



SAN JUAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

MEMO DATE: January 7, 2022
TO: San Juan County Planning Commission
CC: David Williams, DCD Director
FROM: Sophia Cassam, Planner II *SC*
SUBJECT: San Juan County Comprehensive Plan (*Plan*) Update
Planning Commission Town Hall Events
BRIEFING DATE: January 21, 2022
ATTACHMENTS: A. Calendar of Events: October through January
B. Town Hall Volunteer Sign Up Sheet

PURPOSE

To provide the Planning Commission with information on the upcoming public participation strategies for the Comprehensive Plan (*Plan*) update. To set dates for the Planning Commission town hall events. To prepare the Planning Commission for the February 18 meeting where they will:

1. Assemble a list of questions or discussion prompts for the public during the town halls, and
2. Volunteer for town hall roles.

Note: this staff memo is based on the August 6, 2021 memo written by former DCD Planner III, Adam Zack, with updated information and dates. The August 6 memo can be found here: <https://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/View/23773/>

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PHASES

The public participation process prior to the Planning Commission public hearing on the draft Comprehensive Plan is divided into three phases with specific objectives for each. Table 1 shows each phase, its objective and a brief description of the public outreach involved with that phase.

Table 1. Public Participation Phases, Objectives, and Descriptions

Phase	Phase Objective	Topic Focus	Description
<p>Phase One</p> <p>Pop Ups and Open Houses</p> <p>COMPLETED OCTOBER 2021</p>	<p>Education</p>	<p>Overall Plan Update</p>	<p>Phase one was staff led. The pop ups and open houses were in-person events where staff went out into the community to walk the public through the possible changes during the <i>Plan</i> update. These events gave the public an opportunity to find out more about what might change during the <i>Plan</i> update and where to find more information. This step helped to ensure the public can make informed comments during the later phases of public involvement.</p>
<p>Phase Two</p> <p>Five Public Town Halls</p>	<p>Public Input</p>	<p>Climate Change, Housing, and Official Maps</p>	<p>Phase Two will be Planning Commission led. This phase provides opportunities for the public to weigh in on the preliminary draft of <i>Plan</i> amendments during virtual town halls. There will be a total of five town halls. Virtual town halls on climate change and housing each will be held. Then, three virtual town halls will focus on proposed changes to the Official Maps on San Juan, Orcas, Lopez, and Shaw islands each. Lopez and Shaw will be combined because they have fewer proposed map changes.</p>
<p>Phase Three</p> <p>Planning Commission Work Sessions</p>	<p>Synthesize Input Into Drafts</p>	<p>Overall Plan Update</p>	<p>The Planning Commission will synthesize responses to public comments from public meetings into the pre-hearing draft of the <i>Plan</i> update. The public will be able to provide additional input during the public access time. The Planning Commission will get to a public hearing draft of the <i>Plan</i> update by the end of the public work sessions.</p>

POP UPS AND OPEN HOUSES

Pop ups and open houses were held on San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez Islands in October 2021. The consultant hired to design and assist in the implementation of these events created a 170-page report that summarizes the public participation and findings. The report also includes a tool that comprehensively organizes the *Plan’s* goals and policies in a matrix and provides suggestions for refining them. This tool will be used later in the *Plan* update process to organize, reduce redundancy, and improve implementation. The complete report is available to view here: <https://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/View/24918/>

TOWN HALLS

The town halls will be public meetings led by the Planning Commission. The town halls will be held in March and April, 2022. These meetings will be the Planning Commission’s opportunity to directly engage in conversations with the community about *Plan* update topics before finalizing their public hearing drafts

of the *Plan* update. There will be five town halls in total. There will be two virtual town halls on climate change and housing goals and policies in the *Plan*. Then, there will be three virtual town halls on the *Plan* Official Maps; one each for San Juan, Orcas, and Lopez/Shaw Islands.

WORK SESSIONS

The work sessions will follow the town halls. These work sessions will take place during the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings. They will be the Planning Commission's opportunity to synthesize the feedback received in the previous phases of public participation into the draft of changes to the *Plan* and finalize the public hearing draft of amendments to the *Plan*. These meetings will be open to the public, who will be able to comment during public access time.

