

Public Participation Plan for Amending the County Comprehensive Plan

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Prepared by the

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Introduction and Background

In 1999, the Wisconsin Legislature enacted a new comprehensive planning law, set forth in Section 66.1001 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. On April 15, 2008, the Washington County Board of Supervisors adopted the *Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Washington County: 2035*. The comprehensive plan was prepared in accordance with a public participation plan adopted by the County Board on September 14, 2004 that indicated the steps to be followed to foster public participation in the preparation of the comprehensive plan. Under Section 66.1001(4)(a) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*, future amendments to the comprehensive plan must also be carried out in accordance with an adopted public participation plan, designed to promote public participation in the amendment process.

Wisconsin Statutes, Section 66.1001(4)...

PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTING COMPREHENSIVE PLANS. A local governmental unit shall comply with all of the following before its comprehensive plan may take effect:

(a) The governing body of a local governmental unit shall adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan. The written procedures shall provide for a wide distribution of proposed, alternative, or amended elements of a comprehensive plan and shall provide an opportunity for written comments on the plan to be submitted by members of the public to the governing body and for the governing body to respond to such written comments.

The written procedures shall describe the methods the governing body of a local governmental unit will use to distribute proposed, alternative, or amended elements of a comprehensive plan to owners of property, or to persons who have a leasehold interest in property pursuant to which the persons may extract nonmetallic mineral resources in or on property, in which the allowable use or intensity of use of the property is changed by the comprehensive plan.

(b) The plan commission or other body of a local governmental unit that is authorized to prepare or amend a comprehensive plan may recommend the adoption or amendment of a comprehensive plan only by adopting a resolution by a majority vote of the entire commission. The vote shall be recorded in the official minutes of the plan commission or other body. The resolution shall refer to maps and other descriptive materials that relate to one or more elements of a comprehensive plan. One copy of an adopted comprehensive plan, or of an amendment to such a plan, shall be sent to all of the following:

- 1. Every governmental body that is located in whole or in part within the boundaries of the local governmental unit.*
- 2. The clerk of every local governmental unit that is adjacent to the local governmental unit that is the subject of the plan that is adopted or amended as described in par. (b) (intro.).*
- 3. The Wisconsin land council.*
- 4. After September 1, 2005, the department of administration.*
- 5. The regional planning commission in which the local governmental unit is located.*
- 6. The public library that serves the area in which the local governmental unit is located.*

(c) No comprehensive plan that is recommended for adoption or amendment under par. (b) may take effect until the political subdivision enacts an ordinance or the regional planning commission adopts a resolution that adopts the plan or amendment. The political subdivision may not enact an ordinance or the regional planning commission may not adopt a resolution under this paragraph unless the comprehensive plan contains all of the elements specified in sub. (2). An ordinance may be enacted or a resolution may be adopted under this paragraph only by a majority vote of the members-elect, as defined in s. 59.001 (2m), of the governing

body. An ordinance that is enacted or a resolution that is adopted under this paragraph, and the plan to which it relates, shall be filed with at least all of the entities specified under par. (b).

(d) No political subdivision may enact an ordinance or no regional planning commission may adopt a resolution under par.(c) unless the political subdivision or regional planning commission holds at least one public hearing at which the proposed ordinance or resolution is discussed. That hearing must be preceded by a class 1 notice under ch. 985 that is published at least 30 days before the hearing is held. The political subdivision or regional planning commission may also provide notice of the hearing by any other means it considers appropriate. The class 1 notice shall contain at least the following information:

- 1. The date, time and place of the hearing.*
- 2. A summary, which may include a map, of the proposed comprehensive plan or amendment to such a plan.*
- 3. The name of an individual employed by the local governmental unit who may provide additional information regarding the proposed ordinance.*
- 4. Information relating to where and when the proposed comprehensive plan or amendment to such a plan may be inspected before the hearing, and how a copy of the plan or amendment may be obtained.*

(e) At least 30 days before the hearing described in par. (d) is held, a local governmental unit shall provide written notice to all of the following:

- 1. An operator who has obtained, or made application for, a permit that is described under s. 295.12 (3) (d).*
- 2. A person who has registered a marketable nonmetallic mineral deposit under s. 295.20.*
- 3. Any other property owner or leaseholder who has an interest in property pursuant to which the person may extract nonmetallic mineral resources, if the property owner or leaseholder requests in writing that the local governmental unit provide the property owner or leaseholder notice of the hearing described in par. (d).*

Need for Citizen Participation

Citizens participating in government decision-making are fundamental to our system of governance. While it is true that our government officials are elected to represent citizens, it is also true that elected officials need to interact with the public on an ongoing basis if their representation is to be meaningful. Regular and continuing involvement in government decision-making is the very basis for the idea of citizenship.

