Envision Skagit 2060
Ground Rules for Citizen Committee

Adapted from the Envision Skagit Steering Committee (2010), Skagit Wetlands and Industrial Negotiations (WIN) 1995
and the Skagit Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) 2007 ground rules

The Envision Skagit 2060 Citizen Committee brings together diverse community perspectives to develop and recommend a balanced, forward looking, "preferred future" for Skagit County through 2060. The Committee will develop its recommendations for a "preferred future" drawing on broad community input and information gained from the modeling and evaluation of four alternative future scenarios modeled. Many committee members represent one or more communities and/or interests. Discussion topics may or may not require a formal decision. When decisions are needed the committee will strive for consensus* (see definition and discussion below) or, when consensus cannot be reached, will use an alternative decision-making process as noted below.

The committee commits to following the ground rules below. Words in the "Definitions" section are marked with an asterisk the first time they are used.

Ground Rules

1. **Respect Own and Others' Interests*, Needs*, Values*, and Emotions**
   The Envision Skagit 2060 Citizen Committee reflects a diverse range of interests. Members commit to bring all relevant issues to the table and to actively seek to understand and respect the diverse interests, needs, values and emotions underlying their own and each others' positions.*

2. **Listen Carefully, Suspend Assumptions, Ask Questions, Speak to Educate, and Be Self-Aware**
   Members commit to listen carefully to each other, to suspend assumptions about each others' interests, needs, values and emotions, to ask questions for clarification, to make statements that attempt to educate or explain, and to be self-aware and self-questioning about one's own biases and suspicions.

3. **Be Open and Honest**
   Members agree to maintain open and honest communication with each other. The purpose of frank and candid discussion is to bring issues out in the open, provide greater understanding of members' perspectives, share insights, reduce hostilities, and build trust.

4. **Be Creative and Take Risks**
   Members commit to search for opportunities, options, and alternatives. The creativity of the group often finds the best solution. Creativity also requires taking risks. Thus members are willing to be creative and to risk proposing new or unusual ideas individually and as a group.

5. **Agree to Disagree**
   Members agree to respect each other's right to disagree in order to foster open discussion of ideas. While members agree not to seek to make others uncomfortable for its own sake, members also agree not to shy away from discomfort where necessary to discuss or resolve conflicts.

6. **Use a Consensus Building Process When Needed**
   The Committee will strive for consensus when a formal decision is needed. When the committee agrees it is necessary to formally document a decision, a tally will be taken with each Citizen

Committee member having one vote. If consensus is not achieved initially, the committee may chose to continue seeking consensus. If the committee finds that it cannot reach consensus, another formal tally will be taken. The outcome of the tally will be recorded. Majority and minority opinions will be noted in meeting documentation and specific points or issues where consensus could not be reached will be included. Of those members present at a meeting, **nine votes** are necessary to move a decision or recommendation forward. A committee member must be present to vote. Citizen Committee members have a responsibility to be briefed if they miss a previous meeting, and there will not be repeat discussions for a member who was previously absent. There will be an effort made to bank major decisions/recommendations for a meeting where most members are able to be present.

7. **Follow Good Meeting Protocols**
   In the interest of communicating well, members agree to:

   a. Set and follow meeting agendas in a timely manner.

   b. Make one's best effort to attend all meetings. The County has the option to replace a member due to lack of or poor attendance.

   c. Come prepared to each meeting.

   d. Speak up and participate, be aware of how much one is speaking relative to others, and do not interrupt others. The meeting coordinator or facilitator should ensure everyone gets a chance to speak.

   e. Avoid distractive behavior (e.g., separate conversations, cell phone use).

   In addition:

   f. Meetings will be coordinated by the project manager and facilitated by a professional facilitator.

   g. Summary meeting minutes will be prepared for each meeting. These draft minutes will be circulated to all committee members to review and revise before releasing them beyond the committee. Audio- and video-recordings of meetings may occur only with the agreement of the committee. Once approved, meeting notes will be posted to the project website.

