

# Vashon-Maury Island Community Service Area Plan Public Involvement Summary

## Overview

In partnership with other King County departments, the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) facilitates King County's unincorporated Community Service Area (CSA) Planning Program. A key objective of the program is broad-scale, timely, and consistent public engagement throughout the development of all CSA Plans. Section 36.70A.130 of the Revised Code of Washington mandates this type of public involvement in the creation of subarea plans. King County's Strategic Plan, Equity and Social Justice Plan, and Comprehensive Plan also contain policies that call for robust levels of public involvement in the formation of documents like these CSA Plans.

## Outreach

### Community Advisory Group

The outreach process for the Vashon-Maury Island CSA Plan began in March 2016 with the public solicitation of volunteers from the island to serve on the Community Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG invitation was distributed through an announcement in the *Vashon-Maury Island Beachcomber* newspaper, Washington State Ferry vessel postings, local social media and e-mail trees, and through flyers that were posted at the Vashon Library and Vashon's two main grocery stores. Flyers were posted in both English and Spanish. A two-page application was required to be submitted and more than 40 island residents responded. Fifteen CAG members were selected by a team of King County staff based upon several factors, including completeness of the application form, length of island residency (aiming for a mix of short, medium and long-term), achieving a diverse representation of expertise and knowledge in different community topics, interest in long-term consequences of policy decisions, and one's ability to regularly attend meetings over the course of a year-long process.

The CAG's first meeting was held on March 10, 2016. The full group of 15 members met monthly through August and then on three subsequent occasions, the last meeting being January 20, 2017. The CAG was divided into three different working groups that met in separate meetings from the full CAG and which were facilitated by King County staff. All CAG meetings were open to the public. Due to the nature of their topics, the Land Use, Housing and Community Health working group had the highest level of public attendance, averaging more than 30 attendees during their last four meetings.

### Digital Outreach & Engagement

In April 2016, a web page dedicated to the Vashon-Maury Island CSA Plan was created on DPER's web site and utilized throughout the planning process to host a number of plan documents and related links of interest. The page included an opt-in subscription to an *e-Update* newsletter for the plan. By October 2016, more than 120 island residents had subscribed. The page also served as the access to a separate online portal that was created by the digital engagement company, *Peak Democracy*, who assisted King County with creating and monitoring two different online early versions of the draft plan. The draft policy and action list, which was active from mid-January to mid-February, 2017, generated approximately 250 views and 30 individual comments. The second document that was posted for online comment was the full draft plan and it resulted in 154 visitors and 21 comments. Six *e-Update* newsletters were prepared and distributed to the e-list between May 2016 and February 2017.

### Community Forums

A series of four community-wide forums were convened between March 2016 and April 2017 with the goal of hearing directly from citizens on a variety of topics. A kick-off meeting was held in March 2016 to identify opportunities and challenges. This event included a live electronic poll where the 40+ participants voted on a series of questions related to perceived community needs and priorities. This was followed by an October 2016 forum where 10 small group discussions facilitated by King County staff were held to discuss island-wide land use and climate change policies. The February 2017 forum on affordable housing in the Town of Vashon was attended by approximately 120 people and included oral comments from 21 individuals and written comments from many others. The last community event was held in April 2017 and was an open house format where five different “stations” staffed by King County employees provided maps, proposed policies and other materials on the CSA Plan’s key topics. More than 300 islanders participated in these four events, all of which were held during evening hours at McMurray Middle School on Vashon Island.

### Vashon-Maury Island Strawberry Festival

King County hosted a booth during this July weekend where festival-goers viewed plan materials and gave staff their ideas about Vashon’s future. An informal, 5-question survey was taken by approximately 85 people. A summary of the survey results are attached to the CSA Plan.

### Media Partnerships

The *Vashon-Maury Island Beachcomber* newspaper provided regular and in-depth coverage throughout the 15-month plan process and published numerous letters to the editor from citizens representing diverse points of view, especially related to affordable housing and groundwater supply. The newspaper editorial board also wrote and published an opinion piece about the plan in April 2017. The *Voice of Vashon* radio also hosted two, one-hour shows in September 2016 and March 2017 during which staff, CAG members, and citizens discussed various aspects of the plan. The two radio shows were recorded and are on the *Voice of Vashon* web site.

### Other Public Involvement Items

- Between April 2016 and February 2017, DPER staff held regular on-island office days where members of the public were able to drop-by or make appointments to discuss the plan and offer opinions in a one-on-one setting.
- A master list of all written public comments submitted via e-mail or on handwritten comment forms provided at the community forums and Strawberry Festival was created and compiled at four different junctures throughout the planning period. This list was distributed to e-list subscribers and posted on the Vashon CSA Plan web page. As of April 2017, more than 200 comments were submitted, the vast majority of which were concerned with the proposed affordable housing Special District Overlay for Vashon Rural Town. During just the final draft plan public comment period (April 17 – May 3, 2017), 107 comments were received in opposition or with significant concerns and eight comments in support of the overlay. The other topic that generated substantial written comments was the proposal to retain marijuana retailing as an allowed use in the Community Business zone of Vashon Rural Town. During the same April to May public comment period, 9 people opposed, 20 in support, and 2 neutral comments were received.
- An online petition organized/sponsored by Islander Jenny Bell was received during this process. Approximately 170 residents signed the petition which advocated for environmentally-appropriate, permanent, not-for-profit affordable housing.