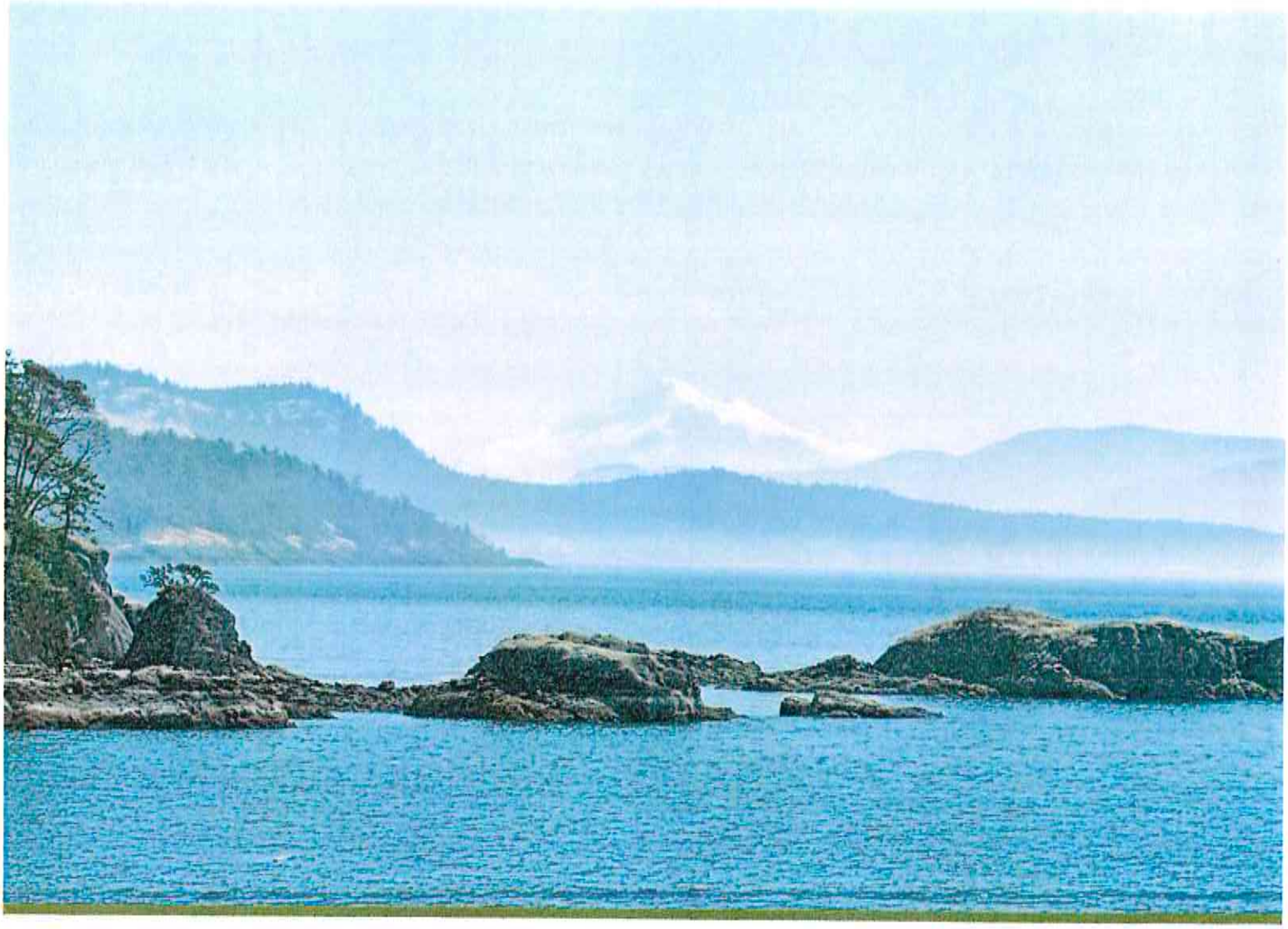

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN – June 20, 2016

Attachment D

2018 Periodic Comprehensive Plan Update

San Juan County, Washington

Developed by:

ELDRED & ASSOCIATES
*PLANNING * PERMITS * GRANTS*

1. INTRODUCTION

San Juan County (County) is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations under the Growth Management Act (GMA) of 1990. Resolution No. 10-2015 established a December 31, 2018 deadline for the update. As stated in Washington State statute RCW 36.70A.130(2)(a), the County is required to establish a Public Participation Plan (Plan) to ensure early and continuous public participation throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process.

