

City of West Richland Shoreline Master Program Update

Public Participation Plan



REVISED MARCH 10, 2020



I. Introduction

The City of West Richland (City) is reviewing and updating its Shoreline Master Program (SMP) to be consistent with the state Shoreline Management Act (SMA) and related SMP Guidelines (RCW 90.58 and WAC 173-26, respectively). The City's Shoreline Master Program was last adopted (following amendments) on March 1, 2016. The SMA requires any jurisdiction that contains "shorelines of the state" within its boundaries to review and revise its SMP if needed, on an eight-year schedule established by the Legislature. The schedule directs Benton County and all of its Cities to complete periodic reviews by June 30, 2021.

The SMA and SMP guidelines require local governments to encourage active and early participation in the SMP review and update by all persons, private groups, public agencies, and tribes that have an interest or responsibility related to shorelines of the state. The City has developed this Public Participation Plan to meet State requirements for public involvement in the update process, and to address the priorities and issues specific to the City.

II. Public Participation Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of this Public Participation Plan is to build support for timely adoption of a quality SMP amendment. The Public Participation Plan will support the overall objectives of SMA by achieving specific desired outcomes, which include:

- A public involvement process that provides timely information to the public on the purpose of the SMP update and how the update process works;
- Public meetings designed to provide opportunities for all interested parties to be heard, and for people to listen and learn from one another;
- Broad participation of all interested groups and individuals regardless of point of view;
- Consideration of recommendations from neighboring jurisdictions, federal and state agencies, and Native American tribes;
- A transparent process which clearly documents all public input and makes it available for any and all to review; and
- Consideration of all participant viewpoints, even if views are not reflected in the outcomes.

III. Public Participation Plan Themes

The following project themes will guide the overall outreach program and be promoted through communication materials and opportunities facilitated by City staff, Planning Commission, City Council members, and AHBL.

- **Required by State Laws and Rules:** The SMA requires the SMP update. It is subject to the SMA and Ecology Administrative Rules (SMP Guidelines WAC 173-26). The City must undertake this effort or the State will do so in its stead.
- **State and Local Partnership:** The SMP is a partnership between local governments and Ecology. The City develops the SMP, but both the local government and Ecology must approve it. The City received state grant funding to do this work and it must adhere to the requirements of the grant agreement.
- **Promoting the Local Vision:** State law and rules dictate what shoreline elements are required, provide direction for local policies and regulations, and the minimum standards for most areas. However, there are varying degrees of latitude in several elements that allows particular attention to be paid to the vision the City has for its shorelines.
- **The Benefits of the SMP:** The SMP emphasizes not only the protection of shoreline functions, but also the development of public access and water-oriented uses. As such, the SMP must promote both human needs and environmental conservation. By requiring no net loss of current function and promoting restoration through non-regulatory means, the SMP will ensure future generations can also benefit from shoreline resources.
- **Balanced Plan, Honest Broker:** The goal of the SMP Update is to create a balanced plan for shoreline utilization and protection. City staff and AHBL will inform the community what is required under the SMA and SMP Guidelines, identify those areas where the community has greater latitude for promoting the local vision, clarify erroneous information, and create collaborative solutions that respond to community needs, and balance the interests of stakeholders.
- **Convenient Access and Participation by All:** Easy, convenient, and equal access to information for all interested parties is essential to the process. City staff and AHBL will ensure that information, both background and substantive regulatory proposals, is easy to obtain, timely, pertinent, and available in both electronic and paper formats.
- **Transparent Decision Making Process:** Public input on the Draft SMP will be documented and considered. The rationale behind decisions will be communicated. Decision-making will be open, transparent, and public.

IV. Guiding Principles

The following is a list of guiding principles that will direct the public participation process for updating the SMP:

1. Communicate the purpose, scope, and objectives of the SMP throughout the duration of the update process (i.e.: schedule, decision milestones, progress, and involvement opportunities).
2. Conduct public involvement consistent with the goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan, the SMA, and the principles of transparent and open government.

