



City of Oak Harbor

EIS Scoping Fact Sheet

February 2026

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

An Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, is an informational document that provides the City, public, Tribes, and other agencies with environmental information to be considered when an action, in this case the Comprehensive Plan update, is likely to have significant environmental impacts.

The information including alternatives, impacts, and mitigation measures presented are to be considered in the decision-making process for a proposal.

An EIS includes



Existing conditions in the city, including the natural, built, and public service environment



Explanation of scenarios including no action and selected actions



Potential adverse environmental impacts that may occur as a result of certain alternatives



Mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate adverse environmental impacts



Potential significant, unavoidable, and adverse impacts

The EIS is meant to be a clear, concise document with a process that provides time for the public and interested parties to comment on proposed policies, programs, and alternative land use scenarios. The process is meant to assist in improving plans, mitigate or resolve concerns, and inform the decision-making process.

For more information, see Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197-11-400.

What is the Oak Harbor Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a compass that guides growth and development over the next 20 years. The plan serves as a guiding document for local governments' future decision making. The Plan addresses many topics including population growth, housing, transportation, infrastructure and utilities, economic development, parks, recreation and open space, rural areas, and protection of natural resource lands. The Plan includes goals, objectives, policies, actions, and standards. For more information on the Comprehensive Plan, see the Washington planning resources below.



Why is the City preparing an Environmental Impact Statement?

An EIS is called for under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) for larger projects or for major plans, regulations, and programs that are determined to potentially have significant adverse impacts. The City has determined that the Comprehensive Plan update and the land use alternatives under consideration have the potential to have significant impacts on the environment as a non-project action. As such, the City is preparing an EIS to assess the alternatives and their related impacts and mitigation measures.

What is the EIS process?

The EIS process includes the following steps:



Scoping



Existing Conditions



Alternative Analysis



Draft EIS (DEIS) and Public Comment Period



Final EIS (FEIS)

What is meant by “Scoping Process” and “Alternatives”?

A “Scoping Process” is an opportunity for the public to provide early input on what environmental topics the EIS should focus on. It is particularly important for the City to know what impacts are of greatest interest to the community.



“Alternatives” are the scenarios that the City is considering as it relates to the state required population, housing, and employment growth targets. Alternatives represent a range of growth options (low, medium, high) that can highlight the impacts of different potential choices. The Alternatives are broad enough so that the final preferred scenario included in the final Comprehensive Plan update falls within the range of alternatives studied.



What impact topics, or “elements of the environment”, are being considered.

The natural, built, and social environment topics proposed for study in the Comprehensive Plan EIS include those listed below.



Earth: geology, soils, topography



Water & Shoreline: groundwater, runoff, flooding, shoreline management



Air Quality: emissions, pollutants



Plants & Animals: habitat, special-status, migration



Natural Resources: critical areas



Environmental Health: hazards, noise



Land Use Patterns & Built Environment: land uses, zoning, displacement risk



Population, Housing, & Employment: forecasted growth



Transportation: traffic, circulation, transit systems



Public Services & Utilities: energy, water, sewer, fire, police, schools, parks, libraries

Each Alternative would be evaluated with these topics. A full list of potential SEPA topics can be found in WAC 197-11-444.

What Alternatives are being considered?

The City anticipates studying three Alternatives in the draft EIS as described below:

No Action Alternative:

The No Action Alternative is required by the SEPA and would consider the scenario by which the City would not adopt a new Comprehensive Plan. The goals, policies, and growth projections under the existing 2016 City of Oak Harbor Comprehensive Plan would be carried forward.

Two Action Alternatives:

Two Action Alternatives would evaluate the different ways the City can accomplish City objectives for planning for and accommodating the City's housing and growth allocations through its land use designations and development regulations.



What is the anticipated schedule?

The City is due to complete the Comprehensive Plan by end of year 2026. The DEIS assists the comprehensive planning process and the decisions made to plan for future growth. The schedule below shows the EIS and Comprehensive Plan schedule.



This scoping period and the DEIS comment period provide public comment opportunities.

How can I provide input during the scoping period?

The City will collect public input on what factors the EIS should consider from **February 21st to March 23rd**. After the end of the comment period, the City will review and summarize the comments received, sharing what was heard. The comments provided will be considered as part of the scope of the EIS. Please note that this comment period is to identify elements to study in the EIS. A 30-day comment period will also be held when the DEIS is published (anticipated for September 2026).



Written Comments may be submitted by mail to:

Reference: Comp Plan EIS Scoping Comment
To: City of Oak Harbor Community Development Department
Address: 865 SE Barrington Drive
 City Hall
 Oak Harbor, WA 98277



Online Comments may be submitted to the comment form linked on the project webpage here:

www.oakharbor.gov/808/Oak-Harbor-Comprehensive-Plan



How can I learn more and receive updates?

To learn more about the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update and EIS, visit www.oakharbor.gov/808/Oak-Harbor-Comprehensive-Plan for continued updates.