

Public Participation Plan

for the

CITY OF PORT TOWNSEND

Comprehensive Plan Update

April 2024



SCJ ALLIANCE
CONSULTING SERVICES



PURPOSE

The intent of this document is to provide a plan for public participation in the City of Port Townsend's Comprehensive Plan update process. This outreach plan provides a breakdown of each engagement activity, a schedule for outreach efforts, roles and responsibilities, and key/milestone dates.

BACKGROUND

The City of Port Townsend is updating its Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA). The Comprehensive Plan is the long-range policy document guiding the City's growth and development over the next 20 years. Under the GMA, cities and counties in Washington must periodically review and, if needed, update their comprehensive plans to ensure consistency with state law and other regional planning documents. Port Townsend's Comprehensive Plan is required to be consistent with GMA, and Jefferson County's Countywide Planning Policies. Our target completion and celebration is June 30, 2025.

Public outreach is a key component of this periodic update effort. Among other things, GMA requires early and continuous public participation in the Comprehensive Plan update (RCW 36.70A.140). This Public Participation Plan (PPP) is intended to guide public outreach efforts throughout the process to ensure early and continuous involvement in decision making. Efforts to encourage participation will continue over the course of the Comprehensive Plan update.

This document outlines the public participation opportunities for Port Townsend's Comprehensive Plan update, including engagement methods, timeline, and implementation strategies. This is a working document and may be updated over time as needed to reflect the needs of the community.

Objectives

- ◆ Inform residents of the Comprehensive Plan update and their opportunities to help shape the plan, the planning process, and outcomes.
- ◆ Give participants more ownership in the outcome of planning processes through collaborative events that engage in conversation and the exchange of ideas and information, leading to high quality planning documents, resident buy-in, and a sense of ownership.
- ◆ Include a range of perspectives, engaging residents in unique ways to reach a broader audience and understand their goals, needs, and desires. This will include a look at trade-offs and how different goals can work together or conflict with each other.
- ◆ Provide access to engagement opportunities, events, and participation for all Port Townsend residents, including disadvantaged groups and individuals and those who have historically been left out of community planning processes.
- ◆ Build support for the Comprehensive Plan and work with the Port Townsend community, elected officials, and other agencies toward success in

Roles and Responsibilities

City of Port Townsend

The City of Port Townsend is responsible for the update of the Comprehensive Plan in compliance with the Growth Management Act. This responsibility includes actively inviting public comment and coordinating with state, regional, and county planning policies as outlined in the GMA. The City has hired a consultant, SCJ Alliance, to work alongside City staff in facilitating the Comprehensive Plan update process.

Planning Commission

Port Townsend's Planning Commission, a volunteer advisory body appointed by the City Council, is required to review amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and provide a recommendation to the City Council for consideration and potential adoption.

City Council

City Council will seek out their constituent's goals for Port Townsend and connect people to the Comprehensive Plan through outreach in public spaces. Once the Comprehensive Plan update is complete, the Port Townsend City Council is responsible for adopting it.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audiences

There are several audiences – individuals and agencies – that will participate in the Port Townsend Comprehensive Plan update, and each will engage in the process in different ways:

- ♦ **General Public:** Port Townsend residents, workers, students, property owners, business owners, and other people who are engaged in Port Townsend.
- ♦ **Officials & Service Providers:** City Councilmembers, Planning Commissioners, and others such as PUD, Port, Library, and Hospital District staff. Special districts such as the School District, Fire District, and others.
- ♦ **Non-Governmental Organizations:** Non-Governmental Organizations including service clubs, local environmental groups, Housing Solutions Network, Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, Port Townsend Main Street, Fort Worden Public Development Authority, EDC Team Jefferson, and others.
- ♦ **State, Regional, Tribal, and Other Local Governments:** Jefferson County, Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 17, Jamestown S’Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Port Gamble S’Klallam, and Skokomish Tribes.

