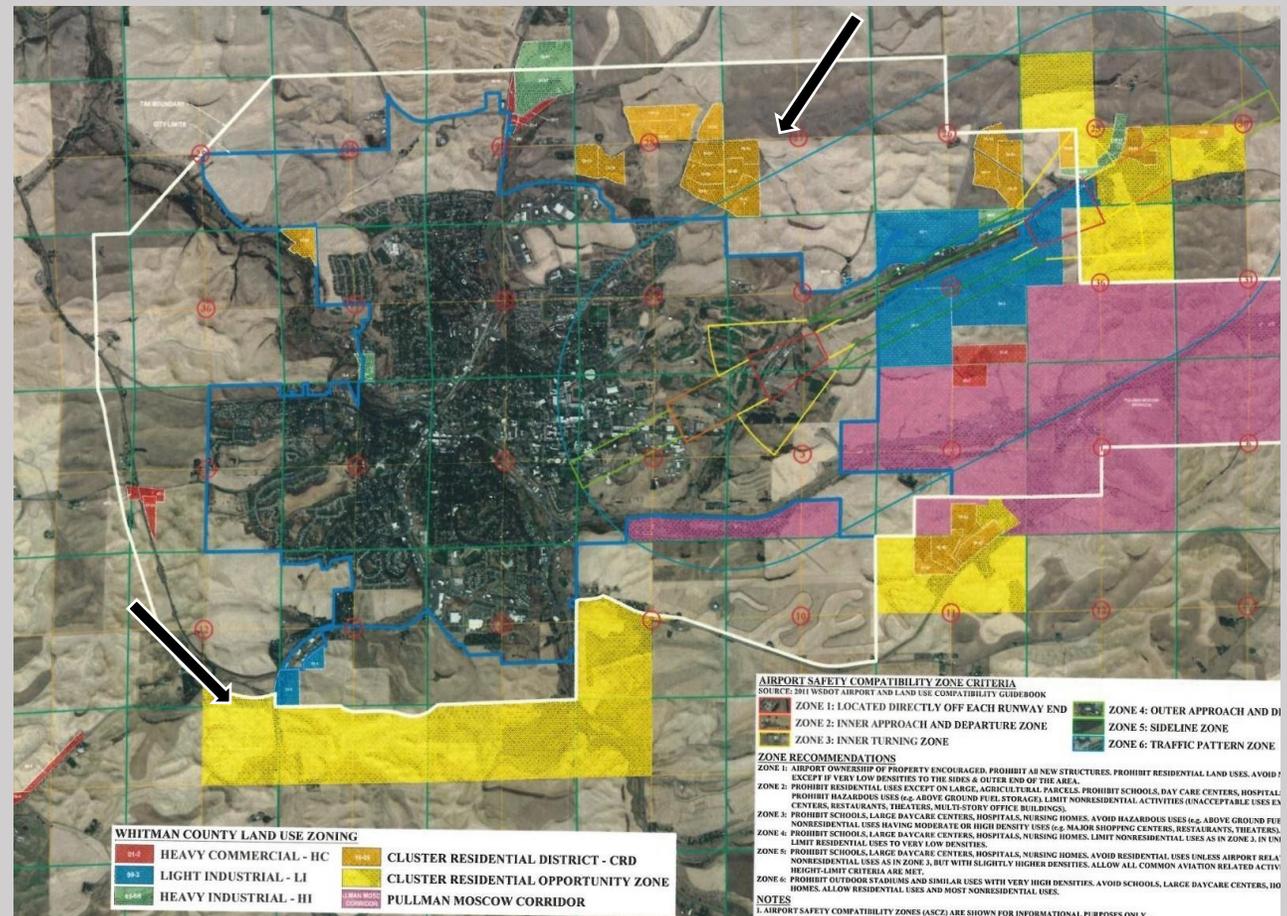
- In what ways has Whitman County changed over the past 40 years?
- Is there balance between agricultural, commercial and residential interests? If not, what do you think can restore it?
- Where should commercial development be allowed in Whitman County?
- How can we allow business flexibility in agricultural zones?
- What are your thoughts on cluster zoning? Should we keep it where it is, remove it, or expand it?



