



City of Port Orchard 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Participation Program

City of Port Orchard Department of Community Development

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I. INTRODUCTION

Port Orchard is conducting a periodic review of its Comprehensive Plan as required by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). As a city in Kitsap County, Port Orchard is required to complete its update by December 31, 2024. The entire Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed and updated with review to include the following elements or chapters:

- Introduction
- Land Use
- Housing
- Parks
- Natural Systems
- Climate
- Economic Development
- Utilities
- Transportation
- Capital Facilities
- Appendices

In addition to the review and update of these elements and chapters, the City will also conduct a consistency evaluation to ensure that its development regulations are consistent with the updated comprehensive plan, the Growth Management Act, Vision 2050, and the Kitsap Countywide Planning Policies.

The GMA requires early and continuous public participation in the Comprehensive Plan and Municipal Code Update in RCW 36.70A.140:

Each county and city that is required or chooses to plan under RCW 36.70A.040 shall establish and broadly disseminate to the public a public participation program identifying procedures providing for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans. The procedures shall provide for broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives, opportunity for written comments, public meetings after effective notice, provision for open discussion, communication programs, information services, and consideration of and response to public comments [...]

The purpose of this document is to identify the City of Port Orchard's public participation objectives, approach, audiences, schedule, and opportunities for public participation. This document may be updated over time to reflect the needs of the Comprehensive Plan and Municipal Code Update project and experiences in early outreach to ensure public participation is effective.

II. OBJECTIVES

The Port Orchard Comprehensive Plan Update Public Participation Objectives include:

- Meeting the public participation goals of the Growth Management Act.

- Offering engaging opportunities to the Port Orchard community to participate in planning and comment on the future of the city.
- Providing objective information to assist the public in understanding issues and solutions.
- Providing opportunities for the public to provide feedback through all phases of the review.
- Using a variety of participation methods (such as meetings, media, social media, mailers, etc.) to offer all residents a variety of ways to participate.
- Making the review inclusive to people of all ages, races, cultures, and genders.
- Making the plan itself easily accessible to residents of the community.
- Asking questions of the community in order to gain new insights about Port Orchard and choices about the Comprehensive Plan policies, regulations, and implementation strategies.
- Identifying GMA requirements, policy trade-offs, and opportunities to voice unique conditions about Port Orchard.

III. APPROACH

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update was a major overhaul of the City's guiding document. In 2024, the City envisions a light refresh of the 2016 document to address regional objectives, changes to state law, and changes in community preferences. The City intends to check in with the public on progress toward achieving previously stated goals while seeking input on how to best achieve regional objectives and implement state law.

The City has hired a team of consultants lead by AHBL, Inc. to assist with the 2024 periodic update. The City has other consultants working on related plans that will be utilized in the comprehensive plan update process including:

- Water System Plan
- Sewer System Plan
- Stormwater System Plan
- Housing Action Plan
- Transportation Plan and Modelling

Other recently completed plans and reports will also inform the planning process and include but are not limited to:

- The 2022 Port Orchard Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan
- The 2021 Kitsap County Buildable Lands Report
- The Port Orchard Downtown Subarea Plan
- The Ruby Creek Subarea Plan
- The McCormick Village Subarea Plan
- The South Kitsap School District Capital Facilities Plan
- The West Sound Utilities District Water System Plan
- The West Sound Utilities District General Sewer Plan
- The Blackjack Creek Watershed Assessment Protection and Restoration Plan
- The City's 6- and 20-Year Transportation Improvement Programs
- The Bethel Sedgwick Corridor Plan

The City has a separate contract with Transportation Solutions, Inc. (TSI) to assist with updating the City's transportation model and transportation element, though TSI is also a member of the team led by AHBL. The City is working with other consultants on updates to utility system plans and these system plan updates will be utilized to inform the Utilities Element Update. The City and the consultant team will consult with West Sound Utility District and the City of Bremerton to inform the Utilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Housing Action Plan currently under development using Department of Commerce Grant funds will inform the Housing Element. Finally, the recently completed Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan adopted in 2022 will be used as the basis for the Parks Element.

IV. AUDIENCES

There are several audiences - individuals and agencies - that will participate in the 2024 Port Orchard Comprehensive Plan Update, and each will become engaged in the process in different ways

- General Public: Port Orchard residents, property owners, and business owners.
- Elected and Appointed Officials: City Councilmembers, Planning Commissioners, Design Review Board Members.
- Non-City Service Providers: West Sound Utility District, City of Bremerton (Water), South Kitsap Fire District, Kitsap Transit, South Kitsap School District, etc.
- Non-governmental Organizations: Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club of Port Orchard and other service clubs, the Port Orchard Bay Street Association (POBSA), Kitsap Alliance of Property Owners (KAPO), Kitsap Homebuilders Association, etc.
- State, Regional, and Other Local Governments: Puget Sound Regional Council, Kitsap County, Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council, The Suquamish Tribe, and the cities of Bremerton, Gig Harbor, Poulsbo, and Bainbridge Island, WSDOT, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Ecology, the Port of Bremerton, and the Department of Natural Resources.

