

# **Public Participation Plan**

## **City of Bellevue**

### **Shoreline Master Program Update**

#### **March 5, 2008**

#### **Introduction**

Throughout Phases 1 through 5 of the SMP update planning process, the consultant/City team shall inform and involve the public in updating the SMP consistent with the Shoreline Management Act (see RW 90.58.130) and WAC 173-26. The methods of public involvement are summarized in this Public Participation Plan, which identifies specific objectives and establishes timelines for public participation activities. *Extra effort shall be made to engage all parties early and continuously in the update process*, particularly those relevant recreation and conservation organizations that may not typically seek involvement in new shoreline regulations. This will be done by contacting identified relevant groups and either attending a preliminary meeting of their organization or discussing the issue with a representative of their group.

#### **Goals**

The goals of the public participation plan are to lay a framework identifying how the City can achieve the following:

- Provide opportunities for members of the public, groups and entities to be informed and actively participate in the preparation of the SMP in compliance with WAC 173-26-201(3)(b) and RCW 90.58.130(1)
- Invite and encourage participation by all agencies of federal, state and local government including affected Indian tribes, municipal and public corporations to participate in the preparation of the SMP in compliance with WAC 173-26-201(3)(b) and RCW 90.58.130(2).
- Ensure that the SMP update process is transparent, inclusive, effective and comprehensive.
- Identify and consider the concerns of all interested parties
- Document the input resulting from the process so that it can be effectively considered during the preparation and adoption of the SMP.

#### **Steps**

The public participation program will include the following steps:

##### **1. Prepare an outreach strategy**

###### **a. Establish a database for input**

The City, with the consultant's assistance, will establish a database to record and document public and agency responses. The database will contain names and contact information of those participating in the process and responses to specific issues.

*Timeframe: Database will be established by April 30, 2008 and maintained for the duration of the project.*

**b. Establish a communication identity**

The team will develop a graphic system to identify materials produced in support of SMP preparation. MAKERS will craft a logo and document style system based on City direction (in order to meet City standards). If appropriate, the team will develop a byline or slogan to further highlight public recognition and continuity in the process and document package.

*Timeframe: Draft logo and document style system to City by February 29, 2008. Final layout and template prepared two weeks following City comment on draft product.*

**c. Prepare outreach program**

The consultant/City team will initiate the following outreach activities to be conducted throughout the SMP update process:

- Project introduction and information solicitation letter to interested agencies, governments, tribes, and groups. *(See attached distribution list and letter.)*
- Advertising through City newsletter (It's Your City), e-mail alerts, utility bills, etc.
- News media – utilize Bellevue Television to broadcast meeting notices and play recorded meetings and events
- Special event notification letters or emails sent to organizations/agencies listed above, as well as property owners
- City to develop an SMP specific webpage on the City's website to post information and accept input through a dedicated email address. The consultant and City will provide content for this page and update it on a regular basis.
- Special outreach (personal contact from the City is most effective) to leaders of groups potentially interested in shoreline management, such as boaters, contractors, environmental groups, and park and recreation interests.

Key Dates	Public Participation Activity
February 2008	Draft logo and document style/layout
Feb. – April 2008	Draft survey program
March 2008	Final logo and document style/layout
March – June 2008	Survey performed
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Nov. – Jan. 2009	Open Houses*
March/April 2010	Public Hearing, with an open house prior to Planning Commission consideration*
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\* Advertise public events a minimum of two weeks in advance

## 2. Initiate Outreach and Distribute Letters to Interested Parties

The City will initiate the outreach activities. Consultant will provide information materials.

Distribute letters to relevant governments, agencies, tribes, and identified interest groups to announce the project and solicit comments and information. *(See attached list and sample letter)*

*Timeframe: During the inventory process (ongoing as of Jan 2008.)*

## 3. Conduct a Public Opinion Survey

The consultant, with guidance from the City, will conduct a public opinion survey to gather qualitative and quantitative information to understand the main concerns of the City's residents. This public opinion survey will include a statistically valid telephone survey of approximately 400 citywide residents and 200 shoreline residents, yielding a margin of error of less than 5 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval.