Communication Channels

It is important that information be made available so any interested person can review the materials and participate. Throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process, the City will maintain several channels for notifying the public and other participants of relevant meetings and events. Regular opportunities for engagement and notification include:

- ♦ City website, project website, and social media channels
- ♦ Public events, including meetings hosted by the City
- ♦ City Manager’s outreach
- ♦ **Port Townsend Leader** (a local weekly newspaper)
- ♦ **KPTZ Local Radio**
- ♦ **Peninsula Daily News**
- ♦ Mailers and other City communications
- ♦ Email







The City will also advertise Planning Commission and City Council public meetings according to the standard procedures for those bodies, as well as on the City’s website. All outreach efforts and comments received will be documented by the City and available for public review upon request.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Inclusivity and Potential Barriers to Participation

The channels by which we communicate and the events we hold should incorporate an inclusive engagement approach. The table below identifies the engagement options for this plan, including the potential barriers of each as well as how the method achieves inclusivity.

| ENGAGEMENT METHOD | POTENTIAL BARRIER(S) | INCLUSIVITY METHOD |
|--|---|--|
|  <p>Project Website A central location for status updates, draft documents, meeting schedules and related information, official notices, and feedback/ comment portal.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting visitors to the website. Uploading materials in a timely manner. Reaching residents without internet access. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure ease of access through virtual outreach on social media and email correspondence directing public to website. Make materials available in advance for distribution to the public. Partner with the library to connect those without internet to resources. |
|  <p>Social Media Sharing of public events, surveys, and other opportunities to participate.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posting and noticing in a timely manner. Creating postings that appeal to a wide audience. Reaching ESL residents. Moderating responses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide surveys and social media posts in English and Spanish as needed. Provide links to surveys and other web-based platforms. |
|  <p>Printed Materials Printed materials describing the update process, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Port Townsend Leader </p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaching ESL residents. Potential for low participation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide printed materials in English and Spanish as needed. Identify a variety of outlets with relevant contact information for notification and distribution of materials (newspapers, neighborhoods, churches, and other community-oriented organizations/ groups). Include website link and QR code for access. |
|  <p>Public Meetings, Civic Events, and Presentations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying appropriate events for community. Childcare availability. High level of coordination/ communication required. Proper safety measures to reduce the risk of COVID exposure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with City departments to identify appropriate events to reach a diverse audience. Designate 1–2 point people for coordination/ communication to ensure clarity and efficiency. Incentivize participation with food and/or childcare. Host virtual public meetings with a 1–2 week open timeframe. |
|  <p>Community Workshops</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility of the event. Childcare availability. Potential for low participation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure ADA accessibility. Incentivize participation with food and/or childcare. |
|  <p>Planning Commission and City Council Meetings/Hearings</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare availability. Potential for low participation. May be intimidating. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ample time for the public to speak and/or provide written comments and questions. Incentivize participation with food and/or childcare. |

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Principles of Public Engagement

The following principles will guide the development of our public engagement program, and the correlating strategies will ensure we follow these principles throughout the process.

| PRINCIPLE | APPROACH |
|-----------------------|---|
| Make it convenient. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Meet people where they are. ◆ Be thoughtful about how much we are asking of people at each event. ◆ Provide options so people can engage as little or as much as they want. |
| Make it intuitive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide activities with clear purpose and language to reduce confusion. ◆ Provide contextual information as necessary. ◆ Minimize the use of planning jargon. |
| Make it meaningful. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Encourage critical thinking and curiosity. ◆ Aim to spark conversation outside of the engagement space, making people think about and discuss the future of their community. ◆ Encourage and emphasize dialogue at outreach events and reduce presentation times. ◆ Follow up with the public after each engagement activity to provide results and next steps. |
| Make it accessible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide opportunities for members of the public to participate, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybrid meeting options. • Providing childcare at events when possible. • Providing food and beverages at events. • Making printed outreach material available in both English and Spanish as needed. |
| Make it fun. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Talk with people while playing games or doing something creative. ◆ Provide incentives for participation. |
| Make it approachable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Offer opportunities to participate in small groups, such as breakout groups or neighborhood meetings. ◆ Provide information and request feedback in bite-size pieces. Asking too much of people at once can be overwhelming. |
| Make it inclusive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Aim to gather feedback from a proportional number of people from each age bracket and other demographics as feasible. ◆ Invite everyone from the community to participate, regardless of how long they have lived here. ◆ Maintain flexibility for future public engagement events. The ability to pivot is vital to ensuring as many people as possible are reached in this process. |