V. ROLE OF DECISION MAKERS

City Council: The City Council will provide policy guidance and is the final decision maker for the Comprehensive Plan update. Council members will be notified of public workshops and are invited to participate early on in the planning process. All public workshops will be noticed appropriately so that all Council members are able to fully participate in these events in the event of a quorum. The Council will receive periodic briefings on the update and will review the Planning Commission recommendations on the periodic update to the Comprehensive Plan. Council will hold a public hearing on the final draft periodic update to the Comprehensive Plan prior to taking final action.

Planning Commission: The Planning Commission will provide policy recommendations for the periodic update to the Comprehensive Plan and ensure that the public is involved throughout the process. The Planning Commission will review the draft update on a chapter-by-chapter basis, providing opportunities for public comments while providing feedback and recommendations to the administration. All public workshops will be noticed appropriately so that all Planning Commission members are able to fully participate in these events in the event of a quorum. The Planning Commission shall forward its final recommendation to the City Council for the periodic update no later than October 31, 2024.

Administration: The Administration will oversee staff and consultant work on the periodic update. They will facilitate public meetings and present draft materials to the Planning Commission and City Council for review. They will revise documents as needed and provide all materials to Planning Commissioners and City Council members in a timely manner.

VI. ROLE OF THE PUBLIC

The Comprehensive Plan is primarily written for and with guidance from the public. It contains their preferences, ideas, and policy objectives. During the update is important to retain the public's interest by making citizen participation as accessible as possible. This will be accomplished through advertising, outreach, stakeholder involvement, and numerous public events.

Goal 11 of the GMA requires citizen participation and coordination: *"Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts."* The Washington State Department of Commerce lists benefits of including citizens in the process:

- Enhances the quality of planning by incorporating a wide variety of information and perspectives.
- Allows communities to make decisions based on shared values.
- Engage citizens in the ownership of local land use challenges and solutions.
- Educates and empowers citizens.
- Supports swift and efficient project implementation.
- Ensures that good plans remain relevant over time.
- Fosters a sense of community, and trust in government.

This Public Participation Program is intended to supplement existing City regulations and procedures for the processing and adoption of policy materials and development regulations.

VII. METHODS AND TOOLS

Techniques for public participation vary in scale, technology, structure, and timing. The primary means of participation will be the traditional public meeting at several key points during the update process. Meetings will likely be held in a hybrid virtual/in-person format to ensure that all members of the public are encouraged to participate. All meetings offering virtual engagement components will be recorded to provide citizens with an opportunity to follow this process at their convenience. Port Orchard has a historical lack of citizen interest in planning processes, so it essential to encourage involvement from as wide an audience and as early as possible.

The following tools will be employed to achieve widespread and ongoing citizen involvement:

- Public open houses and meetings
 - Background presentations, educational lectures, workshops, roundtables, one-on-one interviews, activities, games, etc.
 - Encouragement of participation by attendees
 - Effective notice:
 - Underrepresented groups will be specifically targeted for outreach
 - The date, time, and location of events will be published early enough and widely enough for all interested citizens to be notified

- Notice will be published in the City’s official newspaper of record
 - Regular press releases will be published ahead of public meetings, and city staff will be available for interested reporters and media outlets
 - Postings in public spaces, social media updates, and email subscription lists
- Focus events
 - Small scale focus groups with underrepresented members of the community (at schools, businesses, neighborhood centers, etc.
 - Presentations and workshops with community organizations and neighboring jurisdictions
- Opportunities for open discussion
 - Speaking sessions and roundtables at meetings
 - Additional public comment periods at Planning Commission, Council, and sub-committee meetings
- Written comments
 - Online meetings
 - Public feedback
 - Online surveys
 - Comment forms available at public meetings
- Surveys
 - Online and paper surveys will be conducted to collect public opinion on a wide range of topics and from a diverse and representative sample.
- Distribution of background information
 - The current Comprehensive Plan and other relevant documents will be easily accessible on the City website and available at the Port Orchard branch of the Kitsap Regional Library.
 - Information will be shared with the Planning Commission, city departments, and regional agencies as needed.
- Public hearings
 - The Planning Commission will conduct public hearings on the draft plan elements and on the final draft plan prior to making a recommendation to the City Council. Written and oral testimony will be accepted at public hearings.
 - The City Council will conduct a public hearing on the final draft plan prior to adoption. Written and oral testimony will be accepted at this public hearing.
- SEPA
 - The city's environmental process will include opportunities for the public to provide comments on the proposed plan and its possible adverse impacts.
- Interested Parties List
 - The city will build and maintain an interested party's notification list and provided notice to interested parties when opportunities to participate in public workshops or to provide testimony exist.

XIII. SCHEDULE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

(See Appendix A attached)

IX. CONCLUSION

A public meeting was held to discuss the draft Public Participation Program on November 1, 2022 by the Port Orchard Planning Commission to review and provide comments on the draft Program. A subsequent public hearing on this Program was held on December 6, 2022 by the Planning Commission at which time the plan was recommended for approval by the City Council. The Port Orchard City Council adopted the program at its regular meeting on December 13, 2022. This program may be updated administratively as conditions change or additional resources to support outreach activities become available. A current copy of the program shall be available for viewing at the front counter of the Department of Community Development and on the city's website.