



Memorandum

TO: County Council
Jack Louws, County Executive

FROM: Cliff Strong, Senior Planner

THROUGH: Mark Personius, Director

DATE: May 8, 2018

SUBJECT: 2020 Shoreline Master Program Update – Public Participation Plan

Planning and Development Services has started working with a consultant on the 2020 Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update. One of the first steps is to develop a public participation plan, outlining how we will engage the public in this process.

Attached you will find the proposed public participation plan. We would like Council to review and approve it through a motion at your evening meeting.

We will use multiple strategies and tools for engaging the public and other agencies, including the media, a project website, a new “Notify Me” subscription group, and direct notification and engagement of a number of community groups, government agencies, and the Tribes.

We will kick off the process by holding three public open houses in various locations throughout the County (Birch Bay, Deming, and Bellingham/Lake Whatcom). These open houses will be to announce the project and to seek ideas from the public for issues that may need to be addressed. The Planning Commission will be invited to attend as well. Their ideas, as well as those from PDS, Parks, and Public Works will be used to develop a scope for the project.

We will plan on taking this scope through the Planning Commission and then to Council, to be adopted by resolution. Our goal is to “set” the scope early, and address only those issues to which Council has agreed. We’re trying this approach after the experience with the Critical Areas Ordinance Update, where many people waited until after Planning Commission (and most of the work) was done to bring issues directly to Council. As you’ll recall, this, in part, led to having 22 Council workshops. Since we are having a consultant do much of the work on this project, we will not have the time or budget to repeat that experience.

After the scope is set, staff and the consultant will do all the necessary background work to develop a draft SMP update. We then plan to hold three additional public open houses in January 2020 to explain what’s included in the update, get public feedback, and revise as necessary. Once the final draft is done, the Planning Commission will hold a joint public hearing with the Department of Ecology¹.

From this will be developed the final draft SMP for Council to consider. We will plan on at least one public hearing with the Council, and will schedule Council workshops as necessary (but hope the process we’ve laid out minimizes the number needed).

¹ This is a new DOE process that allows for a joint public hearing and review process so as to reduce duplicative efforts and save time.