

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE AND MISSION:

Public participation is an essential part of the City of Bremerton's planning process. This public participation program provides the framework for public input on the review, amendment, and ultimate update of the city's comprehensive plan.

In designing this public participation program, the City of Bremerton attempts to involve the broadest cross-section of the community, particularly encouraging both groups and individuals not previously involved in planning. Early, continuous, effective public participation will result in a comprehensive plan that assures the community's desired future, while meeting the mandates of the Washington State's Growth Management Act.

2. REQUIREMENTS OF THE ACT

The Growth Management Act requires that the City of Bremerton establish procedures providing for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations. The procedures described below for the City of Bremerton Update Process will achieve the following:

1. Early and continuous participation

From the onset of the process, including the creation of the participation program, the Planning Commission and city staff will ensure expansive and effective public involvement by using methods that include surveys, information bulletins, and distribution lists for all interested parties to receive regular notices, meeting advertisements, and updates. The public will be well advised of the opportunities for involvement and particularly encouraged to participate in the drafting and review of the proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

2. Communication and information programs

City staff will use all available means to encourage participation at all levels, through outreach and educational efforts, including television appearances, presence at public events, and an interactive website.

A bulletin-type publication will be posted, and updated regularly, at various locations throughout the City. This bulletin is designed to describe the Comprehensive Plan and the update process, outline opportunities for public involvement, and provide contact information, including the web site, email, and facsimile address for public inquiry and comment. Detailed information and progress reports will be available for local organizations and media outlets, such as local newsletters, news articles, and radio announcements.

3. Public meetings with adequate notice

All public meetings concerning the Comprehensive Plan will be advertised throughout the community. Formal public notices will be posted and published in consistent locations including the Planning and Building Permit Office, Bremerton School District office, “The Sun” (local daily newspaper) and “The Patriot” (local weekly newspaper). Interested parties will be further notified through a notice distribution list, providing process updates and meeting details.

4. Provisions for open discussion

Open discussion will result from a fair and open process, with various opportunities for public input. Public workshops will be advertised and made accessible to the broadest audience possible, building on established venues whenever possible. Discussion will be ensured and encouraged by designated time for facilitated discussion, public hearings prior to adoption of amendments, and well-noticed public comment periods.

5. Opportunity for written comments

Written comments will be accepted and encouraged at all venues and in various forms, including email messages and facsimiles. Notice of public comments periods will encourage written comments and provide contact information, especially on draft comprehensive plan updates. Comments should be addressed to the City of Bremerton Planning Commission at: (Mail Address) Department of Community Development, 286 4th Street, Bremerton, Washington 98337; (Fax) (360) 478-5278; or (E-mail Address) compplan@ci.bremerton.wa.us

Planning staff will provide public comment cards at Commission meetings and at strategic locations throughout the city. The comments cards will be regularly collected but also designed for easy postcard mailing. Written comments will be presented to the Planning Commission during official public meetings.

6. Consideration and “fair response” to public comments

All comments on draft proposals and alternatives will be accepted and brought to the attention of the Planning Commission for their consideration. Written comments will also be kept on file for public review. City Planning Staff will

acknowledge the receipt of written comments by sending a letter with notification of opportunities for further involvement.

7. Broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives

Draft proposals and alternatives will be broadly disseminated throughout the community. A bulletin-type publication, posted at various locations to provide general information about the process, will direct the public to the city-wide locations for reviewing the draft materials. Locations for the review of draft proposals and alternatives include:

1. Planning and Building Permit Office. 286 4th Street, Central Bremerton
2. Downtown Library, 612 5th Street, Central Bremerton
3. Bremerton Area Chamber of Commerce, 301 Pacific, Central Bremerton
4. Central Kitsap Regional Library. 1301 Sylvan Way, East Bremerton
5. Sheridan Community Center, 680 Lebo Blvd., East Bremerton
6. Olympic College Library, 1600 Chester Avenue, West Bremerton
7. School District Office, 134 Marion Avenue, West Bremerton

3. PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process, the City of Bremerton will maximize citizen involvement opportunities and maintain compliance with policies outlined in the existing “Citizen Involvement Program,” Element D of the Comprehensive Plan (1995). However, this participation program specifically details the comprehensive update process, striving for city-wide participation as opposed to the previous annual comprehensive amendment process which tends to focus on isolated issues or properties. Efforts will continue to make the process open and accessible to all concerned parties and to make related materials and presentations easily understood by the citizens of Bremerton.

STAGES of the COMPREHENSIVE UPDATE PROCESS:

1. Visioning Stage: Review of the Comprehensive Vision and Goals

Public participation efforts begin with a visioning process in which the public is invited to participate to broadly define the desired community future. Workshops will be held throughout the city. Existing venues will be utilized as much as possible to build upon the established Comprehensive Plan geographic units: East, West, and Central Bremerton. Likewise, the existing Comprehensive Plan’s vision, goals, policies, and implementation strategies are the starting point for the update. Within the discussion on the community’s vision and implementation strategies, Kitsap County-wide planning policies and Washington State mandates will be raised for discussion. As the foundation for the update, the visioning results will be presented to both the Planning Commission and the City Council.

2. Drafting Stage: Update Drafted to Support Revised Goals and Visions

The Comprehensive Plan Update will ultimately be proposed to the City Council, recommended by the Planning Commission to be necessary to implement the community's vision. Public participation will be invited in the actual drafting of the update through open-membership, community-based committees that focus on subject areas, chaired by a planning commissioner with ex-officio representation from the City Council. Draft updates will then go through a formal comment review period which includes distribution throughout the community and to various interested parties and jurisdictions. Finally, the Planning Commission and the City Council will co-host a public workshop on the draft update before staff finalizes the update for formal public hearings.

3. Adopting Stage: Proposed Updates for a Comprehensive Revision

The Comprehensive Plan Update will be conducted through public, noticed hearings at which community members and interested parties will be encouraged to participate. Public Hearings will be held at both the Planning Commission and City Council levels, complete with notices and written comment periods. At hearings, all persons desiring to speak should be allowed to do so, consistent with time constraints.

ROLES in the COMPREHENSIVE UPDATE PROCESS:

As outlined above, the Planning Commission chairs the update process for the Comprehensive Plan. Following the City Council's final adoption of comprehensive plan updates and supplemental development regulations, the Commission will monitor implementation and compliance. The Commission will hold public meetings to provide information on how implementation is progressing and to receive public input on changes that may be needed. When amendments are proposed for adoption, the same public hearing procedure should be followed as attended in the Update adoption process. Public participation and comprehensive planning are iterative and continuous.

Planning staff will provide frequent progress reports on the update to the Planning Commission and the City Council, including verbal reports during regularly televised Council meetings. Committee work, each officially chaired by a Planning Commissioner, will be coordinated through staff, and presented as a whole to the public, the Planning Commission, and the City Council.

Members of the Planning, Engineering, Parks and Recreation, Utilities, and other City Departments will provide technical assistance throughout the process, including requests for neighborhood meetings, sub-committee work, and other opportunities.

The City will support and participate in public education/involvement offered by Puget Sound Regional Council, Kitsap County, Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council, surrounding jurisdictions, special districts, and other area organizations.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 36.70A. -020(11), -.140,-.035,-.070,-.130(2),-.390]