



Levy County Comprehensive Plan 2050 Update Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Introduction and Objectives

Levy County’s 2050 Comprehensive Plan Public Participation Plan (PPP) seeks to inform and involve the community from its start in September 2025 through the final adoption in December 2026. The goal is to collect broad, meaningful feedback from all parts of the community while adhering to Florida’s growth management laws (Ch. 163, FS). Chapter 163 Florida Statutes (FS) highlights that “the public [should] participate in the comprehensive planning process to the fullest extent possible,” and requires local governments to develop procedures for “effective public participation”.

Legal Compliance & Accountability

Levy County’s PPP is designed to meet and exceed Florida’s Community Planning Act requirements (Ch. 163, FS). Public notice, written comment opportunities, and hearings before the Planning Commission and BOCC will ensure compliance. Beyond statutory compliance, the PPP emphasizes accountability by documenting, responding to, and incorporating public input into plan drafts. This transparent feedback loop builds public trust and demonstrates that resident input directly shapes the plan.

Chapter 163, Part II, FS (Community Planning Act) and related rules set the minimum standards for public participation. Levy County’s PPP will ensure that property owners and the public receive advance notice of all official actions affecting land use, such as through newspaper advertisements or website notices. It includes public hearings before the Planning Commission (serving as the Local Planning Agency) and the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) for plan approval. It will also offer opportunities for written comments throughout the process (online, in person, and by mail), and these comments and public input will be documented, considered, and addressed during the plan’s development. By following these procedures, the County not only complies with legal requirements but also promotes public trust through transparency and accountability.

Project Timeline and Engagement Phases

The public participation activities are planned to follow the project timeline and key tasks, as shown in the project’s deliverables chart and scope. Table 1 below summarizes the main phases from kickoff to adoption, along with the related public engagement actions.



**Table 1: Comprehensive Plan 2050 Update Timeline & Public Engagement Activities
(Sept 2025 – Dec 2026)**

Phase & Timeline	Key Tasks	Public Engagement Methods
Project Kickoff (Sep – Oct 2025)	Launch project with staff and officials; finalize PPP and project schedule; announce plan update to community.	Kickoff Meeting with County staff and consultant (Sept. 11, 2025) Public launch presentations at the joint meeting of the Planning Commission and BOCC (tentative date: Oct. 7, 2025) to introduce the project, timeline, and PPP. Initial Notice & Website Launch to inform the community about the Comp Plan update and opportunities to participate.
Community Visioning (Oct–Nov 2025)	Gather input on vision, priorities, and issues; form groundwork for plan goals.	General Community Surveys (Oct–Nov 2025): county-wide survey (online and paper) to gather broad input on vision, growth concerns, and community values. Youth & Senior Outreach: During this phase, surveys specifically targeted to these groups will be made available to gather input from this demographic.
Thematic Workshops (Nov 2025– Mar 2026)	In-depth public input on specific plan elements/topics; review data and initial ideas. NOTE: Workshop topics and order may be adjusted to reflect community input and project needs as the planning process moves forward.	Series of Themed Public Workshops (Nov 2025 through Mar 2026) covering major Comprehensive Plan elements. Public Workshop 1 - 11/4/25: (Visioning): focusing on establishing a vision and identifying key issues. “ <i>Topic 1 – Vision & Strategic Initiatives</i> ” to identify opportunities and challenges. Workshop 2 - 12/2/25: Future Land Use; Workshop 3 – 01/06/26: Housing & Economic Development; Workshop 4 – 02/03/26: Conservation, Coastal Management, Recreation & Open Space (including springs protection); Workshop 5 – 02/17/26: Public School Facilities & Intergovernmental Coordination; Workshop 6 – 03/17/26: Transportation, Capital Improvements & Infrastructure. Each workshop will be publicly advertised and designed as an interactive session (utilizing maps,



Phase & Timeline	Key Tasks	Public Engagement Methods
		polling, and Q&A) to gather detailed input on that topic. Ongoing Communication: The County will post workshop materials, summaries, and surveys on the project website after each session, allowing those unable to attend to review and provide comments. Regular social media updates, email, or newsletters will keep the public informed of progress.
Plan Drafting & Review (Mar–Aug 2026)	Develop the draft Comprehensive Plan elements with continued public input; review drafts with officials and the community.	Draft Plan Development: County staff and consultants will synthesize public input and draft each element (e.g., Future Land Use, Transportation, Housing, etc.) from March to July 2026. Public Review: As draft sections are finished (for example, a draft Future Land Use Map or draft goals/policies), draft project documents will be posted on the county’s website for feedback. Planning Commission Public Hearing/Work Session: August 2026, the Planning Commission (LPA) will hold a work session (open to the public) to review the draft elements for transmittal to the BOCC. This session provides another forum for open discussion and iterative feedback in a public setting. The hearing will be noticed in advance, and citizens can provide official comments on the record. Feedback: The County’s project website will allow stakeholders to provide online feedback so residents can comment on the complete Draft Plan once released.
Formal Adoption (Sept–Dec 2026)	Official approval process: state review and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.	Board of County Commissioners Hearings: The BOCC will hold public hearings – one in September 2026 for plan transmittal to state agencies, and a second final adoption hearing by December 2026. Both hearings will be advertised per Florida Statute (e.g. in a newspaper of general circulation or online) and will welcome public comments. State Review: In the interim between transmittal and final adoption, the County will post the plan on its website and keep the public informed of any state review comments. Should the state issue an Objections, Recommendations, and Comments