SCHEDULE

The proposed dates for the town halls and work sessions are shown on the calendar in Attachment A. At the January 21 meeting, the Planning Commission will finalize the schedule.

EXPECTED PLANNING COMMISSION INVOLVEMENT

PHASE TWO – PUBLIC TOWN HALLS

CLIMATE CHANGE TOWN HALL

The climate change town hall will be about two hours long and focus on the proposed climate change related goals and policies throughout the *Plan*. This town hall will be a special meeting of the Planning Commission and will be held virtually. The town hall is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, March 2 at 5:30 pm.

HOUSING TOWN HALL

The housing town hall will be about two hours long and focus on the proposed housing related goals and policies throughout the *Plan*. This town hall will be a special meeting of the Planning Commission and will be held virtually. The town hall is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, March 9 at 5:30 pm.

OFFICIAL MAP TOWN HALLS

The Planning Commission will hold three virtual town halls on the preliminary draft of Official Map amendments in March and April. Each Official Map town hall will be about two hours long and focus on the Official Map changes on each ferry-served island. The Official Map town halls are tentatively scheduled as follows:

San Juan – March 23, 2022 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM.

Orcas – March 30, 2022 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM.

Lopez and Shaw – April 6, 2022 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM.

TOWN HALL FORMAT

The format of the Comprehensive Plan town halls is the Planning Commission's to design. These are the Commission's opportunity to engage with the public directly in advance of reaching a public hearing draft of changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Because this is the Planning Commission's process, they can design their portion of the town halls however they would like.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission prepare a list of questions and discussion topics for the public to respond to during each town hall. This list of questions can be used to structure the Planning Commission facilitated portion of the town hall. The facilitator can ask the public to respond to each question or topic. If five questions or topics are provided, about 20 minutes of public discussion can take place for each. Providing a list of questions or topics will also help ensure that the Planning Commission gets public feedback on the specific topics they are looking for.

Staff recommends the following format for the Town Halls:

5:30 to 5:40 PM – Welcome and Introductions

5:40 to 6:00 PM – Staff Presentation

6:00 to 7:30 PM – Planning Commission Facilitated Public Feedback on Discussion Questions and Topics

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

Staff recommends the Planning Commission assemble a list of discussion topics and questions to provide the public with a prompt for comments and to structure the Planning Commission facilitated portion of the town halls. These discussion topics and questions should be structured to address the points the Planning Commission wants specific feedback on.

The town halls will focus on three topics. Table 2 provides the staff recommended high level question and topic prompts for each town hall. These prompts should act as a starting point for the Planning Commission to develop their own list of specific questions and discussion topics.

Table 2. Staff Recommended Questions and Discussion Prompts.

Town Hall Topic	Question and Discussion Prompts
Climate Change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land Use climate change goal and policy alternatives. 2. Are there any missing <i>Plan</i> climate change goals and policies?
Housing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing goal and policy alternatives. 2. Are there any missing <i>Plan</i> housing goals and policies?
Official Maps and Land Use Designations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List of land use designation review requests the Planning Commission would like specific feedback on. Note: there will be a town hall on San Juan, Lopez, and Orcas islands, each. The Planning Commission can ask island-specific questions at each island’s town hall. 2. Input on designation and density change alternatives in Eastsound UGA.

Climate Change and Housing

The Planning Commission requested the climate change town hall to get specific feedback on the proposed climate change goals and policies. Housing is another high priority concern the Planning Commission has expressed wanting more public feedback on as well. The questions listed above are very general questions. The discussion questions and prompts should be made more specific to address the particular questions the Planning Commission has during the town hall. If the discussion questions and prompts are more specific, they will elicit more actionable input from the public.

Staff recommends expanding the list of questions and prompts to between four and seven. More questions than seven will cut down on the amount of discussion of each possible during the allotted time. Fewer prompts than four will likely keep the discussion too general and not elicit the specific feedback the Planning Commission is looking for.

Official Maps

The Planning Commission can call out specific proposed land use changes they would like comments on during each island-specific town hall. The staff presentation at the outset of the town hall can highlight the proposed amendments on the island and set the stage for gathering comments. In general, these land use review requests are the principal issues surrounding the Official Maps. If the Planning Commission has other issues they would like to get public input on related to the Official Maps, they can propose additional questions or discussion prompts.