# Private Development - Cluster Zoning

- Private development (commercial and SF residential) is **limited to specific areas**
- Cluster Residential District (Chapter 19.12 Whitman County Code)
  - ✓ Provides minimum standards for specified areas near Pullman to allow more non-farm rural residential
  - ✓ Zone/Lot size requirements
  - ✓ Yard requirements
- Development within the County is also limited by available water rights

## PULLMAN AREA



# Requirements for Public Engagement



Search



Administrative Services  
Division

Building & Development  
Division

[Home](#) > [Departments](#) > [Departments I through W](#) > [Public Works](#) > [Planning Division](#)

## Planning Division

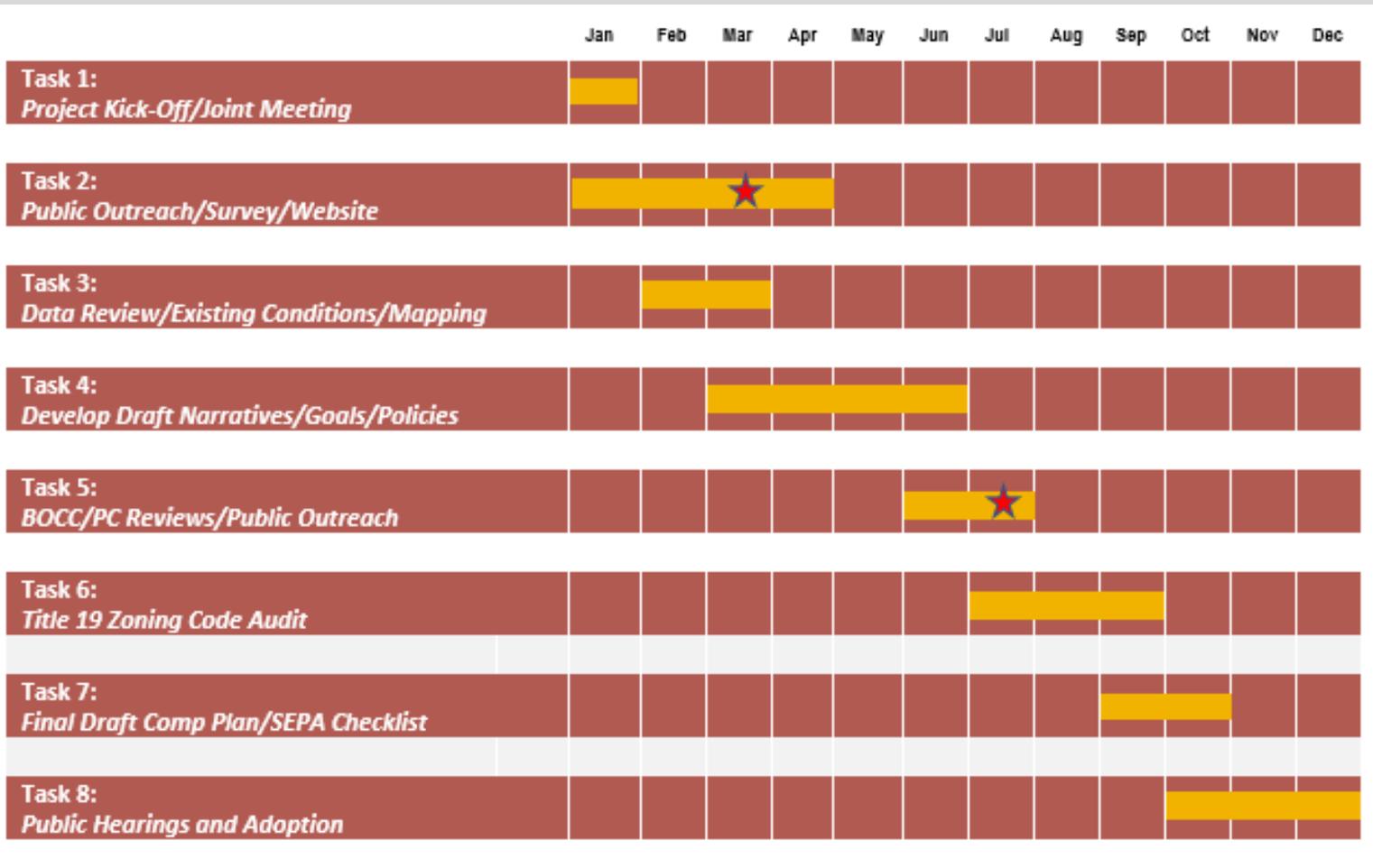
### Purpose

The Planning Division assists the public with zoning, critical area reviews and other inquiries.

Due to COVID-19, traditional in-person meetings will not be possible until Summer of 2021. Public participation will be available through the following avenues until then:

- Project information on Whitman County website
- Periodic public meetings online
- Public noticing around County
- Emails, mailing lists and surveys
- In-person workshops and meetings scheduled for summer of 2021

# Project Timeline



Today's  
Virtual Public Meeting  
March 10



In-Person  
Public Meeting(s)  
Week of July 12 or 19  
Locations TBD

# For more information / questions / comments

If you have any questions about the project, the process, or any other general planning questions:  
**VISIT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROJECT PAGE**

<https://whitmancounty.org/513/Comprehensive-Plan>

**OR CONTACT:**



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**Thank you!**