The purpose of a survey at the beginning of an SMP update is to identify the public's general attitudes, priorities, and values relative to shoreline management. It can be crafted to gauge the public's level of concern regarding shoreline management issues and preferences regarding approach and level of effort for achieving shoreline management objectives. The survey sampling will allow the team to compare attitudes of, for example, shoreline property owners versus those of the general public.

The results of the survey will be useful in:

- Guiding the team in formulating SMP provisions.
- Communicating with the public on this topic.
- Providing input into the Planning Commission and Council deliberations.

The overall goal of the survey is to better understand how the public perceives the issues and the inherent values they hold.

Questions/topics to address:

- What are the public's key concerns regarding shoreline management (e.g., salmon and habitat restoration, public access, homeowner rights, water quality, aesthetics)?
- What are the preferences for general approaches (e.g., a preference for incentives with regulations versus simple regulations)?
- Are there special geographic concerns (e.g.: Meydenbauer Bay, Lake Sammamish, Mercer Slough area, etc)?
- How aggressive should the City be in pursuing various shoreline management objectives such as habitat restoration and public access?
- How can the City best keep the public informed and involved?
- There may be specific questions that come from the inventory that might elicit some questions, such as people's opinions regarding aesthetics of Kelsey Creek.

The consultant, in coordination with the City, will develop a draft survey instrument and program protocol between February and April 2008. This will include coordination with City Planning, Parks, Utilities, and other relevant departments to ensure consensus regarding

survey objectives. Shoreline survey efforts recently conducted by University of Washington graduate students and King County will be reviewed. EMC Research will provide guidance on the design and implementation of the survey.

*Timeframe:*

- *Initial discussions regarding objectives and approach - late February 2008.*
- *Preparation of draft instrument and review by City - early-late March 2008.*
- *Preparation and administration of survey – April 2008.*
- *Analysis and preparation of report – May 2008.*

#### **4. Conduct a Focus Group Session**

Qualitative information regarding public opinion will be gathered by the consultant through at least one focus group meeting consisting of 10 to 12 participants of various stakeholder interests. Participants will be provided with survey results prior to the session. The focus group meeting will probe issues identified in the survey and provide an opportunity to ask more specific questions for which a background explanation is necessary. Since this is a focus group and not an advisory committee, the emphasis will be on better understanding public values and concerns rather than producing solutions or directing the project. The consultant will prepare an analytical report presenting the findings from the focus group.

One benefit of conducting a focus group after the survey is that it will help the team to identify how different groups talk about the issues; that is, the language and reasoning participants use when considering and discussing the topic.

*Timeframe: During the analysis phase (August 2008)*

#### **5. Conduct Open Houses**

Three open house gatherings will be conducted at specific locations (Lake Washington/Mercer Slough, Lake Sammamish, and Phantom Lake). Aggressive notification efforts will be made through the print media, City newsletter ("It's Your City"), mailings to interested parties, E-Mail Alerts, and postings on the City's web site. These open houses will be formatted to provide public education—including an informative presentation by the City/consultants—as well as provide a feedback mechanism.

Participants will be encouraged to register preferences for different approaches to shoreline policies and regulations. Participants will also be able to ask questions regarding inventory and analysis findings and proposed recommendations leading to the policies and regulations. A key objective of this session is to gather input from individuals *and* from groups, which have the opportunity to discuss the alternate measures and perhaps reach a consensus regarding an approach.

A map will be available for participants to mark the location of their homes or businesses. Graphic examples and photos will be used to illustrate the issues and alternate measures. If feasible, presentation portions of the workshops could be videotaped and made available for viewing on the City's website or Bellevue TV.

The consultant team will prepare materials (in consultation with the City) and be responsible for facilitating the open houses and documenting results. The City will conduct outreach and advertising, make arrangements for the location and any refreshments, attend the open houses, and review draft results.

