

## Public Participation Working Group Notes

Our perception is that the County has a Public Notification Plan and not a Public Participation Plan. **The Public needs to feel that their input is valued and important.**

- The Planning Commission is getting few members of the public attending the Planning Commission meetings.
- The Planning Commission is getting few comments from the public
- Many people are bypassing the Planning Commission and going directly to the BOCC
- Few Public Comments listed in the comment Matrix are acted on favorably, most are dismissed by Staff comments.
- The impression is DCD is merely following a Checklist rather than encouraging participation.
- The Public needs to feel they are a stakeholder

Washington State law describes Public Participation:

**RCW [36.70A.140](#)**

**Comprehensive plans—Ensure public participation.**

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. In enacting legislation in response to the board's decision pursuant to RCW [36.70A.300](#) declaring part or all of a comprehensive plan or development regulation invalid, the county or city shall provide for public participation that is appropriate and effective under the circumstances presented by the board's order. Errors in exact compliance with the established program and procedures shall not render the comprehensive land use plan or development regulations invalid if the spirit of the program and procedures is observed. [[1995 c 347 § 107](#); [1990 1st ex.s. c 17 § 14.](#)]

DCD has demonstrated in the Shoreline Master Plan update that they know to run an effective Public Participation Plan. The Key words **“are early and continuous public participation in the development”**

For the public to participate they need to be involved in the development process. To encourage participation draft documents need to be posted early and updated often. The current practice of publishing the final draft 2 weeks before the Planning Commission Meeting is insufficient.

Recommendations:

1. The opening discussion should always include: why the change is necessary and why the current regulation isn't working.
2. For updates such as this current Shoreline Management Plan Update explain that the thrust of the update is to bring the SMP into compliance with changes in state law and publish the changes that are required to bring conformance early.
3. Publish Drafts early (marked as drafts) and update frequently.
4. Publish PC briefing material to the PC website prior to the meeting. A two week public notice may not be sufficient to generate public interest.
5. Investigate how to get issues published in the newspapers
6. When dealing with major updates consider Planning Commission Hearings in North, Central and South Kitsap County.
7. PC Commissioners should be encouraged to attend County Advisory Committee meetings to discuss the role of the PC. What is the PC, what do they do and why it is important.
8. The Public Participation plan for regulations sets up the input process to the planning commission. We realize that there is significant budget and staff impacts and that the BOCC is the final decision authority. Recommend that the PC be given a brief and Courtesy Chop on the plan before the BOCC signs off.
9. We need to be in the loop sooner. We want to know what DCD is doing. When you present a briefing to the BOCC that involves land use (eg. WIRA), please let us know what's going on. We don't necessarily need a brief but you could post the briefing materials to the PC Dropbox.
10. Improve the DCD website to make information easier to find.
  - a. BOCC briefing Items on their agendas disappear after the meeting
  - b. Buildable Lands Report Update when googled leads to a dead page. The update site link on the Buildable Land Report is not obvious.
  - c. The Comprehensive Plan site has not been updated for the annual changes
  - d. The Zoning Code update draft is not obvious
  - e. PC Minutes are not posted in a timely fashion
11. Improve timeliness of responses to Kitsap One.
  - a. Calls generally go to voicemail, needs a real person contact
  - b. Consider publishing a phone directory.