Citizens and interest groups are the source of tremendous creativity, and their creativity and comments will help produce better planning decisions. Because the decisions represented by Washington County's Comprehensive Plan and future amendments will help influence what Washington County will look like for many years to come, public participation is critical.

Public Participation Methods for Future Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan

The County will provide opportunities for the public review of materials describing all proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan, including the following:

- Printed copies of materials describing proposed plan amendments will be made available at the following locations:
 - Washington County Planning and Parks Department
333 E. Washington St.

Suite 2300, P.O.Box 2003
West Bend, WI 53095-2003
262-335-4445

- Public Libraries throughout Washington County
- Printed or electronic copies of materials describing proposed amendments will be provided to all units and agencies of government listed in Section 66.1001(4)(b).
- Electronic copies of materials describing proposed amendments may be posted on the Washington County Website: www.co.washington.wi.us/smartgrowth

The Planning, Conservation and Parks Committee will hold a public hearing on all proposed plan amendments to the comprehensive plan. The hearing will include a presentation describing the proposed plan amendments and provide an opportunity for the public to comment orally or to submit written comments on the proposed amendments. The Planning, Conservation and Parks Committee will take the public testimony into account in their deliberations and actions on the proposed plan amendments.

The public hearing will be preceded by a Class 1 notice that is published at least 30 days before the hearing is held. In accordance with Section 66.1001(4)(d), the notice will include the date, time, and place of the hearing; a brief summary of the proposed comprehensive plan amendments; a contact who may be contacted for additional information on the proposed plan amendments; and information regarding where and when the proposed plan amendments may be inspected before the hearing and how a copy of the proposed plan amendments may be obtained.

Provisions for Open Discussion

Washington County will ensure that public meetings allow for an open discussion of the relevant issues at hand and to ensure that public hearings allow for appropriate testimony. When public meetings or hearings are conducted, Washington County will make every effort to ensure those who choose to participate in the planning process have the opportunity to have their opinions heard. To accomplish this, the following actions will be implemented:

- An agenda will be established that clearly defines the purpose of each public meeting or hearing, the items to be discussed, and any actions that may be taken. Agendas will be officially posted and sent to the local media.
- The scheduled date, time, and place will be convenient to encourage maximum participation by Washington County residents.
- A clearly identifiable facilitator or chair will conduct the meeting or hearing in an orderly fashion to ensure that all attendees have an opportunity to offer comments, discuss issues or provide testimony.

- The facilitator or chair will provide opening remarks that clearly outline the purpose of the meeting or hearing, describe procedures attendees should use during the meeting or hearing when offering comment and describe how the public comment will be used.
- As appropriate, an overview of amendment documents or proposals to be considered will be discussed.
- All persons attending the meeting or hearing who desire to participate should be allowed to do so. However, specific factors, such as the meeting or hearing purpose, number in attendance, time considerations, or future opportunities to participate, may require that appropriate constraints be applied. These constraints will be clearly outlined by the facilitator or chair if the need arises.
- All attendees will be encouraged to sign in using a provided sign in sheet.
- Meetings and hearings will be tape recorded and/or videotaped by the County as necessary.
- Summaries or minutes of meetings or hearings will be prepared and made available as soon as possible following the meeting or hearing through mailings or via the County's website: www.co.washington.wi.us
- Special arrangements will be made under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with sufficient advance notice.

Opportunity for Written Comments

Detailed comments can sometimes be better expressed through written format. To encourage the citizens of Washington County to express written comment throughout the amendment process, the following steps will be taken:

- All meeting and hearing notices will include the name, address and email address (if applicable) of a person(s) to whom written comments should be sent, along with any deadlines for submitting comments.
- At public meetings or hearings, the facilitator or chair will clearly announce any deadline for submitting written comments, if such comments are allowed subsequent to the meeting or hearing.
- Persons speaking or testifying will be encouraged to concisely express their comments and/or provide specific details in written format.
- The Washington County Comprehensive Planning Website will also provide residents with the opportunity to e-mail comments to: webplan@co.washington.wi.us

Consideration of and Response to Public Comments

The various methods for involving the public and soliciting public opinions and comments during the Comprehensive Plan amendment process are defined herein. These methods represent the initial steps for bringing public comment into the decision-making process:

- Time will be reserved subsequent to the close of a meeting, hearing or comment deadline and prior to the actual decision or recommendation being made to ensure that decision-makers can adequately review all relevant materials or comments.
- Decision-makers may reconvene a meeting for the purpose of addressing public comments.
- The record (written comments or testimony, tape recordings, or transcripts) of hearings and meetings will be compiled by County or local municipal staff and made available to decision makers for their review and consideration prior to a recommendation or decision being made.
- Substantive comments, along with appropriate responses, will be included in an accompanying report, as needed.