### **Schematic Agenda for the Open Houses**

*(subject to change as the project progresses)*

- Introductions (20 minutes)
  - Project purpose
  - SMA background and purpose/components of the SMP
  - Schedule, process etc.
- Inventory Findings (PowerPoint presentation) (30 minutes)
- Presentation of SMP Issues and Alternate Means to Address Them (PowerPoint presentation) (30 minutes)
  - Using surveys (or other appropriate evaluation measure), participants evaluate the alternatives as *individuals*
- General Discussion and Questions (30 minutes) (This session offers participants the opportunity to discuss and comment on the measures collectively.)
  - This could be in one large group or in small groups with team facilitators
  - Participants are able to give verbal feedback during the discussion
- Wrap-Up and Next Steps (15 minutes)

*(Note that this is a very ambitious agenda and will be refined as the project proceeds.)*

*Timeframe: Prior to drafting policies and regulations (November 2008 through January 2009)*

### **6. Conduct Shoreline Tour (Optional)**

Additionally, a shoreline boat tour (e.g., Argosy) is known to be an effective and well-attended public outreach event (see City of Kirkland). Such a tour could replace or supplement the Lake Washington/Mercer Slough open house. The varied nature of the Lake Washington shoreline lends itself well to discussions of piers, bulkhead, stormwater, invasive aquatic vegetation, setbacks, parks, and other topics of major interest in the SMP update process. Aggressive notification efforts would be made through the print media, City newsletter (It's Your City), mailings to interested parties, E-Mail Alerts, and postings on the City's website. Depending on funding and other logistical matters, a smaller tour attended by Planning Commission members would also be beneficial. Alternatively, a virtual tour could be developed using PowerPoint and presented with narration at various public outreach events, including Open Houses, Planning Commission or Council meetings, and possibly even to kick off a Focus Group session. The virtual tour could be available as a download on the City's website.

*Timeframe: Summer/Fall 2008 (prior to drafting policies and regulations)*

## **7. Conduct Public Involvement Before the Planning Commission Meetings**

Public hearings will be held prior to Planning Commission consideration of final recommendations to the Council (March/April 2009) and prior to Council adoption deliberations (May/June 2009). These hearings will be in addition to the open houses and regular Planning Commission meetings.

Presentations will be made to both the Parks Board and the Environmental Services Commission to encourage participation and gather feedback (complete by June 2009).

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The SEPA process offers the opportunity to seek additional public input. The City will notice the programmatic, non-project SEPA Checklist early, with SEPA threshold determination coming before the public hearing prior to Planning Commission consideration of the draft Master Program. During the hearing before the Planning Commission (Step 7), the team will conduct an open house prior to the testimony period. The open house will feature materials explaining the proposed SMP and the results of the cumulative impacts analysis report/SEPA evaluation. It may include a presentation of the materials as well.

The City's Planning Commission will serve as an advisory panel throughout the SMP update process. The Planning Commission will review appropriate work products, provide input and guidance related to the development of goals, policies, and regulations, and serve as a preliminary approval board prior to Phase 5 (Local Approval).

## **Dissemination of Products**

All relevant materials useful to the public in understanding the effort will be placed on the City's web site and in the public library after approval by City staff. To the extent possible and as required by regulations, materials will be made public prior to public events so that citizens have the opportunity to review the materials prior to providing input.

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Three open house gatherings will be conducted at specific locations (Lake Washington/Mercer Slough, Lake Sammamish, and Phantom Lake). Aggressive notification efforts will be made through the print media, City newsletter ("It's Your City"), mailings to interested parties, E-Mail Alerts, and postings on the City's web site. These open houses will be formatted to provide public education—including an informative presentation by the City/consultants—as well as provide a feedback mechanism.

Participants will be encouraged to register preferences for different approaches to shoreline policies and regulations. Participants will also be able to ask questions regarding inventory and analysis findings and proposed recommendations leading to the policies and regulations. A key objective of this session is to gather input from individuals *and* from groups, which have the opportunity to discuss the alternate measures and perhaps reach a consensus regarding an approach.

