Public Participation Plan
2016 Comprehensive Plan Update

Section RCW 36.70A.140 of Washington Statutes requires local governments to establish and broadly communicate to the public a Public Participation Plan which identifies procedures providing for “early and continuous public participation” in the amendment of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations implementing such plan.
Introduction

Oak Harbor’s comprehensive plan and development regulations need to be reviewed periodically and updated to reflect current laws, correct errors, input new data, and/or clarify intent. Washington State’s Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Oak Harbor to do this review and update its comprehensive plan and development regulations by June 2016.

As part of this update process, Section RCW 36.70A.140 of Washington Statutes requires local governments to establish and broadly communicate to the public a Public Participation Plan which identifies procedures providing for “early and continuous public participation” in the amendment of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations implementing such plan.

The city recognizes the importance and necessity of the public involvement process. The city has several boards and commissions that serve in various capacities to foster public input, discuss complex issues, further goals and policies of adopted plans and make recommendations to the governing body. The Planning Commission of Oak Harbor serves as the hearing board for amendments and updates to the city’s comprehensive plan and development regulations. The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the City Council who ultimately decides on the adoption of amendments and updates. All meetings of the Planning Commission and the City Council are open to the public and have dedicated time for public input on their agenda.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Public Participation Plan is to provide the public with complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and support early and continuous involvement in the process. It is also the goal of the PPP to provide the public with sufficient information so that there is an understanding of the process, and opportunities to review and comment on update decisions before they are made. Public is defined broadly to include individual citizens, interest groups, trade groups, government agencies, utilities and service providers and businesses.

The city’s current comprehensive plan and development regulations integrates public involvement into its decision making process. OHMC 18.15 outlines the requirements on public involvement during annual amendments to the comprehensive plan and OHMC 18.20 provides the regulations for public noticing for permit process and other development regulated activities. Though the city will abide by all the existing requirements, this Public Participation Plan describes the steps that the City of Oak Harbor will take to involve the community in decisions regarding the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.

Stakeholders and Public Groups

The GMA does not exempt any portion of a comprehensive plan or development regulation from being subject to review and evaluation. However, there are some key elements that need to be
reviewed and updated based on changes to laws. The Department of Commerce has provided a checklist to help cities determine the portions of a comprehensive plan that needs to be updated. A review of the plan against this checklist provides a scope of the amendments necessary to comply with GMA.

The scope of the update will determine the involvement of key stakeholders and interest groups. It is beneficial to identify these groups and involves them early in the process.

Some of the groups and individuals that could have a potential interest in public input and involvement opportunities are identified below. This list serves as an initial identifier of interested groups and is not intended to exclude any groups from the process.

- Government agencies – state, county, school districts etc.
- NAS Whidbey
- Chamber of Commerce and other business groups
- Media – newspaper
- Organizations and individuals who have been notified of public hearings for major projects, or organizations and individuals who have submitted written comments on other major projects.
- Whidbey Environmental Action Network
- SICBA

Information Access
All reports and documents generated for the 2016 Update to the Comprehensive Plan is available to the public for review. This information can be viewed at Oak Harbor’s city hall or online at the city’s website www.oakharbor.org under the Development Services Department/Planning Division and under the Plans under progress.

Outreach Techniques
As mentioned earlier, the Planning Commission shall serve as the primary body to discuss, review and recommend changes to policies and regulations regarding the 2016 update. The Planning Commission meetings will be advertised on the city’s website and in the local newspaper. The agenda for the Planning Commission meeting are noticed in the newspaper two week prior to the meeting date. Reports to the Planning Commission are posted on the city’s website five days before the meeting date.

The City maintains an active involvement in the local government access cable channel. All Planning Commission meeting are recorded and then played back on channel 10 at a minimum of 5 times a week till the next meeting. The rebroadcasting provides the public access to the process and information of key decisions during the review process.
The City’s website www.oakharbor.org has links on the home page to the Planning Commission’s agendas and reports. It lists the date of the next upcoming Planning Commission meeting on the calendar. The website also has an “Oak Harbor News” section on the homepage that will also be used to notice of any special meetings associated with the 2016 update.

The city’s website also contains information on the 2016 update in the Development Services section under “Departments” tab on the homepage. It is under the “Plans under progress” section of the Planning Division. This section of the website will have access to reports, studies, and issue papers that are related to the update.

The Development Services Department maintains a list of interested groups and individuals that have expressed interest in Comprehensive Plan related issues since 2005. Notices of meeting related to the 2016 update will be mailed to them.

During the update process, various other methods of outreach may be used based on the kind of input that is most efficient and helpful to the issue under consideration. This can range from open houses, surveys, ad hoc committees, workshops, public displays etc.

**Input Mechanisms**

The City accepts input and comments from the public through a variety of means. Members of the public can visit with planners in the Development Services Department to make comments and provide input. Members of the public can also make comments by calling the Development Services Department at 360-279-4510. Written comments are the most effective way to get on record with the comprehensive plan update. Comments can be faxed to the city at 360-279-4519 or mailed to

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Development Services Department
Attn: 2016 Update
865 SE Barrington Ave
Oak Harbor, WA 98277
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Public comments can also be emailed to a dedicated 2016 update email account – 2016update@oakharbor.org.

The public may also make verbal comments or submit written comments at Planning Commission meetings and City Council meetings. There is a dedicated time on the agenda for public input on general issues at these meetings. The Planning Commission and City Council always entertain public comments when a particular comprehensive plan item is on the agenda for discussion.

Interested members of the public or a representative of a group, with expressed comments on a particular topic may request to serve on committees if one it activated.
Contact information

The City of Oak Harbor believes firmly in the essential role of the public in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update process, welcoming any and all comments from citizens or groups concerning comprehensive plan policies or development regulations. Members of the public can provide comments to any of the planners in the Development Services Department. The primary contact for the update is provided below.

Senior Planner, Cac Kamak, AICP.
Development Services Division
Attn: 2016 Update
865 SE Barrington Ave
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

Email: 2016update@oakharbor.org
Website: www.oakharbor.org