Phase & Timeline	Key Tasks	Public Engagement Methods
		(ORC) report, those comments and any resulting plan changes will be shared publicly. Final Plan Publication: Upon adoption in December 2026, the County will publish the new Comprehensive Plan document accompanied by a summary highlighting how public input influenced the final policies, closing the feedback loop with the community.

Alignment with IC&E Deliverables: This schedule closely mirrors the tasks in the County’s project deliverables chart. Notably, it includes the September 2025 kickoff, the topic-focused workshops from late 2025 into early 2026, the draft plan presentations and revisions through mid-2026, and the transmittal and final adoption hearings in late 2026. By syncing public participation activities with project milestones, the PPP ensures that outreach is timely and relevant. For example, public input from the workshops will directly inform the drafting of plan elements in 2026. This integration means that at each key decision point, community voices will be heard and can shape the plan’s direction before it is finalized.

Public Engagement Methods and Tools

The PPP employs a variety of engagement methods to gather input and disseminate information. The core tools are public workshops and surveys, supplemented by public hearings, digital outreach, and ongoing communications:

Public Workshops: In-person community workshops are the backbone of the engagement process. These interactive meetings will be utilized in multiple phases, ranging from county-wide visioning sessions to detailed topical workshops (as listed in Table 1). Workshops will be designed to be welcoming and interactive, utilizing techniques such as group discussions, mapping exercises, and live polling to encourage participation from everyone. Each workshop will begin with a brief presentation (to explain the comprehensive plan topic and relevant data), followed by open discussion periods. The Consultant Team and County staff will be present to ensure all voices are heard, including those who might be less inclined to speak up in large groups. Written comment cards will also be provided at workshops for anyone preferring to submit input privately. All workshop outcomes (notes, maps, polling results) will be compiled and posted publicly for transparency.

Surveys (Online and Paper): Surveys will serve as a complementary engagement tool, enabling input from residents who might not attend meetings. Surveys will be conducted during the Visioning phase (to capture broad opinions on strengths, weaknesses, and future priorities) and possibly a follow-up survey when the draft plan is released (to gauge public support for proposed policies). The surveys will be accessible online (via the County’s project website) and in paper format at County offices, libraries, etc. Efforts will be made to



publicize the survey widely – through the County website, social media, and at scheduled public hearings. For those without internet access, paper surveys and drop-off boxes will be provided at strategic locations (e.g., libraries, the County building). Survey questions will be designed in clear, non-technical language, allowing for both multiple-choice answers to facilitate quantitative analysis and open-ended responses to gather qualitative feedback. The Consultant will summarize survey results and share them with the public and decision-makers, demonstrating the common themes and how they inform the plan.

Public Meetings & Hearings: Formal public meetings, including Planning Commission/Local Planning Agency meetings, and BOCC meetings, are integral engagement points. As described in the timeline, joint sessions between the Planning Commission and BOCC throughout the process will be open to the public and advertised. The Planning Commission’s public hearing (transmittal stage) and the BOCC’s adoption hearing will be conducted per Florida’s open government laws, with required notices and unlimited opportunity for public testimony. To encourage attendance, the County will go beyond the legal minimum notice by also promoting these hearings through its website, social media, and direct email to stakeholders who have expressed interest. These formal settings allow residents to enter comments into the official record, and officials are required to consider them before making decisions. The PPP ensures that all such comments (whether voiced at hearings or submitted in writing beforehand) receive a response or acknowledgment in the final plan documents, demonstrating accountability to public input.

Communications and Information Tools: Underlying all the above methods is a robust communications program to keep the public informed and engaged throughout. Levy County will maintain a dedicated Comprehensive Plan Update webpage that serves as an information hub – posting project updates, schedules, documents, and engagement opportunities. This webpage will host materials, such as draft chapters and maps, for public review and will archive past presentations and meeting summaries. Consistent with practices used in other counties, important documents will be made available for inspection in both digital and hardcopy formats (e.g., at County offices). The County website or social media account will be used to share quick updates, share facts about the plan, and remind users about upcoming events. Additionally, the County may make available email newsletters for those who sign up – an approach that will provide periodic highlights on what has been done and what is coming next (for example, summarizing “We heard you” results after the visioning workshops, or outlining how public input shaped the draft policies). All communications will emphasize how residents can get involved at each step, thereby sustaining interest and participation over the plan’s 16-month development period. Before any project information provided by the consultant is uploaded to the project page on the County’s website, it will be reviewed and approved by the County Manager or their designee.