A map will be available for participants to mark the location of their homes or businesses. Graphic examples and photos will be used to illustrate the issues and alternate measures. If feasible, presentation portions of the workshops could be videotaped and made available for viewing on the City's website or Bellevue TV.

The consultant team will prepare materials (in consultation with the City) and be responsible for facilitating the open houses and documenting results. The City will conduct outreach and advertising, make arrangements for the location and any refreshments, attend the open houses, and review draft results.

### **Schematic Agenda for the Open Houses**

*(subject to change as the project progresses)*

- Introductions (20 minutes)
  - Project purpose
  - SMA background and purpose/components of the SMP
  - Schedule, process etc.
- Inventory Findings (PowerPoint presentation) (30 minutes)
- Presentation of SMP Issues and Alternate Means to Address Them (PowerPoint presentation) (30 minutes)
  - Using surveys (or other appropriate evaluation measure), participants evaluate the alternatives as *individuals*
- General Discussion and Questions (30 minutes) (This session offers participants the opportunity to discuss and comment on the measures collectively.)
  - This could be in one large group or in small groups with team facilitators
  - Participants are able to give verbal feedback during the discussion
- Wrap-Up and Next Steps (15 minutes)

*(Note that this is a very ambitious agenda and will be refined as the project proceeds.)*

*Timeframe: Prior to drafting policies and regulations (November 2008 through January 2009)*

### **6. Conduct Shoreline Tour (Optional)**

Additionally, a shoreline boat tour (e.g., Argosy) is known to be an effective and well-attended public outreach event (see City of Kirkland). Such a tour could replace or supplement the Lake Washington/Mercer Slough open house. The varied nature of the Lake Washington shoreline lends itself well to discussions of piers, bulkhead, stormwater, invasive aquatic vegetation, setbacks, parks, and other topics of major interest in the SMP update process. Aggressive notification efforts would be made through the print media, City newsletter (It's Your City), mailings to interested parties, E-Mail Alerts, and postings on the City's website. Depending on funding and other logistical matters, a smaller tour attended by Planning Commission members would also be beneficial. Alternatively, a virtual tour could be developed using PowerPoint and presented with narration at various public outreach events, including Open Houses, Planning Commission or Council meetings, and possibly even to kick off a Focus Group session. The virtual tour could be available as a download on the City's website.

*Timeframe: Summer/Fall 2008 (prior to drafting policies and regulations)*

## **7. Conduct Public Involvement Before the Planning Commission Meetings**

Public hearings will be held prior to Planning Commission consideration of final recommendations to the Council (March/April 2009) and prior to Council adoption deliberations (May/June 2009). These hearings will be in addition to the open houses and regular Planning Commission meetings.

Presentations will be made to both the Parks Board and the Environmental Services Commission to encourage participation and gather feedback (complete by June 2009).

All notifications for public hearings will be through a combination of print media, City newsletter, E-mail Alerts, Bellevue Television, mailings to interested parties and posting on the City's web site.

## **8. Support SEPA/Adoption Process**

The SEPA process offers the opportunity to seek additional public input. The City will notice the programmatic, non-project SEPA Checklist early, with SEPA threshold determination coming before the public hearing prior to Planning Commission consideration of the draft Master Program. During the hearing before the Planning Commission (Step 7), the team will conduct an open house prior to the testimony period. The open house will feature materials explaining the proposed SMP and the results of the cumulative impacts analysis report/SEPA evaluation. It may include a presentation of the materials as well.

The City's Planning Commission will serve as an advisory panel throughout the SMP update process. The Planning Commission will review appropriate work products, provide input and guidance related to the development of goals, policies, and regulations, and serve as a preliminary approval board prior to Phase 5 (Local Approval).

## **Dissemination of Products**

All relevant materials useful to the public in understanding the effort will be placed on the City's web site and in the public library after approval by City staff. To the extent possible and as required by regulations, materials will be made public prior to public events so that citizens have the opportunity to review the materials prior to providing input.