> *"Each county and city shall establish and broadly disseminate to the public a public participation program consistent with RCW 36.70A.035 and 36.70A.140 that identifies procedures and schedules whereby updates, proposed amendments, or revisions of the comprehensive plan are considered by the governing body of the county or city no more frequently than once every year, except that, until December 31, 2015, the program shall provide for consideration of amendments of an urban growth area in accordance with RCW 36.70A.1301 once every year."*
>
> *RCW 36.70A.130(2)(a) (quoted in part)*

The Plan establishes public participation procedures, goals and objectives, and public comment methods. It provides clear guidelines so residents can easily determine how and to what extent they wish to be involved. Prior to implementation, this plan will be reviewed by the San Juan County Planning Commission and adopted by the San Juan County Council (County Council), with opportunities for public comment. The plan will then be implemented as adopted.

2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Growth Management Act

GMA is a set of laws adopted in 1990 to help manage Washington's growth through identifying and protecting natural resource lands, designating urban growth areas, and preparing local comprehensive plans to be implemented through development regulations. GMA sets required deadlines for compliance, provides direction and guidance for local governments during the comprehensive plan update process, and requires local governments to include thorough public participation throughout the update process.

Revised Code of Washington

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A is the state statute that regulates GMA in regards to planning by selected counties and cities. It requires the County to review and revise its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations periodically stating,

> *"Each comprehensive land use plan and development regulations shall be subject to continuing review and evaluation by the county or city that adopted them. Except as otherwise provided, a county or city shall take legislative action to review and, if needed, revise its comprehensive land use plan and development regulations to ensure the plan and regulations*

comply with the requirements of this chapter according to the deadlines in subsections (4) and (5) of this section."

RCW 36.70A.130(1)(a)

As stated earlier, RCW 36.70A.130(2)(a) requires thorough public involvement throughout the update process consistent with the Public Notice Provisions (RCW 36.70A.035) and Public Participation statute (RCW 36.70A.140) of GMA, which state in part:

Public Notice Provisions

The 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.

RCW 36.70A.035

Public Participation

"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. In enacting legislation in response to the board's decision pursuant to RCW 36.70A.300 declaring part or all of a comprehensive plan or development regulation invalid, the county or city shall provide for public participation that is appropriate and effective under the circumstances presented by the board's order. Errors in exact compliance with the established program and procedures shall not render the comprehensive land use plan or development regulations invalid if the spirit of the program and procedures is observed."

RCW 36.70A.140

Washington Administrative Code

According to the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 365-196-600, the County must establish public participation procedures for early and continuous public participation in the development and update of the County's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations. The WAC states:

"(a) Each county and city planning under the act must establish procedures for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive plans and development regulations. The procedures are not required to be reestablished for each set of amendments.

(b) The procedures must 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."

WAC 365-196-600(1)(a&b)

The County should also try to involve a broad base of the community to ensure that all residents have an opportunity to participate and it should not develop arbitrary requirements or qualifications that a person to meet in order to participate in the public process. Specifically, the WAC states:

"(4) Each county or city should try to involve a broad cross-section of the community, so groups not previously involved in planning become involved.
(5) Counties and cities should take a broad view of public participation. The act contains no requirements or qualifications that an individual must meet in order to participate in the public process. If an individual or organization chooses to participate, it is an interested party for purposes of public participation."

WAC 365-196-600(4&5)

The County must also provide adequate notice to the public. The County is encouraged to use multiple forms of communication in order to ensure all members and segments of the public have been addressed. The WAC suggests a number of procedural and substantive strategies to maximize effective communication with the public:

"(6) Providing adequate notice.
(a) Counties and cities are encouraged to consider a variety of opportunities to adequately communicate with the public. These methods of notification may include, but are not limited to, traditional forms of mailed notices, published announcements, electronic mail, and internet web sites to distribute informational brochures, meeting times, project timelines, and design and map proposals to provide an opportunity for the public to participate.
(b) Counties and cities must provide effective notice. In order to be effective, notice must be designed to accomplish the following:
(i) Notice must be timely, reasonably available and reasonably likely to reach interested persons. Notice of all events where public input is sought should be broadly disseminated at least one week in advance of any public hearing. Newspaper or online articles do not substitute for the requirement that jurisdictions publish the action taken. When appropriate, notices should announce the availability of relevant draft documents and how they may be obtained.
(ii) Broad dissemination means that a county or city has made the documents widely available and provided information on how to access the available documents and how to provide comments. Examples of methods of broad dissemination may include:
(A) Posting electronic copies of draft documents on the county and city official web site;
(B) Providing copies to local libraries;
(C) Providing copies as appropriate to other affected counties and cities, state and federal agencies;
(D) Providing notice to local print and online newspapers; and
(E) Maintaining a list of individuals who have expressed an interest and providing them with notice when new materials are available."