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

PT Public Engagement Tips

Interviews with community members and meetings with the Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Trees Advisory Board, the Housing Fund Board, and the Planning Commission resulted in some tips to make Port Townsend’s engagement effort even more successful, ideas which can be incorporated into the specific public engagement program implementing this participation plan.

| TOPIC | APPROACH |
|--------------------|--|
| Audience | Interviewees and board and commission members all emphasize the need to reach as many folks as possible, seeking out those who do not already participate in community conversations. This includes the marine trades and professions, the community’s youth, people experiencing housing instability, and representation from all economic and social groups. Interviewees and commission members mentioned the Recovery Café, the Recyclery, the school district and PTA, and the Nest as likely outlets to reach audience members not usually participating in processes like these. |
| Instrument | The website and the City’s social media posts will be important resources to push information out to the community, keeping the public current on this process and its relevance. The City is also considering a lobby display at City Hall, with changing displays with new information and quick public interaction opportunities. The City will also set up appearances at community events, staffing a table or booth with materials provided by the consultant. |
| Topics | The process must make its choices relevant and intuitive, presenting the variety of topics in terms clearly understood by those participating in the process. The community’s advisory boards can help this, understanding the issues underlying the topics, internalizing them, and then speaking about them with their colleagues, family members, friends, and others. This will nest the conversation in an acceptance of change and empowerment, where conversation about today’s topics may influence the strategies the community adopts to manage and shape the community’s future. |
| Meaning | The engagement process and conversations must help the public understand how to engage at a policy level most effectively, focusing on the longer-term strategy rather than on complaints about current conditions or past decisions. This ties in to the focus on relevance and transparency, indicating how public conversations relate to the community’s planning issues and influence recommended initiatives in response. Building relationships and community trust is an important first step here, creating an environment of safety to allow participants to communicate without fear or retribution or being pushed to the margins. |
| Related Activities | The City is also updating its shoreline master program during this period, and there are other community groups (like HSN and T-lab) who are conducting outreach on topics related to this planning process. The public engagement effort must be aware of these other activities, reference or promote them as appropriate, and clarify for the public how they interrelate. |

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Project Website

Timeframe: Duration of Project

The project website will be a central location for all interested parties to access the latest information related to the Comprehensive Plan update. The website will be linked through the City's website and will allow all interested parties to:

- ♦ Review background information concerning the Comprehensive Plan update;
- ♦ Access and review the project status and timeline;
- ♦ Review draft and final documents, Comprehensive Plan deliverables, and community workshop materials;
- ♦ Provide comments and feedback via a comment portal throughout the update process;
- ♦ Attend public open houses virtually, via a link on the project website; and
- ♦ See the Planning Commission and City Council's schedules related specifically to the update process.

Roles and Responsibilities

- ♦ **City Staff (lead):** Distribute website link throughout the community.
- ♦ **SCJ Alliance (support):** Production of materials as needed, website creation and maintenance.

Social Media

Timeframe: Duration of Project

Social media will broadcast public events, surveys, and other engagement activities for the public. To run a successful social media campaign, materials must be published on time and updated regularly.

There should also be regularly scheduled postings leading up to events, and each post should include a clickable image that redirects people to the website or event link. Comments posted on social media posts should be compiled and delivered to City Staff and consultants regularly. Social media postings will correspond with the event dates listed under Public Outreach Events, Community Survey, and Planning Commission and City Council meetings listed below.

Roles and Responsibilities

- ♦ **City Staff (lead):** Publishing and production of materials.
- ♦ **SCJ Alliance (support):** Assisting the City in the production of social media content (e.g., text, images, and information).

