



CITY OF EAST WENATCHEE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Public Involvement Plan



**A Plan for Public Involvement Opportunities Relating to Amendments
to the Greater East Wenatchee Area Comprehensive Plan &
Development Regulations**

Adopted by Resolution 2010-06 on June 8, 2010

■ Introduction

Periodic review and amendments to the community's comprehensive plan and development regulations is necessary to comply with current laws, reflect local needs, include new data, correct errors, and generally keep the plan and regulations up-to-date. Citizen involvement is an essential component of the review and update process.

All members of the community are affected by how land is used in East Wenatchee. Land use planning helps guide and shape our community. There are many reasons why someone may wish to become involved with land use planning issues. Whether applying for a permit to build a home or business, testifying on a project proposed in your neighborhood or the community, or helping to develop new land use policies or regulations; citizen involvement in land use planning at all levels is important.

Public involvement generally means participation by people who are not professional planners or government officials. It is the process through which the general public takes part in developing and amending local comprehensive plans and land use regulations. City staff and decision makers need comments and ideas from those who know the community best: the people who live and work here.

Public involvement is a two-way process. Citizens provide information that is needed to develop and implement the comprehensive plan and at the same time receive information about planning and land use. An informed community and informed leaders creates a better framework for planning. Involving the community in planning, gives the citizens more of a sense of ownership in the process and fosters cooperation between citizens and their government. This sharing of information ensures that issues and concerns are openly expressed, understood, considered, and incorporated into the final product wherever possible.

This *Public Involvement Plan* (PIP) describes the steps that the city of East Wenatchee will take to involve the community in decisions regarding annual review and amendments of the comprehensive plan and periodic amendments to development regulations. The goal of this PIP is to provide the public with timely information, a general understanding of the amendment process, and opportunities to review and comment on amendment proposals during the process - before decisions are made.

This PIP is intended to cover most instances where the comprehensive plan or development regulations are proposed to be amended. In some instances, the City may wish to consider establishing a separate, more targeted public involvement plan for amendment processes that are specific to a certain topic or special projects requiring a more tailored approach to public involvement. In those instances a separate document may be prepared specific to the type of action or proposal under consideration.

■ Legal Framework

- The Growth Management Act (GMA). RCW 36.70A, requires local governments to establish a public participation program for the development or amendment of its comprehensive plans and development regulations.
 - RCW 36.70A.020 establishes the overall goals of the GMA to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations. Goal 11 specifically addresses public participation and states:

Citizen participation and coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

- The RCW 36.70A.140 states:

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.

- RCW 36.70A.035 outlines the public notice provisions that should be considered and states:

...public participation requirements of this chapter shall include notice procedures that are reasonably calculated to provide notice to property owners and other affected and interested individuals, tribes, government agencies, businesses, school districts, and organizations of proposed amendments to comprehensive plans and development regulation...

Several processes are listed in that section of the GMA as examples of notice provisions including: posting property; publishing notices in newspapers, trade journals, agency newsletters; and sending notices to individuals or public or private groups with known interest in the proposal being considered.

- RCW 36.70A.106 requires notification to the Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) if a county and city is proposing adoption of, or an amendment to, a comprehensive plan or development regulation. That provision requires that a notice of intent to adopt a comprehensive plan or regulation be provided at least 60 days prior to final adoption. This provides Commerce and other state agencies with an opportunity to comment on the proposed comprehensive plan or proposed development regulations during the public review process and prior to adoption.
- Open Public Meetings Act. RCW 42.30 states that “All meetings of the governing body of a public agency shall be open and public and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting of the governing body of a public agency...” A “meeting” includes any gathering of the governing body at which action is taken. “Action” means the transaction of official business of the governing body which

includes receiving testimony, discussions, deliberations, considerations, reviews, evaluations and form actions. A governing body includes commissions, committees, councils or any other policy or rule-making body of a public agency. This definition covers planning commissions, city councils, county commissioners and advisory boards.

- East Wenatchee Municipal Code (EWMC). Title 19 EWMC provides the processing timeframes, notice requirements, and general procedures for amending the comprehensive plan and development regulations as well as the guidelines for administration of development regulations.