WAC 365-196-600(6)

3. PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Provide residents, property owners, business owners, community groups, and other stakeholders an opportunity to participate in the Comprehensive Plan Update process.

Objective 1.1: Outline a clear and accessible public process for the comprehensive plan and development regulations update.

Objective 1.2: Outline a clear and accessible public process for the review of urban growth areas.

Objective 1.3: Provide multiple avenues for public involvement to occur to ensure all members have an opportunity to participate. This can include public meetings, open houses, focus groups, and study sessions, among others.

Objective 1.4: Ensure public input is sought from a broad base of participants and is consistent with to the Comprehensive Plan Update timeline.

Objective 1.5: Seek public input and ideas related to the 20-year vision of San Juan County and its community members.

Objective 1.6: Make copies of the item or proposal under discussion available to the public prior to the public hearing so that participants have time to review and comment accordingly.

Objective 1.7: Encourage participation of community groups that may not normally participate in the planning process and reach out to ferry and nonferry served islands especially Waldron, Stewart, Blakely and Decatur islanders.

Objective 1.8: Remain compliant with the following state statutes as they relate to public participation:

- WAC 365-196-600 Public Participation
- RCW 36.70A.140 Comprehensive Plans – Ensure Public Participation

Goal 2: Ensure all public comments related to the Comprehensive Plan Update are reviewed and considered during the decision-making process.

Objective 2.1: Make a concerted and continuous effort to ensure that elected officials and County staff are aware of and understand all community and stakeholder concerns.

Objective 2.2: Ensure sufficient time is reserved subsequent to the close of a hearing or public meeting and prior to the finalization of a decision so that decision makers can adequately review all material and/or comments.

Objective 2.3: Substantive comments pertaining to studies, analyses, or reports, along with necessary responses, should be included in the published document itself. (e.g. SEPA process)

Objective 2.4: The record (such as public written comments, testimony, tape recordings, etc.) will be compiled and maintained by the County. The full record will be made available to decision-makers for their consideration and review prior to making a decision.

Goal 3: Provide proper and adequate public notification of all meetings, open houses, hearings, and other events or items related to the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Objective 3.1: Encourage a variety of opportunities to ensure adequate communication with the public. Methods can include:

- Newspaper Advertisements (Print and Online)
- County Comprehensive Plan Update Webpage
- Direct Mail Notice
- Email Notice
- Posters and Notice Boards

Objective 3.2: Provide effective public notification in a timeframe suitable to the comprehensive plan update timeframe.

Objective 3.3: Disseminate public notice of all events where public input is desired. Some comprehensive plan amendments require specific notice.

Objective 3.4: Ensure the public notice clearly specifies the nature of the proposal under consideration and how the public may participate.

Objective 3.5: Provide public notification in compliance with the following state statutes:

- WAC 365-196-600 Public Participation
- RCW 36.70A.035 Public Participation – Notice Provisions

Objective 3.6: Provide public notification in compliance with County Code.

Goal 4: Educate residents, property owners, business owners, and other stakeholders on comprehensive plan processes and requirements.

Objective 4.1: Explain the laws by which the County is obligated to conduct the Update process.

Objective 4.2: Inform the public about current or future plans that are related to the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 4.3: Build upon past planning work and carry forward the vision and direction of the community.

4. INTERESTED PARTICIPANTS

The Public Participation Plan is designed to reach all members of the San Juan County community and those interested in the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations update. It is intended to address the entire spectrum of San Juan County community members, including those individuals or groups that may not yet have an interest or a desire to participate.

PUBLIC

For the purposes of this plan, the general public includes residents, business owners, property owners, community groups, and all other community members wishing to participate in the Comprehensive Plan Update process.

Interested Property Owners

Interested property owners are defined as those property owners, including developers, who may have an interest in urban growth or development regulations as they relate to private property or their private property rights. Interest can either be related to preserving their property or developing their property.

Citizen/Community Organizations

Community Organizations are defined as community groups, boards, associations, or committees formed with a common cause or interest in mind. They can include environmental groups, service groups, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, neighborhood associations, homeowners associations, religious organizations, community councils, and any other organization or group formed within the community for a common interest.

Other Interested Parties

Other interested parties are defined as all other residents, community members, organizations, or parties with an interest in urban growth or development regulations in San Juan County.