On Orcas, there are some proposed density increases in the Eastsound UGA that the Planning Commission has not made a preliminary recommendation regarding. At the Orcas Official Map Town Hall, the Planning Commission can get input from the public regarding the proposed density increases in the UGA.

PLANNING COMMISSION TOWN HALL ROLES

Volunteers from the Planning Commission will facilitate the discussion at each town hall, take notes on the discussion, and keep track of follow-up questions they have for staff based on the discussion. Planning Commission volunteers from each town hall will provide a summary of the discussion to the Planning Commission at the work sessions following the town halls. Staff will be present to provide an introductory presentation, give clarification as needed, and help track follow up questions.

Staff suggests the following Planning Commission volunteer roles at each Official Map town hall. A sign-up sheet is provided in Attachment B. The volunteer roles are:

- **Facilitator** – runs the Planning Commission facilitated portion of the meeting;
- **Scribe** – keeps track of comments received and follow-up questions; and
- **Reporter** – summarizes the feedback received during the town halls at the work sessions following the town halls for those members that might miss an island-specific town hall.

PHASE THREE – PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSIONS

The Planning Commission will have the opportunity to respond to the public comments gathered during the town halls at work sessions. The work sessions will take place during regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings. During the work sessions the Commission will refine the public hearing draft of *Plan* amendments. The proposed schedule for the Planning Commission work sessions is:

April 15, 2022 8:30 AM – Planning Commission members will discuss the input they gathered at each town hall during their regularly scheduled April meeting. The volunteer reporter for each town hall will provide a summary of the feedback received for the members that did not make it to that town hall. Then, the Planning Commission will work on the following over the course of the work sessions:

- A list of follow-up questions for staff;
- A ‘parking lot’ of issues raised at the town halls that should be addressed but do not pertain to the matter at hand; and
- The public hearing draft of possible amendments.

May 13, 2022 8:30 AM – Staff will brief the Planning Commission on the answers to their follow-up questions. Then they will continue to work toward the public hearing draft of possible amendments. Finally, they can add or remove items from the Planning Commission parking lot.

The public will be able to attend the work sessions and provide comments to the Planning Commission during defined public access time.

PLANNING COMMISSION 'PARKING LOT'

The Planning Commission 'Parking Lot' will be a running list of issues that come up that the commission agrees are important topics for further discussion but do not relate to the specific *Plan* amendments considered during the town halls. The idea is to hold onto these topics so the Planning Commission can return to them as they work on their hearing draft. For example, if the public is concerned about the allowed uses in the Island Center land use designation, these regulations are not necessarily a part of the Official Maps, but the public concern could be added to the parking lot until they work on the Island Center land use policies and/or regulations. This should help the Planning Commission keep track of other issues the public is concerned about but do not necessarily relate to the matter at hand.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

January 21: be prepared to agree on dates for the five town hall events. The calendar in Attachment A is a schedule proposed by staff.

February 18: come prepared to volunteer for town hall roles and assemble a list of questions and discussion prompts for the public during the town halls.

February 2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
				Regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting: -Prepare for Town Halls -VR permit cap findings and conclusions hearing		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

ATTACHMENT A

March 2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1	2 Climate Change Town Hall (Virtual)	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Housing Town Hall (Virtual)	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 Regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting	19	20
21	22	23 San Juan Official Map Town Hall (Virtual)	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 Orcas Official Map Town Hall (Virtual)	31			

April 2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
				1	2	3
4	5	6 Lopez and Shaw Official Map Town Hall (Virtual)	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Planning Commission Work Session	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 Planning Commission Work Session	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Town Hall	Role	Name
Climate Change March 2 5:30 to 7:30 pm	Facilitator	
	Scribe	
	Reporter	
Housing March 9 5:30 to 7:30 pm	Facilitator	
	Scribe	
	Reporter	
Official Maps: San Juan March 23 5:30 to 7:30 pm	Facilitator	
	Scribe	
	Reporter	
Official Maps: Orcas March 30 5:30 to 7:30 pm	Facilitator	
	Scribe	
	Reporter	
Official Maps: Lopez and Shaw April 6 5:30 to 7:30 pm	Facilitator	
	Scribe	
	Reporter	