■ **Comprehensive Plan**

The comprehensive plan reflects the community's values and preferences for land use planning and development. The plan has two components, a text document and a map. The Comprehensive Plan text contains background information and specific goals and policies. It is organized around major planning subjects, such as land use, housing, transportation, utilities, capital facilities, economic development, and recreation which correspond to the GMA planning goals and general requirements. The comprehensive plan map shows land use categories ("designations") that identify the types of land uses allowed in different areas within the area covered by the plan.

All cities in Washington are required to have an Urban Growth Area (UGA). The size of the UGA must be sufficient to accommodate the land needed for projected residential, industrial, commercial, and recreational land uses in the community, for a 20 year planning period. The UGA generally serves to separate rural and agricultural land from land that is, or eventually will be, urban in character. The UGA boundaries are intended to protect agricultural lands by limiting where urban style development can occur. They are intended to promote efficient development patterns that are less costly to serve with public facilities and services necessary to support urban style development. Over time it is intended that cities would grow into the UGA.

GMA comprehensive plans were adopted for the City of East Wenatchee and Douglas County in 1998 and 1996 respectively. In 2001, the City and County approved an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement specific to annexations and sharing of revenue. A major component of that document was that the City and County would work jointly on planning in the Greater East Wenatchee Area and have a consistent comprehensive plan and development regulations. In 2006, the City and County jointly adopted the Greater East Wenatchee Area Comprehensive Plan. That plan was substantially amended in 2008 and 2010. Each amendment process included extensive community participation. The Greater East Wenatchee Area Comprehensive Plan (GEWA Plan) provides a blueprint for future growth and development in the East Wenatchee Urban Growth Area. Amendments to the comprehensive plan are limited to once per year. All proposed amendments must be consolidated into a single adoption process.

■ **Development Regulations and Land Use Controls**

East Wenatchee's development regulations or land use controls must comply with the GMA. The GMA also requires that land use controls be consistent with the comprehensive plan. Key regulations subject to review include zoning, land division,

development regulations, resource land and critical area regulations. Amendments to development regulations may be processed on an “as-needed basis”.

Generally, the land use controls and development regulations include:

- Zoning Code. The Zoning Code, Title 17 EWMC, is one of the major tools for implementation of the comprehensive plan. The adopted land use map in the comprehensive plan is synonymous with City’s Official Zoning Map. In general, the goal of zoning is to secure a reasonable development pattern by keeping similar and related uses together and separating dissimilar, unrelated and incompatible uses (or providing mitigating buffering strategies), particularly in relationship to transportation, utilities, and other public facilities and services.
- Subdivision Code. The City’s land division regulations are found in Title 16 EWMC. This title regulates how new lots will be created and made ready for future development such as provisions for adequate access, utilities and services (such as wastewater, electricity, solid waste, and water supply. The impact of land division regulations is also an important implementation tool because once land is divided into lots and streets are laid out, development patterns are fairly firmly established.
- Resource Lands and Critical Areas Regulations and Shoreline Master Program. The GMA directs local jurisdictions to adopt regulations to protect critical areas and resource lands. The Shoreline Management Act requires jurisdictions with qualifying water bodies to develop a shoreline master program. Title 18 EWMC includes the regulations for protection of resource lands and critical areas and adopts the shoreline master program.
- Development Standards. Development standards are the specific requirements that manage the location of uses, the improvements required for various activities, and the density and intensity of the use. Development standards are found in Titles 16, 17, and 18 EWMC as well as in Title 12 EWMC which specifically relates to street standards.

■ **Key Parties**

- Local residents, property owners, and the business community
- East Wenatchee Planning Commission
- Douglas County Planning Commission
- East Wenatchee City Council
- Douglas County Board of Commissioners
- East Wenatchee Water District Commissioners and staff
- Douglas County Sewer District Commissioners and staff
- Eastmont Metropolitan Park District Commissioners and staff
- Eastmont School District
- Douglas County Fire District
- Irrigation Districts and staff
- Port of Douglas County
- Pangborn Memorial Airport

- Special interest groups and agencies (e.g. home builders, realtors, housing specialists, chamber of commerce, and agricultural groups)
- State agencies
- Neighboring jurisdictions such as Rock Island, and Wenatchee

