

INTRODUCTION

Skagit County (County) and the Towns of Hamilton and Lyman (Towns) are partnering to complete a Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update in accordance with the Shoreline Management Act and Shoreline Master Program Guidelines. The County began working to comprehensively update its SMP in 2010 with assistance from a Shoreline Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission. The goal is to develop an SMP that reflects existing and future planned uses of the County's shorelines, protects shoreline ecosystems, and provides public enjoyment and recreational opportunities. The draft SMP has undergone extensive review and development over the past decade, with a Planning Commission recommended draft in 2016. However, this draft was not adopted by the Board of County Commissioners nor the Town Councils. The County and Towns have committed to complete this update by June 2021, including compliance with the State's periodic review process. The periodic review ensures the SMP stays current with changes in laws and rules, remains consistent with other County plans and regulations, and is responsive to changed circumstances, new information and improved data.

The SMP's jurisdiction (also referred to as shoreline jurisdiction) includes marine waters, lakes at least 20 acres in size, and streams with a flow greater than 20 cubic feet per second (cfs), together with shorelands within 200 feet of the ordinary high water mark, associated wetlands, floodways, and contiguous 100-year floodplain extending up to 200 feet inland of the floodway (RCW 90.58.030).

The purpose of this Public Participation Plan is to describe how the County will encourage early and continuous public input throughout the SMP review process, including the steps that the County will take to provide opportunities for public engagement and public comment, as well as contact information and web addresses.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OBJECTIVES & THEMES

Objectives and Themes

The following objectives and project themes will guide the overall Public Participation Plan implementation and be promoted through communication materials and outreach opportunities.

- **Encourage public involvement:** Public involvement is a state requirement and key component of the SMP update (WAC 173-26-090 and 100). Public involvement will be important throughout the SMP update. Ultimately, the Board of County Commissioners will decide the final SMP outcome on behalf of their citizens but will desire the assurance that the SMP update has been developed with community input.
- **Meet State laws and rules:** The SMP is required by the Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58) and is subject to Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) SMP Guidelines. The SMP is a partnership between local governments and Ecology. While the County takes the lead in developing the SMP, the SMP must be approved by both the County and Ecology.
- **Inform the community:** The County will communicate the SMP update purpose, process, and progress throughout the project. Easy and convenient access to project information is essential to the process. County staff, elected and appointed officials, and consultants will ensure that information is easy to obtain, useful, timely, and pertinent.

- **Invite the community to participate in a variety of ways:** The County will provide a variety of public participation activities and venues and will provide appropriate notices of meetings, comment periods, and other activities. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, public participation activities and venues that allow for remote participation will be used.
- **Engage stakeholders:** The County will seek and engage stakeholders to ensure that all interested or responsible parties are involved in the update.
- **Link input to SMP products:** The County, Towns, and consultants will collect and review public comments and identify how the public input is addressed in SMP products.
- **Create a balanced plan:** The goal of the SMP is to create a balanced plan for shoreline utilization and protection (WAC 173-26-176(2)).

Past Public Participation Activities

The following public events were held since 2010 to facilitate discussion on the SMP update:

2011	Visioning workshops in Concrete, Lyman, Mount Vernon, Anacortes
2012	Informal comment period on first working draft
2013	Working draft for Ecology's preliminary review released Open houses in Concrete, Lyman, Mount Vernon, Anacortes
2014	Planning Commission workshops
2015	Revised draft elements for Planning Commission final review
2016	Revised draft released; public comment period started Planning Commission public hearing Planning Commission issues recommendation on draft (through a recorded motion) to Board of County Commissioners

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

The County and Towns are committed to providing multiple opportunities for public participation throughout the process and will use a variety of communication tools to inform the public and encourage participation, including the following:

Website

The County will continue to feature information about the update on its SMP webpage. This webpage can be found at: <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningAndPermit/SMPmain.htm>. The webpage is the primary repository of all information related to the SMP update, including draft documents, notices, a Frequently Asked Questions section, and other project information. The page will provide staff contact information, as well as an email link for questions and comments. Links will be made between County and Towns' websites.

News Media

The key print media sources in Skagit County include the Skagit Valley Herald, Anacortes American, The Argus, Courier-Times, and the La Conner Weekly News. Radio outlets include stations KAPS, KBRC, KLKI, and KSVR (bilingual). Local television Station 21 may be used for public service announcements as needed. Other internet sources and social media

will also be considered for notification, if deemed appropriate.

Noticing

The public will be notified of the process and meetings via a combination of website, email, and newspaper announcements. Legal notice of all public hearings and decisions related to the SMP review and update will be published in the Skagit Valley Herald under the “Legal Notices” classified section. Notification of all hearings will be provided at least 15 days before the hearing date. The notice will include the date, time, location, and purpose of the hearing. Skagit County and the individual Towns may publish notices in addition to this legal notification. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, notices will also contain information for joining and participating in remote meetings and hearings as necessary.

Online Open House

The County anticipates developing an online open house platform to help inform the public about the SMP review process. The open house would include information regarding key amendments, the project timeline, and future opportunities for public comment and engagement.