8. **Invite Public Input and Participation**
   Public input to the citizen committee process will always be welcome through the website. The committee will agree when to invite public participation in meetings. Background information and meeting minutes will be posted on the website. Interested parties may request to be cc'd on other committee meeting materials that are sent to members via email.

9. **Communicate with the Media as a Group**
   Please do not speak to the media as a representative of the committee without the consent of the committee. Press releases may be issued from time to time based on decisions of the committee.

10. **Have a Sense of Humor!**
    Humor is welcome and appreciated.

*Definitions

(Adapted from The Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement [Susskind et al 1999], and "Managing Conflict: A Guide for Watershed Partnerships" Know Your Watershed < http://www.ctic.purdue.edu/kyw/brochures/manageconflict.html>)

Consensus – Consensus building is a process of seeking unanimous support. Support may range from enthusiastic to a willingness not to oppose the rest of the group. It involves a good-faith effort to meet the interests of all stakeholders. However, there are sometimes people who believe their interests are better served by remaining outside the emerging agreement for reasonable and compelling reasons. It is crucial that what counts as "success" is clearly defined at the beginning of any consensus building process.

Interests – Interests are the abstract and intangible causes, concerns, motivations, needs, and values underlying positions, often with emotional associations. ("Why" something is being demanded.) Interests are what each participant in a group process ultimately seeks to achieve. Interests can change in light of new information or a deeper understanding of a problem. Interests often reflect deeply held beliefs. Focusing on interests, rather than positions, makes it possible to come up with better agreements. Even when people stand on opposite positions, they usually have a few shared interests. It takes time and effort to identify interests. Groups may not even be clear about their own interests. It helps to write down each group's interests as they are discovered. It helps to ask why others take the positions or make the decisions they do.

Needs – Needs are things that are essential to our well-being. Conflicts arise when we ignore others' needs, our own needs or the group's needs. Be careful not to confuse needs with desires (things we would like, but are not essential).

Positions – Positions are concrete, stated decisions or demands. ("What" is being demanded.)

Values – Values are principles that we consider to be very important and that are tied in some way to our larger belief system. Serious conflicts arise when people hold incompatible values or when values are not clear. Conflicts also arise when one party refuses to accept the fact that the other party holds something as a value rather than as a mere preference.

Interests vs. Positions

source: http://web.mit.edu/negotiation/www/NBivsp.html

There was once only one orange left in a kitchen and two prominent chefs were fighting over it.

"I need that orange!"

"Yes, but I need that orange as well!"

Time was running out and they both needed an orange to finish their particular recipes for the President's dinner. They decided on a compromise: they grabbed one of the large kitchen knives that was lying around, split the orange in half, and each went to his corner to finish preparing his meal.

One chef squeezed the juice from the orange and poured it into the special sauce he was making. It wasn't quite enough, but it would have to do. The other grated the peel and stirred the scrapings into the batter for his famous cake. He too didn't have as much as he would have liked, but given the situation, what else could he have done?

The better solution may seem obvious to you now: both chefs would have been better off if they had peeled the orange and had simply taken the part they needed.

Instead, the chefs had focused on each other's position (the what) and not on each other's interest (the why).

In a negotiation, it is important to be able to distinguish between positions and interests - both yours and the parties' with whom you are negotiating. Depending on which one you decide to focus on will affect your negotiation style and influence the outcomes.

For example, you may insist on a higher salary to cover the costs of daycare for your child, but you never explain to your potential employer the reason why. The potential employer is unwilling to give your a greater salary because he is afraid of inequity among your future colleagues. With an understanding of why you want a greater salary, the potential employer could inform you that they are in the process of developing free daycare in the company building.

Useful Tip: It is always good to ask yourself why you want what you want. This will help you get a better understanding of what your real goals are and could open up better deals for you.