3. Seek out and use input from local stakeholders about opportunities and problems, rather than solely relying on the opinions of technical experts.
4. Define and effectively communicate the roles and interests of all participants.
5. Keep all written communication clear, concise, objective, and free of technical jargon.
6. Use the City's website, mailings and newsletters, and other media to provide and distribute general information to the public.
7. Communicate and distribute information/feedback regularly to participants, and at intervals to interested/affected parties. Follow-up would occur by:
 - Informing affected/ interested parties of outcomes;
 - Continuously evaluating the process to identify successes and shortcomings, and communicate results to participants; and
 - Evaluating the public participation process for effectiveness with community relationships and on perceptions of effectiveness of the process.
8. Use community resources and energies effectively and efficiently, and consider the relative cost-effectiveness of alternative techniques to achieve objectives.

V. Stakeholders

The Public Participation Plan establishes a process designed to reach all audiences that may have an interest in the update process as well as other groups and individuals, including those who may not yet have an interest or feel compelled to participate. It is important to engage an array of stakeholders in order to encourage awareness, understanding, and involvement in the process. The City has identified the following broad groups of stakeholders that are important to contact and engage:

- **General public:**
 - City residents
 - Local businesses and employees
 - Park users
 - Local boaters and recreationists
 - Other citizens of the State
- **Property owners:**
 - Residential property owners
 - Businesses
 - Farmers
 - Governmental agencies
- **Business organizations, environmental groups, and other non-governmental organizations:**
 - Home Builders Association of Tri-Cities
 - West Richland Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Futurewise
- **Tribes that own property and/or have rights to usual and accustomed places and natural resources:**
 - Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
 - Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- **Government Agencies:**
 - Yakima Basin Clean Water Partnership
 - US Bureau of Reclamation

- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- United States Forest Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service
- Neighboring jurisdictions (e.g., City of Richland and Benton County, especially their shoreline planners)
- **Utilities and Transportation:**
 - City of West Richland Public Works Department
 - Columbia Irrigation District
 - Kennewick Irrigation District
 - Benton Rural Electric Association
 - Bonneville Power Administration
 - Cascade Natural Gas
 - Port of Kennewick
- **Media:**
 - Tri-City Herald Newspaper (Kennewick)
 - KFAE 89.1 FM, KONA 610 AM, and KFLD 870 AM
 - KVEW ABC (Kennewick), KNDO NBC (Yakima), and KEPR CBS (Pasco)

Outreach activities are designed to keep these groups informed and updated on key meetings, decision-making milestones, and overall project progress. The public involvement process is designed to prevent last minute surprises and to avoid the inaccurate perception that specific groups have been discouraged from participating or have not been adequately informed. City staff will contact all of the groups listed above, but will engage certain stakeholder groups to greater or lesser degrees based on their demonstrated level of interest and involvement.

VI. Public Participation Opportunities

A. Communication Program

The City will communicate with the public continuously throughout the process to ensure that the broader population is informed and has meaningful opportunities to participate. Some key elements of this program include:

Website: The City will use their website, www.westrichland.org, to allow for interested citizens to access draft documents and maps, view the project schedule, check for meeting notices and materials, see submitted public comments, obtain contact information, and submit comments.

Direct Mailings and Public Notices: At the beginning of the project, postcards will be sent to all residents owning property within or near shoreline jurisdiction, providing notice of the project's launch and giving instructions on how to sign up for the mailing list that will be

used through the update. Notices of workshops, public hearings, and milestones will be placed on the project website, local jurisdiction websites, and published in the local newspaper (Tri-City Herald). A mailing list (email addresses) of interested parties will be maintained and updated to keep the public informed throughout the SMP update process. Email notices will be sent to all parties on the mailing list. State agencies and affected governments will be notified of key milestones in writing via US Mail.

Comment Forms: Comment forms will be made available at public facilities, such as City Hall and the West Richland library, as well as on the City's website. All comments will be recorded, and responses will be made available to the public.

Media Releases: Media releases will be issued at key points during the process, e.g. when Draft SMP documents are available for review, to keep the public informed of events and progress.

Meetings with Interest Groups: To the extent feasible, the City will make staff available to meet with interest groups to discuss the project.

A log of public involvement activities will be created and updated by AHBL with input from the City as communications occur over the course of the SMP update process.