■ **Roles of Appointed and Elected Officials**

- East Wenatchee Planning Commission – The Planning Commission (PC) plays a major role in the public involvement process as participants, facilitators, and as part of the decision making process. The PC is a citizen committee made up of residents or business owners in the East Wenatchee area who have been appointed by the Mayor. The PC works with the Department of Community Development with regards to all matters pertaining to the comprehensive plan and development regulations. The PC does not make final decisions on proposals. They are the hearing body for development, and amendments to the comprehensive plan and development regulations. They provide advice and recommendations to the City Council regarding comprehensive plans and development regulations.
- Douglas County Planning Commission – Plays the same role as the City PC except that their recommendation is transmitted to the Douglas County Board of Commissioners. The City and County Planning Commissions often work jointly on proposals since the two jurisdictions share a comprehensive plan and similar development regulations.
- East Wenatchee City Council – The City Council is the body that makes final decisions regarding the adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations and proposed amendments. They generally take action by adopting an ordinance or resolution. In RCW 36.70A.035(2) the GMA limits the City Council with regards to changing a proposal after it has been transmitted to them by the Planning Commission. If the Council chooses to consider a change to an amendment after the Planning Commission has concluded their public hearing and formulated a recommendation, the Council must provide an opportunity for public review of the proposed change. This public review may occur at a duly advertised, public hearing held by the City Council before voting on the proposed change.
- Douglas County Board of Commissioners – The Commissioners are the decision making body for Douglas County. They have the same roles and responsibilities as those outlined above for the City Council with regards to making decisions on amendments to comprehensive plans and development regulations only over a much larger area. The Commissioners must also coordinate their efforts with the other communities in the County.

■ **Public Notification Procedures and Information Dissemination**

A variety of public notification procedures can be used to encourage involvement of citizens, other local agencies, state agencies, and other interested parties in the planning process. Efforts will be made to involve all segments of the community by providing information in multiple languages whenever possible. To ensure early and

continuous public involvement, a variety of methods to inform the public about upcoming public meetings, availability of relevant planning documents and reports will be used including:

1. Internet: Timely posting of information and opportunities to comment on proposals will be an important use of the East Wenatchee's Webpage. The City will use its established web site for an internet location where interested community members may go to view, download and print: status updates, reports, meeting notices and agendas, and other project information. The web site will also include links to the Greater East Wenatchee Area Comprehensive Plan and development regulations. The information on projects and proposals will be available under the "Current Projects" link in the "Community Development" tab from the East Wenatchee homepage at: www.east-wenatchee.com.
2. Mailing List: A list of interested persons, agencies, and organizations who have requested to receive notices of scheduled public meetings will be maintained and regularly updated. Notice will be provided either by mail or email. Sign-up sheets will be provided at all meetings and events so people provide their contact information to receive additional information or regular notices about activities they are interested in learning more about. Any party interested in being on the mailing list should contact the East Wenatchee Community Development Department, at (509) 884.5396.
3. News Releases: News releases announcing public meetings, hearings, and comment periods will be issued to local media including, but not limited to: The Wenatchee World, The Business Journal, other local or regional newsletters or publications, and local radio stations.
4. Notice of Initiation of Amendment or Adoption Process: Notices will be provided using the methods described in this PIP to initiate any proposed adoption or amendment process. The City will integrate the initial notification period for public involvement with the GMA requirements for initial submittal to Commerce as required by RCW 36.70A.106.
5. Notice of Public Hearings and Decisions: Notice of all public hearings and any decisions regarding amendments to the comprehensive plan and development regulations will be published under "Legals" in the Wenatchee World classified section.

Public notification of all hearings will be provided at least 10 days before the date of the hearing. The notice will include the date, time, location and purpose of the hearing. East Wenatchee may pay for other public notices in addition to this legal notification.

Public notification of the adoption of, and any amendments to, the comprehensive plan or development regulations shall be published in the Wenatchee World normally within 10 days of the adoption. The date of publication of the notice initiates the 60-day appeal period in accordance with the provisions of the GMA in RCW 36.70A.290(2).

To avoid duplication of effort, the City will integrate public involvement required by the State Environmental Policy Act, Chapter 43.21C RCW, into the overall public involvement process for all amendments.