Public Outreach Events

Timeframe: April 2024 – April 2025 (exact dates TBD)

The Comprehensive Plan update process will include several city-wide public outreach events to inform residents of the update process and collect feedback on the plan. The Planning and Community Development Department will coordinate with other City departments as necessary to plan the outreach events.

A vision workshop will be held in spring 2024 to present the Comprehensive Plan update process to the public and collect public feedback. The remaining outreach events are intended to be community workshops for collecting public feedback, and will be held through the summer and fall of 2024 and the first half of 2025 (dates TBD).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Public engagement will be coordinated with other City events and processes when possible, presenting materials pertaining to the Comprehensive Plan update and related planning efforts. SCJ will refine the public engagement and outreach events once an overall strategy is agreed upon including paring down the engagement effort, as necessary.

SCJ will prepare a detailed engagement program listing events, dates, activities, and responsibilities, updating it periodically.

Roles and Responsibilities

- ◆ **City Staff (lead):** Coordinate and help lead outreach events; publish materials on websites and social media page(s); assist with running the events.
- ◆ **SCJ Alliance (support):** Design and production of materials; publish materials on the project website, attending/leading outreach events.

Orientation Interviews

Timeframe: March - April 2024

Orientation interviews will help gather information and context for the plan update and the public engagement process.

A selection of local residents and business people will be interviewed to discuss the public participation plan and challenges and opportunities for more inclusive engagement in Port Townsend.

Community Survey

Timeframe: Spring 2024

At least one online community survey will be developed to explore community preferences and planning alternatives. The survey will be rolled out to coincide with public outreach events. The survey will be made available online, including accessibility on mobile devices, as well as printed out versions that can be filled out at public outreach events or distributed around the community for those that would prefer to fill out the paper copy. In addition, an iPad can be available at public outreach events for those that wish to take the survey at the outreach events.

This survey will collect topical information from the public on various elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The survey may also

include visual preferencing and the collection of comments and ideas on planning scenarios.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- ◆ **SCJ Alliance (lead):** Develop survey questions; digitize in Alchemer, Maptionnaire, or other online survey platform; monitor and analyze results.
- ◆ **City Staff (support):** Distribute survey via City outlets.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ROLLOUT AND ADOPTION

Planning Commission and City Council Meetings

Timeframe: December 2024 – June 2025 (exact dates TBD)

While the Planning Commission and City Council will continue to hold regular meetings throughout the update, there will be several meetings specifically associated with the adoption of Port Townsend's Comprehensive Plan update. These meetings will be advertised to the general public and will encourage members of the public to review materials, provide written comments, and/or attend and provide in-person comment on the plan updates. These meetings will include:

- ◆ **Draft Plan Presentation** (*tentatively December 2024*): City staff and consultant (SCJ Alliance) will present a draft Comprehensive Plan to the Planning Commission.
- ◆ **Final Plan Presentation** (*tentatively March 2025*): A combined Planning Commission/ City Council

workshop will be held to roll out the final draft of Port Townsend's updated Comprehensive Plan. City staff and consultant (SCJ Alliance) will provide an overview of the planning process, public feedback, and final draft of the plan. Final feedback will also be collected from the two public bodies and substantive comments will be incorporated into the final draft.

- ◆ **Planning Commission recommendation** (*tentatively May 2025*): The City of Port Townsend Planning Commission is required to review amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and provide a recommendation to the City Council for consideration and potential adoption.
- ◆ **Comprehensive Plan Adoption** (*tentatively June 2025*): City Council will hold a hearing to adopt the updated Comprehensive Plan.