B. Formal Public Meetings: Planning Commission and City Council

The City Planning Commission will hold an Open House to provide initial public education and solicit input on high-priority issues and concerns regarding the SMP Update. The Open House will be held prior to development of draft SMP policies and it will offer specific education on the following topics:

- SMA/SMP Updated Requirements and the degree of local control
- Property rights and guidance from the Washington State Attorney General
- Shoreline ecology and human impacts

The City will invite representatives from city agencies; regional organizations; state agencies, including Ecology and the Attorney General's Office; Federal agencies; and Tribal staff who will provide technical and scientific advice on shoreline management issues. The City may also consider collaborating with local institutions (public libraries, churches, and community clubs) and regional organizations to distribute educational materials to local constituents.

If necessary, one additional public open house could occur to receive input on the Draft SMP. These meetings will be scheduled and located to provide all residents an opportunity to provide their input.

The Planning Commission will also hold a public hearing to discuss the complete draft of the SMP and make a recommendation to the City Council. City staff, as well as Consultant staff, as needed, will attend, and all comments from the public will be documented.

The City Council will hold a joint public hearing with Ecology using the optional joint review process authorized under WAC 173-26-104.

VII. Roles and Responsibilities

This section identifies key parties involved in the public participation process, and their roles and responsibilities. It also identifies how public input will be used and the decision making process that will be followed during the SMP Update preparation and adoption process.

A. City Staff

City staff will manage the SMP Update process, and review draft policies, and regulations developed by the AHBL team. The work of City staff also includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Project management;
- Documenting and keeping records;
- Fulfilling SMP process requirements;
- Coordinating with Ecology;
- Directing the work of consultants; and
- Apprising the Planning Commission, City Council, and interested parties of project progress and key policy and regulatory decisions.

The primary staff contact for the City is:

Eric Mendenhall, Planning Manager
City of West Richland
3100 Belmont Blvd.
West Richland, WA 99353
emendenhall@westrichland.org
(509) 967-5902

B. Consultant

AHBL will develop the SMP according to the Ecology Guidelines and direction provided by City staff. Under the oversight of City staff, AHBL will design and execute the public participation plan, including facilitating, as necessary, with City staff, and open houses. AHBL will assist with communication materials, develop presentations, and lead the open house with the help of City staff. In addition, AHBL will develop all of the major documents comprising the SMP Update deliverables, including preparing a SEPA checklist.

C. Planning Commission

The Planning Commission will review proposed SMP policies and regulations and provide feedback. Staff and AHBL will consider this input, and AHBL will revise the SMP as necessary to address identified concerns, where appropriate. As established in state law and local enabling legislation,

the Planning Commission will review the draft SMP, take and consider public input, and make formal recommendations to the City Council. Recommendations are not binding.

D. City Council

As established in state law, the City Council will review the draft SMP, solicit public input, make changes as desired, consider the recommendation of the Planning Commission, and locally adopt the final SMP. The City Council is the legislative body with the final local decision making authority for the local adoption of the SMP.

E. Department of Ecology and the State of Washington

State law establishes a cooperative program of shoreline management between local government and the state. Ecology provides financial assistance, guidance to local governments in preparing the SMP, and provides written comments on draft SMP components. The local government approves its program after a public review and comment period. The local government then sends the SMP to Ecology, which reviews it for consistency with the Guidelines. Ecology must approve the locally approved and submitted master program before it can take effect. To ensure respect for private property rights, local and state legal authorities are required to review a shoreline program before formal adoption.

VIII. Project Timeline (Approximate)

All future dates in the following timeline are tentative and subject to change.

May 7, 2020	Open House #1, Hosted by the Planning Commission (Note: This may be combined with other topics for discussion with the public)
May 15, 2020	Complete Draft SMP Text/Map Amendments
May 21, 2020	Planning Commission Briefing (<i>Optional/If Needed</i>)
May 22, 2020	Transmittal of SMP Amendments to Departments of Commerce and Ecology with 60-day Notice of Intent to Adopt
May 22, 2020	Issue SEPA Threshold Determination
June 11, 2020	Planning Commission Public Hearing*
June 19, 2020	Complete Final SMP Text/Map Amendments
July 7, 2020	City Council Briefing (<i>Optional/If Needed</i>)
July 10, 2020	Issue 30-day Joint Public Notice
July 14, 2020	Submit Application for Initial Determination from Ecology
August 18, 2020	Joint City Council / Ecology Public Hearing*

September 11, 2020

Submit Application for Final Determination from Ecology

October 2, 2020

Final Ecology Approval and SMP Adoption

* Requires Noticing