GOVERNMENT/QUASI-GOVERNMENT

Government and Quasi-Government groups are those organizations formed with a connection to the government. This can include County and Town Councils, County and Town Planning Commissions, special purpose districts, area tribes, citizen advisory committees, and others. It is important to the County to maintain constant communication with these groups, as well as with the general public.

County Boards and Committees

County Boards and Committees include advisory boards, advisory committees, general committees, general boards, planning units, citizen groups, commissions, and teams with a connection to San Juan County. The County will do its best to include and solicit input from all boards and committees throughout the Update process.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is an elected or appointed group of individuals whose role is to hold public hearings in relation to land use policies and regulations, and serves as an advisory committee to the Community Development and Planning Department. The Planning Commission also makes formal

recommendations to County Council. State law recommends that the Planning Commission's role in the update and review of the County's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations be clearly defined to ensure compliance with public participation requirements. WAC 365-196-600(3)(c) states,

> *"The public participation program should clearly describe the role of the planning commission, ensuring consistency with requirements of chapter 36.70, 35.63, or 35A.63 RCW."*

The Planning Enabling Act requires all comprehensive plan amendments be approved by the Planning Commission. RCW 36.70.400 states,

> *"The approval of the comprehensive plan or of any amendment, extension or addition thereto, shall be by the affirmative vote of not less than a majority of the total members of the commission."*

To ensure regulatory compliance the Planning Commission will have a strong level of involvement throughout the Update process. They will be involved in public meetings, open houses, and any other public participation event held throughout the Update process in order to hear from the public directly.

Friday Harbor

The Town of Friday Harbor is the only incorporated jurisdiction within San Juan County. The County will engage with Town of Friday Harbor staff throughout the Update process to address and resolve any issues and to achieve coordinated and consistent planning efforts throughout the periodic review. State law requires all local planning efforts to occur in coordination with each other. RCW 36.70A.100 states,

> *"The comprehensive plan of each county or city that is adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.040 shall be coordinated with, and consistent with, the comprehensive plans adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.040 of other counties or cities with which the county or city has, in part, common borders or related regional issues."*

Public participation relating to specific town issues will be undertaken by the Town during its own periodic review.

5. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is a key element to the Comprehensive Plan Update process. This Public Participation Plan is designed to provide multiple avenues for early and continuous public involvement throughout the course of the Update. This will also ensure input is gathered from a broad spectrum of the public as required by state statute, and on various outer islands, in accord with the remote and dispersed population of this county.

Types of Outreach

Opportunities for public involvement will be provided throughout the periodic review to encourage early and continuous public participation.

Open Houses

Open Houses provide background information on the Comprehensive Plan Update process, requirements, and the issues/challenges faced. They provide an opportunity to solicit feedback from the

public and give community members an opportunity to learn about the project and ask County staff questions. Public comments are captured through written comment sheets, written surveys, comment boards, interest boards, and mapping exercises. Open Houses will be provided in each of the three County districts. Some of these meetings will be held in the summer and fall to ensure that seasonal residents have the opportunity to participate. Attendees will consist of:

- General Public
- County Staff and Committees
- Other Interested Parties
- Community Stakeholders or Groups

Public Briefings/Study Sessions

Comprehensive Plan Briefings provide background information and project status throughout the Periodic Review. They provide an opportunity for policy makers, community groups, and the general public to come together and discuss any community issues related to the Comprehensive Plan Update. Attendees will be informed about why an update is needed and what the potential effects of changing a particular comprehensive plan land use designation. Staff will note how comments will be addressed and how they may fit in to the plan update draft. Some attendance may be arranged via telephone or video conferencing among islands. Comments are typically captured through meeting minutes and written comment sheets. Attendees may consist of:

- Policy Makers
- Community Groups
- General Public
- County Staff and Committees
- Quasi-Government Group Leaders
- Other Interested Parties

Social Media

Social Media is used to provide updates on the Comprehensive Plan Update process as well as any lawfully made decisions. It can also be used to solicit feedback from the general public on any project topics or issues. The social media strategy will be coordinated and may include surveys/questionnaires, Questions of the Week, and/or comment sheets, a blog or Facebook page. It can be used by the following:

- General Public
- Community Stakeholders
- Community Groups
- Other Interested Parties
- County Staff and Committees

Group Presentations

Group Presentations provide project information focused on a specific topic/issue or on the general project. They can be given at project meetings, open houses, County Committee meetings, community organization meetings or at a meeting specifically held for the presentation itself. Comments are captured through written comment sheets and attendees may consist of:

- General Public

- Community Stakeholders
- Community Group Leaders
- County Staff and Committees
- Other Interested Parties