Outreach Strategies for Diverse Stakeholders

All public workshops will be held in the Commission Chambers, scheduled for the early afternoon following BOCC meetings (approximately 1:00 PM), making them accessible to a wide audience, with joint participation by the BOCC and Planning Commission. Outreach



strategies are tailored to ensure accessibility and participation from all sectors of the community:

A key goal of this PPP is to engage a wide cross-section of the community, including groups that are often underrepresented in planning processes. The following strategies are designed to ensure that outreach and input opportunities remain tailored, accessible, and responsive to community needs.

Residents (General Public)

Outreach to the general public will remain inclusive. A variety of communication channels will be utilized to promote participation in the workshops and surveys, including community bulletin boards and the County's website. If funding permits, countywide mailers or utility bill inserts may also be used to notify households about the Comprehensive Plan update and direct them to the online project hub.

To accommodate participants unfamiliar with planning processes or terminology, the consultant may use easy-to-understand engagement tools, such as dot-voting, live online voting (e.g., Mentimeter or Poll Everywhere) if Wi-Fi connectivity is available, comment boards, or guided exercises, to encourage inclusive dialogue.

Local Businesses

The project recognizes that business owners, particularly those in the farming, tourism, and small business sectors, often face time constraints. To support their involvement, efforts will be made to coordinate with local Chambers of Commerce, regional economic organizations, and industry groups to share project updates and encourage participation.

Additionally, the “Housing & Economic Development” workshop (WS3) will provide an opportunity to discuss topics such as commercial land availability, workforce housing, and infrastructure needs.

Underserved Communities

Underserved populations in Levy County may include low-income residents, remote rural households, and minority or limited-English-proficiency communities. To reduce participation barriers, the PPP encourages outreach through trusted intermediaries, such as pastors, nonprofit agencies, school liaisons, and community organizations. Bilingual surveys and notices can be made available, as needed.

Youth Engagement

Because the 2050 plan directly affects younger generations, the project will proactively engage youth by partnering with middle and high schools. Potential strategies can include interactive mapping or visioning games, as well as online planning games. Surveys will also be made available online and in paper form. To elevate youth perspectives during formal engagement, a student representative may be invited to speak or submit a summary of youth feedback during one of the workshops or hearings.



Elderly and Retirees

To accommodate this group, Commission Chambers are ADA accessible, with seating, restrooms, and audio support as needed.

Senior-focused outreach may include distributing project flyers through senior centers, churches, or civic clubs. A senior-specific survey will also be developed in addition to the general survey. Public workshop materials will be designed with clarity and legibility in mind, and the daytime meeting schedule (early afternoon) will better suit seniors who avoid evening travel. Updates will also be shared through traditional County media channels.

Ensuring Accessibility and Inclusion in Engagement

The PPP is crafted to be accessible, inclusive, and transparent, aligning with modern principles of equitable public engagement. Key measures to ensure this include:

Multi-Channel Notifications: All public participation opportunities will be widely publicized through multiple channels to maximize awareness and engagement. Legally required notices (newspaper ads or website postings) will be supplemented with direct outreach: flyers in public buildings, posts on social media. If feasible, community email blasts and personal invites through stakeholder networks will also be used. By diversifying outreach methods, the County ensures that people hear about the plan update, whether they read the paper, follow Facebook, or visit the library. Importantly, announcements will be in clear language (avoiding technical jargon like “EAR-based amendments”) so that the average resident immediately understands that “Your input is needed for Levy County’s Future (Comprehensive Plan 2050 Update)”.

Early and Continuous Involvement: Consistent with best practices, the PPP emphasizes engaging the public early in the process and maintaining continuous involvement thereafter. The initial visioning workshops and survey occur at the project’s outset (well before any plan decisions are made) to ensure public values set the foundation. As the plan progresses, the process will provide continuous feedback loops – sharing how public input has shaped draft proposals and seeking further input on those drafts. This ongoing involvement not only improves the plan’s quality but also builds public support, as community members see their fingerprints on the evolving document. By the time of adoption hearings, there should be no surprises; ideally, residents will feel a sense of ownership over the plan, having been part of its creation from day one.

By implementing these accessibility and inclusion measures, Levy County’s PPP aims to achieve broad and diverse participation. The measure of success will be seeing residents of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds attend meetings or submit input. An inclusive process will lead to a more robust Comprehensive Plan that addresses the needs of the whole community and stands the test of time.