(509)427-5970

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TO: City Council FROM: Ben Shumaker

DATE: December 12th, 2022

SUBJECT: Annexation Policy – Conscientious Public Involvement

Introduction

In the summer of 2022, the City Council established a strategic plan for actions over the coming years. The action plan prioritizes adopting an annexation policy. In October 2022, the Planning Commission agreed to take on this priority as part of their annual work plan. In November 2022, the Planning Commission discussed the main issues to address with annexation and called for close collaboration with Skamania County before moving forward.

This memo asks the Planning Commission to more fully develop its conscientious public involvement expectations according to the Planning Commission Bylaws. The Planning Commission Bylaws Separate public involvement into 7 components: 1) Call to Act, 2) Define the Issue, 3) Inform, Educate, and Reach-Out to Public, 4) Engage Stakeholders, 5) Refine, 6) Check-In, 7) Decide.

Recommendation

Staff recommends 1) conscientiously establishing public involvement expectations for this proposal with the intent to have decide on a policy in June 2023 and 2) appointing one of its membership as a subcommittee chair to guide the policy's development, review, and refinement.

Key Concerns

The Planning Commission identified these concerns at its November 2022 meeting.

- Partnering with County
- Growing orderly
- Extending services logically/economically
- Reducing upfront expenses (and perceptions of upfront expenses
- Coordinating with Capital Improvement Plan
- Prioritizing areas

- Providing zoning certainty
- Coping with difficulties of natural (geo hazards) and built (land use patterns, private roads) environment
- Providing reliable water and absorbing water rights

In 1978, 1991, and 2006 City Councils and Planning Commissions also addressed this topic, however no proposal was ever accepted and adopted (Attachment 1).

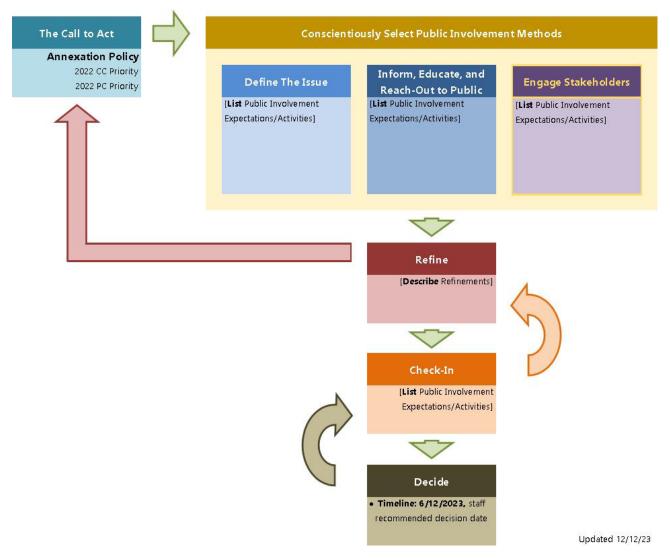
Conscientious Public Involvement

To ensure any proposed changes incorporate public input and occur within a manageable timeline, the Planning Commission's bylaws include expectations for public involvement. These expectations ask the Planning Commission to conscientiously choose, implement, and communicate public involvement techniques from a menu of options (Attachment 2).

Decision Point #1: What methods of Public Involvement are appropriate for the review of this proposed change?

Decision Point #2: Who is responsible for undertaking the Public Involvement methods selected?

The figure below provides context for the implementation of whichever methods are selected, with the current expectation being to work through the 3 boxes under the gold umbrella.



Next Steps

The selected public involvement components will be implemented. Additionally, a presentation and discussion with staff from the Skamania County Community Development Department will be requested for early 2023. Skamania County Acting Community Development Director. Mr. Beck was unable to attend this meeting because of his recently increased duties.

Prepared by,

Ben Shumaker Community Development Director

Attachment

- 1- Past draft annexation policies and City Council meeting summaries
- 2- Public Involvement Framework

753 Phone 509 427-5970

August 1, 1978

The Stevenson Town Council Stevenson, Washington

Gentlemen:

At its regular meeting on July 31, 1978, the Stevenson Planning Commission made the following recommendations regarding annexation:

- 1. That a policy of orderly city growth be adopted to accomodate the natural growth of surrounding areas as may be necessary.
- 2. That the town establish a policy of furnishing city services on the basis of complete service; i.e. water, sewer, public safety and roads.
- 3. That the town establish a policy that it does not extend city services outside the present city limits without annexation.
- 4. That the town establish a policy of setting aside certain areas for possible growth based upon the abilities of city services to serve those areas.
- 5. That the town establish a policy of annexing only contiguous areas of reasonable size thereby avoiding having non-annexed property between existing city limits and areas annexed.
- 6. Establish a policy that all areas annexed must conform to town ordinances within a reasonable time length to be established at time of annexation.