6. Local Information Repositories: Copies of the public involvement plan, comprehensive plan, development regulations, staff reports, decision documents, and other project information will be made available locally for public review at the East Wenatchee Community Development Department.

■ **Additional Public Involvement Methods**

In addition to the public involvement procedures described above, East Wenatchee may utilize the following methods to increase public involvement and to disseminate information:

1. Additional Meetings/Workshops/Open Houses: In addition to public hearings, East Wenatchee may elect to hold additional meetings, workshops, or open houses if it is determined that more meetings are needed to disseminate information regarding a proposal and/or to provide additional opportunities for collecting or reviewing information, gathering public comments and providing for more public involvement.
2. Focus Sheets: Focus sheets provide information specific to a topic under consideration. The City may utilize focus sheets to facilitate the dissemination of information to the public. Focus sheets may be used to cover such topics as: comprehensive planning, development regulations, other factual information such as local trends in growth, economic development, or changes in conditions that may be of interest and assistance to the public during an amendment process.
3. Property Ownership Roles or Voters Lists: The City may utilize property ownership roles or voters list as another means to provide meeting notices.
4. Local News Media: The City will work with local news media to disseminate information related to amendment processes in addition to posting notices of public meetings.
5. Citizen Advisory Committees: The City may use citizen advisory committees to assist in the planning process when that type of public involvement will be effective. Advisory committees are most effective in working on a specific task. These committees can provide information from a group of folks with unique skills, when involvement is needed from people who are most likely to be affected by a proposal, or when a diverse group of participants representing various interests can come together to share viewpoints and provide input.
6. Neighborhood Planning Groups: The City may focus outreach efforts to specific neighborhoods in an effort to invite participation from people who live and work in locations most affected by a particular amendment proposal.
7. Surveys: The City may use a citizen survey as a kind of opinion poll. Surveys are a good tool which typically asks area residents their views on local issues including planning preferences. Surveys can be done in person or by mail, telephone or the Internet.

8. County Fairs/Community Events/Malls: A booth at a local mall, special events such as home shows or the annual county fair can be a good way to reach out to people who might not normally participate in community meetings. The City may set up a booth or information table and have knowledgeable staff or volunteers available to interact with the public to provide information and receive comments.
9. Visioning: The City will evaluate the use of Visioning processes when that process will be an effective tool during significant amendments to the comprehensive plan and development regulations. This is an effective tool for involving the public since the purpose of a visioning process is to gain public input on their desired features and character of the community. The comprehensive plan and development regulations can be developed to achieve these features.

■ **Project Files and Records**

1. Project Files. An official project file will be available for public inspection during regular business hours (Monday thru Friday 8:00 to 5:00 p.m., except holidays) at the East Wenatchee Community Development Department. The address is:

East Wenatchee City Hall
271 9th St. NE
East Wenatchee, WA 98802

2. Recordings and Minutes of Meetings. All public meetings, except for the Open Houses, Neighborhood Meetings, Visioning Processes and similar open-format meetings, will be audio recorded. Summary minutes of all public meetings involving amendments of the comprehensive plan or development regulations will be prepared and made available upon request. Summary minutes will be available on the Internet under the "Current Projects" link in the Community Development tab from the East Wenatchee homepage at: www.east-wenatchee.com.

■ **Availability Public Involvement Plan**

A copy of the City's *Public Involvement Plan* is available at East Wenatchee City Hall, 271 9th St. NE, East Wenatchee, WA 98802 in the East Wenatchee Community Development Department and is filed with the East Wenatchee City Clerk. The *Public Involvement Plan* will also be made available on the Internet under the "Planning Division" section of the "Community Development" tab under the "Important Links" section from the East Wenatchee homepage at: www.east-wenatchee.com

■ **Amendment Procedure for Public Involvement Plan**

East Wenatchee views this *Public Involvement Plan* as establishing the basic public involvement process that will be utilized during proposals to amend the comprehensive plan or development regulations. Other public involvement activities, not described in this document, may be used without necessitating an amendment to this PIP. However, the general public involvement plan described in this document will not be reduced without a formal amendment to the plan. Any amendment to this plan will only be made after an opportunity for public comment and formal action by the City Council.