



CITY OF SUMAS

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Memo

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Sumas City Council

From: Carson Cortez, City Planner, City of Sumas

Date: August 8, 2025

Re: Sumas 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update: Chapters 1-3

The Sumas City Council will begin their initial review of the draft Sumas Comprehensive Plan update for 2025, prepared by City staff, at the August 11, 2025 Council meeting. At this meeting, the Council will receive the first three chapters of the draft Comprehensive Plan. These chapters are named as follows: Introduction, Background, and Land Use Element. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the purpose and scope of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as the process by which the City will adopt this Comprehensive Plan update. Chapter 2 provides a summary of the history of Sumas as well as the history of comprehensive planning in Sumas since the passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990. Chapter 3 provides an analysis of the geographic characteristics of Sumas, an analysis of the City's current land use conditions, and projections for future land use decisions that may need to be made.

The alterations that have been made to the first two chapters are quite limited and mostly involve updating information on what has occurred since the passage of the last Comprehensive Plan update in 2016. In the Community Vision and Goals section of the Background Chapter, City staff collaborated with the Sumas Planning Commission to come up with a new community vision statement that represents the general goals of the City for the next 20 years. The Population Projection and Employment Projection sections of the Background Chapter outlines the population and employment growth projections that become the foundation of all of the analysis performed in the Comprehensive Plan.

Of these three first chapters, Chapter 3 is by far the largest. It is one of the largest chapters in the Comprehensive Plan. The Chapter was also altered quite a bit as part of this Comprehensive Plan update. The first evidence of this is the inclusion of the new Green Spaces and Community Forests, Environmental Justice, and Wildfire Protection

sections. These sections were required in Washington House Bill (HB) 1181 (2025), which added additional requirements related to Climate Change. The next major alteration is to the Future Land Use and Zoning sections. These sections highlight the proposed changes to Sumas' zoning map as well as Sumas' proposed expansions to the City's Urban Growth Area (UGA). The City Council has reviewed these expansion areas and approved them previously. The proposed expansion areas still need to go through the County Council and State growth board review and approval processes, which very likely may require changes in what will be the ultimate result in terms of UGA Expansion Areas. These areas have been chosen with specific priorities in mind. First, providing new areas for Sumas' population and employment base to expand and grow for future generations. Second, to direct growth in the City to areas that reduce the risk of flood damage for new residents. The areas proposed serve both priorities. Another major change in the Land Use Element Chapter is the relocation of the Goals and Policies section from the middle of the chapter to the end. This change is meant to better reflect the overall structure of the chapter which creates goals and policies based on all the analysis and discussion highlighted earlier on in the chapter.

Moving forward, the City Council will review the initial drafts of the remaining chapters 4-10 at the meeting on August 25, 2025. Once that review is completed, City staff will begin a sixty-day public comment period for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update in which written public comments will be received. Then, following the close of the public comment period in late October, City staff recommend beginning the public hearing for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update at the City Council meeting on October 27, 2025. Then, assuming the Council will need 2 to 3 meetings to conduct the full public hearing, City staff project that Council will be ready to adopt the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update at either the November 10, 2025, City Council meeting or the November 24, 2025, City Council meeting. The final deadline for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update is December 31, 2025, so the Council could extend the public hearing into December, however, the City Council will also be deciding on a budget for 2026 around the same time, so agenda space may be limited.