Public Hearings

Public hearings provide an opportunity to the general public and community stakeholders or groups to provide testimony before the County Planning Commission and the County Council. Hearings allow decision makers and the Planning Commission to hear public comment directly. Any testimony given is captured in the public record. Those involved can include:

- Policy Makers
- General Public
- Community Group Leaders
- Community Stakeholders
- County Staff
- Quasi-Government Groups
- Recommending Bodies

Notification Methods

Notification methods are used by County staff to inform the public of participating opportunities available to them. The County recognizes that one notification method may not be easily accessible to all members of the public or county residents; therefore, the County will utilize multiple notification methods to ensure early and continuous public participation throughout the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations update process. Each should direct to a location to submit official comments, and may even provide a form for those comments. The notification methods include:

- Newspaper Advertisements (print and online)
- Email Notices (must sign up on the Update Listserve)
- Press Releases
- County Comprehensive Plan Update Website Postings
- Direct Mail Notice
- Informational Posters and Notice Boards
- Blog
- Facebook page

Newspaper Advertisements

Advertisements of project events will be placed in the local print newspapers (San Juan Islander and Islands Weekly) and on on-line bulletin boards and community calendars at least one week prior to the event date. Project events include: open houses, public meetings, group presentations, or public hearings. The advertisement will provide initial information about the event and may direct the interested parties to the County website for additional information or the opportunity to comment if they are unable to attend the event.

Email Notices

The County currently holds an extensive Interested Parties Email List which contains email addresses retrieved from interested parties during previous long range planning projects. The County will send out an email notice to all members on the interested parties email list with information on public

participation events and opportunities for public comment. The County will also send out an email notice to community groups and key organizations with similar information and request distribution to their membership. Email notices will be sent out prior to the event date. If you are a member of the general public and you wish to be on the interested parties email list or if you are a community group and you wish to be on the Update Listserve please see the instructions on Attachment A.

Press Releases

The County will issue press releases as appropriate to inform the public about GMA and Update issues, local Update planning activities, availability of documents, and/or meeting and hearing dates and Update topics. Press releases will be distributed to printed newspapers specific to San Juan County, such as the Journal of the San Juans and the Islands" Sounder. Online newspapers, such as the San Juan Islander and the Island Guardian, and local online event calendars, such as the Island Update, Lopez Rocks, and Orcas Issues, will be included.

County Website

The County will post on their website information related to the Periodic Review process, background information, and public events (including event date, time, place, and topic). The County will also provide information on other opportunities for public comment or public participation. Postings will occur prior to the public participation event or opportunity and can be found here: http://www.co.san-juan.wa.us/cdp/default.aspx?dept=CDP&listname=CompUpdates.

Electronic comments and questions will be directed to a single address/location to be included as part of the record. Broad responses to attributable questions and comments may be posted on the County Comprehensive Plan Periodic review website.

Direct Mail Notice

The County may send out direct mail notices to residents with information on the Update and other sources for information on public participation and public comment opportunities. A direct mailing early in the process may serve to reach the greatest number of stakeholders. Notification of the Update process, how to find out more about it, and how to participate may go out with County mailings that go to all registered voters and to absentee landowners, such as election and assessment mailings.

Posters and Notice Boards

The County will develop and place informational posters and/or notice boards discussing the Update project and public participation opportunities in public areas throughout the County. Public areas may include: public libraries, local government offices, community centers, and bulletin boards.

Response to Public Comments

The Planning Commission and County Council will consider relevant public comments and testimony throughout the recommendation and decision-making process. Methods for public involvement and comment have been highlighted above. To ensure public comment is reviewed thoroughly the following steps shall be taken:

- Broad responses to attributable questions and comments may be posted on the County Comprehensive Plan Periodic review website.
- Time will be reserved to adequately review all relevant material and comments prior to the end of a hearing or a final recommendation or decision.

- All public comments and/or records will be compiled and maintained by County staff as part of the official record and made available for review and consideration prior to a final recommendation or decision.

6. UPDATES

This Public Participation Plan may be revised after a public hearing of the County Council. Meeting dates may be changed and activities not anticipated in this plan may occur or be added without a revision of this plan.

7. CONCLUSION

This Public Participation Plan was developed at the start of the Comprehensive Plan Update process. It is a living document that will be updated as conditions change or new participation methods are developed. It is intended to meet the requirements of the GMA, the RCW, and the WAC, including providing for early and continuous public participation throughout the Periodic Review process. It is the County's intention to involve a broad cross-section of the community, including those not previously involved in local planning efforts.

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