

CHAPTER TWELVE: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

BACKGROUND

Successful communities are those that are able to face their challenges collectively, harnessing the energy of all different elements of the community. Successful public involvement strategies are essential to define the community's future vision and move toward it. Without the successful participation of citizens in community decision processes, it is all too easy to descend into political gridlock when struggling with difficult problems.

For this reason the Growth Management Act requires that: *"Each county and city planning under the Act shall establish procedures for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans."*

Olympia has long recognized the value of effective public involvement. Public process has been a crucial element in City projects for many years. The City has had an active program of fostering neighborhood associations for over a decade. There are dozens of citizen advisory bodies to help the Council address community issues. In 1992, Olympia won a Merit Award from the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association and the Planning Association of Washington for its Neighborhood Recognition Ordinance. Among other provisions, this ordinance provides for early and continuous involvement of neighborhood associations in City land use decision processes.

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL PI1: To establish and maintain City decision processes that include the informed, active participation of all those affected.

POLICIES:

PI 1.1 Encourage and support the creation of neighborhood organizations and other groups throughout the Olympia Urban Growth Area, in order to help citizens effectively

participate in City decision processes.

PI 1.2 Provide information about the structure of city government and decision processes to organizations and the general public, to enable effective participation.

PI 1.3 Use City publications, bulk mail, direct mail, the broadcast and print media, and other opportunities to inform affected parties about:

- a. Current or proposed City programs or decisions that may affect them; and
- b. Opportunities for them to participate in City decision processes.

PI 1.4 Focus debate on policy issues as they affect people's lives, both individually and community-wide, creating opportunities to discuss these issues without polarization.

PI 1.5 Develop public participation plans for major projects or decision processes. In addition to hearings and other formal opportunities for oral and written public comment, use various outreach techniques such as opinion surveys, speakers programs, forums, workshops, open houses, hands-on events, and task forces.

PI 1.6 Amend the Comprehensive Plan annually to incorporate the updated Capital Facilities Element. Act upon other proposed changes to the Plan concurrently at that time.

- a. Proposed amendments to the Plan which affect the unincorporated growth area will be subject to separate

hearings by the Olympia and Thurston County planning commissions.

- b. The Board of Thurston County Commissioners will act upon requests to amend portions of this plan which pertain to the unincorporated growth area concurrently with all other requests to modify the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan.
- c. The City of Olympia will coordinate its hearings and action on such requests with the County's schedule.

PI 1.7 Appoint at least one member of the Olympia Planning Commission who is a resident of the unincorporated Olympia Growth Area.

PI 1.8 Encourage neighborhoods to work with the City to develop Comprehensive Plan monitoring and implementation programs and capital improvement plans for neighborhoods.

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