

City of Priest River Planning & Zoning Department

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Priest River Comprehensive Plan Update (2025–2026)

Why Update the Comprehensive Plan Now?

The 2013 Comprehensive Plan has served the City well, but significant changes in growth patterns, housing demand, infrastructure needs, and development regulations since that time warrant a comprehensive update. The new plan will help Priest River proactively manage growth, preserve its small-town identity, and reaffirm the community's shared vision for the future.

What Gives the Plan Its Authority? (Purpose and Statutory Authority)

The Idaho Local Land Use Planning Act (Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 65) requires every city to maintain a current comprehensive plan that addresses topics such as population, property rights, land use, and public facilities. Priest River's plan, adopted in 2013, still reflects enduring community values but must be updated to ensure continued legal defensibility, fiscal responsibility, and alignment with public priorities.

Key points:

- Complies with Idaho Code § 67-6508, which identifies 16 required plan components.
- Provides a transparent, data-driven framework for managing growth.
- Establishes the basis for zoning, subdivision, and infrastructure decisions.
- Serves as a shared vision among City Council, staff, and residents.

What's Included in the Comprehensive Plan? (Plan Overview)

A comprehensive plan is both a policy guide and a community vision. It outlines how land use, public services, and infrastructure will support the City's goals over the next 20 years. The updated plan will integrate all required statutory components into a single, cohesive document that reflects Priest River's unique identity and aspirations.

Components*:

- *Property Rights*
- *Population*
- *School Facilities & Transportation*
- *Economic Development*
- *Land Use*
- *Natural Resources*
- *Hazardous Areas*
- *Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities*
- *Transportation*
- *Recreation*
- *Special Areas or Sites*
- *Housing*
- *Community Design*
- *Agriculture*
- *Implementation*
- *National Interest Electric Transmission*
- *Public Airport Facilities*

** These are the minimum components that are required, and additional topics can be added, such as Public Engagement, Environmental Impact, etc. These components can be drafted as individual components/chapters or be combined. Additionally, If any statutory component is not addressed, the City will need to specify why it is unnecessary.*

When Does It Happen? (Timeline and Milestones)

The process is structured to begin in late 2025 and conclude with plan adoption by summer 2026. The schedule allows time for research, early Council review, and public participation.

The following schedule outlines the anticipated timeline for each phase and serves as a flexible framework that can adjust as needed based on Council direction or community feedback.

Phase	Milestone	Target Date
1	Project Initiation	Fall 2025
2	Data Collection & Existing Conditions	Winter 2025
3	Preliminary Drafting	Late Winter 2025
4	Public Engagement	Spring 2026
5	Drafting & Revision	Late Spring 2026
6	Adoption	Summer 2026

How Will the Process Work? (Project Phases and Deliverables)

Updating the Comprehensive Plan will follow a structured sequence designed to ensure accuracy, inclusiveness, and transparency. Each phase will build upon the last, progressing from foundational data to draft policies and ultimately to adoption. The process emphasizes early City Council input, public transparency, and practical deliverables at every stage.

Phase 1 – Launch the Process

- Confirm project goals and schedule.
- Define roles of City Council and staff.
- Establish a communication plan and kickoff meeting.
- Deliverable: timeline and communication plan, Comprehensive Plan update webpage.

Phase 2 – Build the Foundation (Data Collection & Existing Conditions)

- Compile data on demographics, housing, land use, utilities, transportation, etc.
- Review relevant local and state planning documents.
- Prepare land use and infrastructure maps.
- Deliverable: *Data Summary Report* summarizing baseline data and trends.

Phase 3 – Draft the Framework (Internal Review)

- Develop working drafts for each of the plan's elements.
- Develop a draft Comprehensive Plan map.
- Identify outdated goals and policies from the 2013 plan.
- Present early findings to City Council for input before public outreach begins.
- Deliverable: *Working Draft Comprehensive Plan and Map* for Council review and direction.

Phase 4 – Engage the Community

- Conduct community engagement using multiple methods:
 - Public survey (digital and/or paper)
 - Community open houses and workshops
 - Stakeholder interviews (agencies, districts, business groups)
 - Youth and school involvement (e.g., classroom visioning)
 - Interactive map and/or online comment portal
- Deliverables: *Public Engagement Summary* and *Community Vision Report*.

Phase 5 – Refine and Integrate

- Integrate public feedback into revised plan content.
- Align goals and policies across all components for consistency.
- Develop updated Future Land Use Map and implementation strategies.
- Deliverable: *Draft Comprehensive Plan* ready for Council workshop.

Phase 6 – Adopt and Implement

- Conduct public review and comment period.
- Hold a public hearing before the City Council, per Idaho Code §67-6509.
- Adopt the plan by resolution.
- Deliverable: *Adopted Comprehensive Plan*.

Who's Involved? (Roles and Responsibilities)

Comprehensive planning succeeds when all participants understand their role in shaping the process. In Priest River, the City Council serves as both the guiding and adopting body, with support from staff, public agencies, and the public.

Roles:

- **City Council:** Provides direction, approves milestones, and adopts the final plan.
- **Planning & Zoning Administrator:** Leads day-to-day management, data collection, drafting, and coordination.
- **City Staff:** Support analysis, mapping, and outreach logistics.
- **Public and Stakeholders:** Offer input through surveys, meetings, and workshops.
- **Partner Agencies:** Provide data and feedback (IDEQ, ITD, Fire District, School District, etc.).

How Will the Plan Stay Current? (Implementation and Follow-Through)

Adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan will mark not an endpoint, but a beginning. The document will serve as a living framework to guide land use decisions, budget priorities, and community investments. Regular review and updates will help ensure the plan reflects changing conditions and continues to represent the community's vision.

Implementation Steps:

- Conduct a regular review of goals and policies.
- Align City budgets and infrastructure investments with plan priorities.
- Conduct a full plan review every five years to ensure continued relevance.

As the update progresses, supplemental materials such as public engagement summaries, data inventories, or implementation tools may be developed as needed to support the plan.