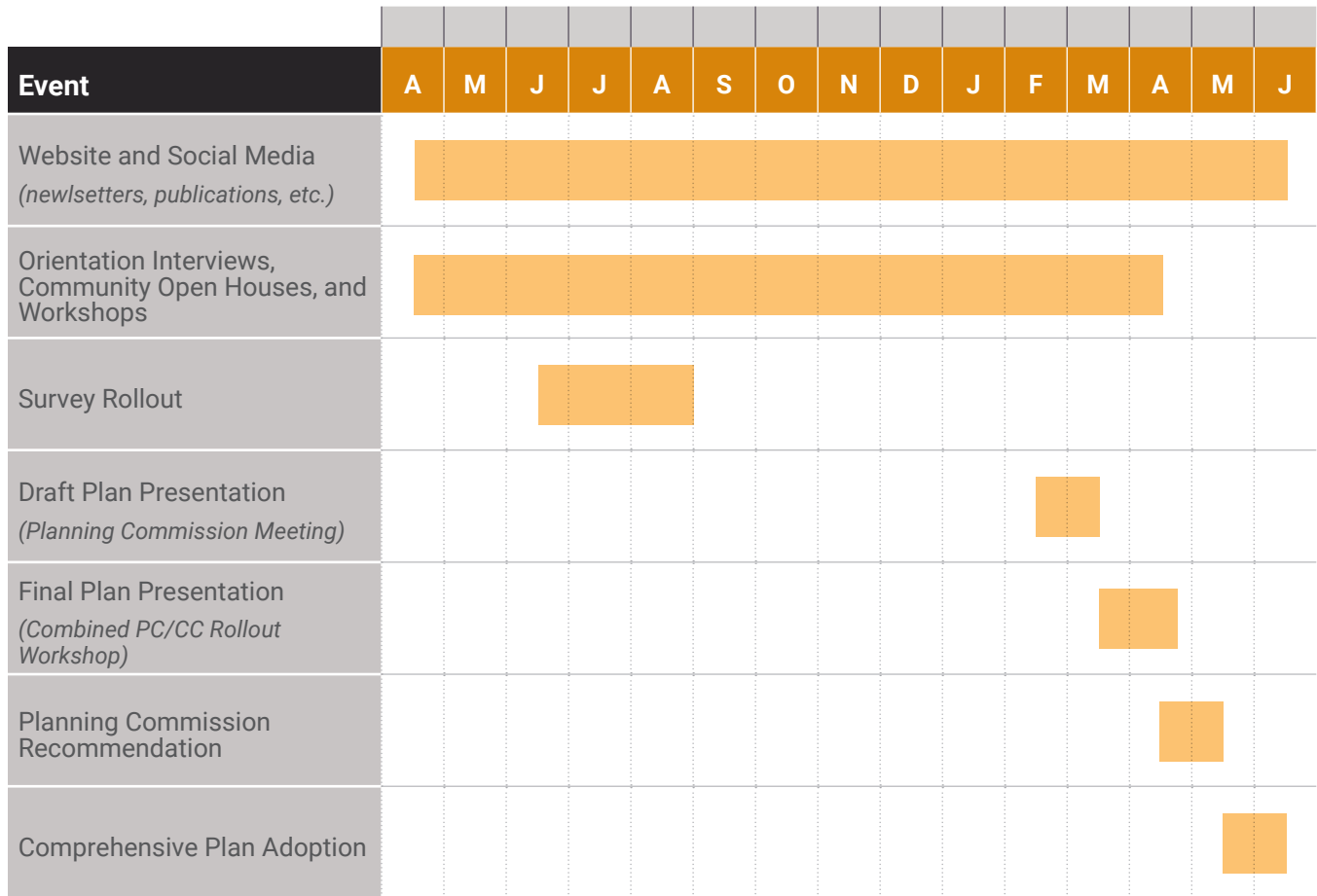
Roles and Responsibilities:

- ◆ **City Staff** (*lead*): Coordinate, schedule, and lead workshops and hearings.
- ◆ **SCJ Alliance** (*support*): Technical resource as needed; production of materials as needed..



SUMMARY

Public Participation Schedule



Conclusion

The update of Port Townsend’s Comprehensive Plan is a collaborative effort in which the City will engage the public, businesses, governmental agencies, tribes, and other interested groups. As detailed in this Public Participation Plan, the City’s website, public postings, community events, public meetings, and workshops will be used to reach out to interested parties and get them involved in the process. Throughout this effort, the City will strive to involve “a broad cross-section of the community” (WAC 365- 196-600) so the Comprehensive Plan truly reflects the community’s vision and goals.