The Commission also recommends that the council instruct the town staff to present short plat applications to the Commission for review and approval as a condition of final approval.

Very truly yours,

Louise Hansen

Why Have an Annexation Policy?

- To accommodate and plan for urban growth in an orderly, more cost effective manner.
- To protect the interests, values and investments of the existing City community.
- To help carry out the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan and zoning.
- To ensure that areas to be annexed are treated equitably and served in an adequate manner and that costs of services and improvements will be fairly addressed, apportioned and met.
- To identify and plan for required urban services.
- To evaluate annexation proposals objectively and in a timely manner.
- To assist those parties seeking annexation and to provide information about City policies, regulations and procedures.
- To work with adjoining jurisdictions to determine where urban growth will likely occur and to identify who will be providing services and how they will be planned and financed.
- To develop and adopt rational policies for utilities extensions and other capital improvement programs.

Unique Circumstances That May Affect Annexation Policy

- Geographical limitations due to topography, soil types, drainages, water bodies natural and man-made hazards, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Urban Area boundary as established by the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area Act.
- Areas of low density development that make utility improvements uneconomical.
- Lack of competition from other jurisdictions to provide water and sewer services.
- Utilities limitations and service area limitations.
- Developments and planning issues related to the Skamania Lodge Conference Center.

CITY OF STEVENSON ANNEXATION POLICY

OPENING STATEMENT

- It is in the best interests of the City and its residents to have established policies for the future development and growth of the community and to have rational guidelines for annexations.
- 2. The City believes that annexations should be consistent with the comprehensive plan, zoning regulations and Washington State growth management goals. The City wishes to provide for the planning and orderly development of adjoining areas in coordination with the County and special purpose districts.
- 3. It is important to analyze and understand the foreseeable impacts of annexations on the City. Urban services should be provided in an orderly and cost-effective manner without detriment to existing City residents and without unanticipated financial burdens to the City. The quality of the community and the ability of Stevenson to attract and sustain new economic development largely depends upon the reliability of services, balanced land use policies and long range capital improvement planning.
- 4. Participants in annexation proposals have a need to be well informed and provided with adequate assistance in meeting the requirements of annexation procedures.

ANNEXATION POLICIES

I. INFORMATION - STAFF ASSISTANCE - PROCEDURES

- A. Information and assistance shall be provided by the City Staff to the land owners seeking annexation concerning the requirements of regulations and procedures, the availability of urban services, costs and financing, land use and building regulations, obligations of the parties, and scheduling of City reviews. The staff shall inform all landowners within the annexation area of hearings and decisions.
- B. Annexation requests shall be received and processed by the City staff including the Public Works, Planning and Finance Departments. The staff shall confer with affected special districts and other jurisdictions to assess the impacts of each proposal.
- C. Written reports shall be prepared by the staff on each pending annexation. Staff reports shall include:
 - Statement of urban services presently available to the area and the condition of the services.
 - Statement of how urban services would be provided, when they could be provided, and how and when they could be financed. Urban services would include water supply, sanitary sewer, storm drainage, streets and pedestrian ways, lighting, fire protection and police services.
 - Statement of existing capacities of City services and whether the new proposal could overburden those capacities, diminish the present level of services for City residents or compromise the City's ability to serve anticipated developments within the current city limits.
 - Statement of proposed zoning designation and summary of environmental review.

II. PLANNING AND LAND USE

- A. The City should identify and adopt an urban growth boundary and consider annexations only within those limits.
 - Urban service areas are described, in part, in the comprehensive plan and in current utilities planning documents.
 - Stevenson has geographical features such as topography, soils and drainages which limit urban development.
 - The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act establishes an urban area boundary within which the local jurisdiction may exercise its full range of powers and duties.
- B. Future urban development shall be contained within the limits of the urban growth boundary.