Feedback on these topics will be collected through the online open house until early 2021. The public comments received will be compiled and posted on the County’s project website.

Public Comment Periods and Hearings

The County Planning Commission and the Town Councils will be the primary forum for detailed review of the SMP. The County Planning Commission will make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. The County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to solicit input on the SMP update. Prior to the hearing, the County Planning Commission will hold at least one meeting to discuss the SMP update since their last recommended draft. All Planning Commission, Board of County Commissioner, and Town Council meetings are open to the public.

The Town Councils will each also hold at least one hearing to take public comments before final adoption. The Board of County Commissioners may hold a hearing before final adoption.

Public notice of all hearings will state who is holding the comment period and/or hearing, the date and time, and the location. Notices will be published per official policy and comply with all other legal requirements, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. A notice will be sent to the County and Town email lists.

Ongoing Comment

All documents under consideration will be available on the County’s SMP webpage. Due to COVID-19, hardcopies will not be available at the County’s Planning and Development Services office. Interested parties are encouraged to provide comments by letter or email (to the address provided below). All comments will be compiled and provided to the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

Primary Point of Contact

Betsy Stevenson, AICP, Senior Planner, Natural Resources Team Supervisor
Skagit County Planning and Development Services
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 416-1320
SMPPDS@co.skagit.wa.us

AUDIENCES

The Public Participation Plan is designed to reach all audiences that may have an interest in and/or be impacted by the SMP update process. It is designed to reach other groups and individuals—those that may not yet have an interest or be compelled to participate—to encourage their awareness, understanding, and participation in the process. Audiences include the following general categories with more specifics listed in the table below:

- General public
- Interested property owners, developers and recreation interests
- Agricultural, drainage, dike, and irrigation interests
- Shellfish growers and aquaculture interests
- Forestry interests
- Community organizations
- Industry representatives
- Environmental groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Partner Towns
- Water and sewer district representatives
- Shoreline Advisory Committee members
- Governmental/Quasi-governmental groups
- Media

General Public, Property Owners, and Businesses	Agricultural Interests, Recreation, Environmental Groups, NGOs, Education	Tribes and Governmental Agencies	Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoreline property owners • Email list serves of persons interested in county planning • BOCC and Planning Commission email list serves • Chambers of Commerce • Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co. • Construction companies • Homeowners associations and neighborhood groups • Boating and other recreational user groups • Association of Realtors • Bureau of Indian Affairs • Seattle City Light • Puget Sound Energy • Bonneville Power Admin. • Shellfish growers • Aquaculture operators • Lake Cavanaugh Improvement Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skagit County Ag Advisory Board • Washington Growers Clearing House Association • Diking, Drainage and Irrigation Districts • Skagit Drainage and Irrigation District Consortium • Farm Bureau • Skagitians to Preserve Farmland • Western WA Agricultural Association • Skagit County Forest Advisory Board • Forterra • Center for Environmental Law and Policy • Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office • Audubon Society • The Nature Conservancy • The Trust for Public Land • Washington Council Trout Unlimited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of County Commissioners • Planning and Development Services Department (Planning Commission) • Parks and Recreation Department • Port Districts • Public Utility District • Health Department • Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group • Skagit Watershed Council • NW Power Association • State and federal elected officials • Public Works Department • Power & Conservation Council • U.S. Agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Army Corps of Engineers ○ Bureau of Land Management ○ Bureau of Reclamation ○ Fish and Wildlife Service ○ Forest Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anacortes American, Anacortes • Skagit Valley Herald, Mt. Vernon • KAPS 660, Mt. Vernon • KBRC 1430, Mt. Vernon • KSVR 90.1, Mt. Vernon SVC • Mt. Vernon TV 10 and TV 26 • Skagit 21 • KLKI 1340 • Courier Times • Anacortes American • The Argus • La Conner Weekly News • Concrete Herald

General Public, Property Owners, and Businesses	Agricultural Interests, Recreation, Environmental Groups, NGOs, Education	Tribes and Governmental Agencies	Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timber companies/ Forest landowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washington Rivers Conservancy • Watershed Planning Units • Skagit River System Cooperative • Evergreen Islands • Futurewise • Skagit Marine Resources Committee • Friends of Skagit County • Skagit Land Trust • Ducks Unlimited • Guemes Island Planning Advisory Committee • Fidalgo Fly Fishermen • Wildcat Steelhead Club • Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Park Service • Washington State Agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commerce ○ Ecology ○ Fish and Wildlife ○ Health ○ Natural Resources ○ Transportation ○ Parks and Recreation • Puget Sound Partnership • Skagit Valley College • Samish Indian Nation • Upper Skagit Indian Tribe • Swinomish Indian Tribal Community • Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe • Nooksack Indian Tribe • Towns of Hamilton, Lyman and Concrete • Cities of Anacortes, Mount Vernon, Burlington, Sedro-Woolley, La Conner • Skagit Council of Governments • Skagit Conservation District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MyGuemes.org

TIMELINE

The following is a general timeline including anticipated public participation opportunities.