- C. Zoning of an area shall be considered simultaneously with annexation procedures and shall not be changed for a minimum of one year after an annexation is approved.
- D. Land uses in an annexation area will be consistent with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan and with zoning.
- E. Cooperate with the County when establishing the urban growth boundary and zoning for urban growth areas. Coordinate land use and development standards. Enter into mutual agreements, when needed, for the provision of urban services.
- F. Encourage annexation of developed areas which are adjacent to the City and which now receive City services.
- G. Consider the availability of vacant land within the City limits when reviewing new annexation requests.
- H. Areas which do not have the full range of urban services available may be considered for annexation and zoned appropriately. The SR Suburban Residential District provides for low density development within the City limits.

III. URBAN SERVICES - UTILITIES

- A. Capital improvement plans for utilities and roads should be kept current and should anticipate the needs of growth areas.
- B. The City comprehensive water and sewer plan should address the urban growth area.
- C. Priority for new utility improvements will be given to unserved areas within the City. A reserve utility capacity will be held for undeveloped areas and anticipated needs within the City.
- D. Utilities, if absent or incomplete, will be provided to newly annexed areas in a timely manner.
- E. The level of utility services to present City residents should not be adversely affected by new annexations.
- F. Logical service boundaries for water, sewer and storm drainage shall be identified and considered in each annexation.
- G. The City may require that the owners of property to be annexed agree, as a condition precedent to annexation, to participate financially in the cost of extending utilities and in constructing the capital improvements necessary to serve the property being annexed.
- H. Consideration shall be given to areas of special hazards or potential threats to public health caused by inadequate or failing utility systems.

IV. STREETS AND PUBLIC WAYS

- A. For each annexation the public streets, pedestrian ways and drainage facilities shall be evaluated as to adequacy, condition, safety, long-term maintenance and needed improvements.
- B. In order to correct identified deficiencies that would pose significant safety or maintenance problems, the City shall require that the owners seeking annexation participate in the financing of the needed improvements to correct the problems, as a condition of annexation.
- C. For each annexation the City shall consider the adequacy of streets, public ways and transportation corridors to assure public access, access for emergency vehicles and provisions for maintenance.

V. FIRE AND SAFETY

- A. Review the City's capabilities to meet the fire protection and public safety needs of the annexation area. Consider the adequacy of street access and fire protection facilities including water supplies, fire hydrants and easements, if needed.
- B. Review annexation proposals to ensure that the City's fire rating will not be adversely affected by the annexation.
- C. Maintain existing levels of services to current residents.

2367

J. James challenged the Planning Commission and staff to begin developing an annexation policy for the City. He noted that there is a strong need for planning of the City/County peripheries. Asked if the City could develop some better means of managing the development of the City's peripheries.

Mr. James also expressed concern that there is an increasing number of septic systems being approved within the City. He asked staff to assess the impact of the use of septic systems. J. James moved that the Planning Commission and the City should explore legislation that limits or eliminates development not connected to sewer on R-1, R-2, and other high density land use zones and also in areas where septic tanks could be detrimental to nearby water bodies and etc. Motion passed.

(November 21, 1989)

The Council reviewed the preliminary draft of the City's Growth policy. In addition, the Council reviewed the areas being suggested for potential consideration for annexation within the next "10" years. Those areas included:

1) The "V" -- Council reaffirmed that any annexation of this area will require

construction of sewers:

"East of the City Limits" -- Council questioned wheter water could be extended

in a cost efficient manner; 3) "West end of City Limits" -- Council expressed concern that extensive development of this area could expose the city to sewer problems.

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ANNEXATIONS: The Planning Commission had requested that a temporary policy regarding new annexations be considered, particularly in the residential context.

The meeting was turned over to J. Granholm. He explained the moratorium and said the regulatory framework needed fine tuning, if not rebuilding. He stated that better in-house planning was needed prior to further annexation. He noted the City Council had the discretion to say, "No," to any further annexation and that the Planning Commission hoped to have the Council better equipped to make a decision.

A discussion followed. M. A. Duncan-Cole noted that if health hazards were an issue, the door would be left open for a moratorium on annexations in residential neighborhoods.

Ceil Horn, City resident and Planning Commission member, asked the Council if the State had any guidelines on annexations or if there was a Department or Commission that would look at growth surrounding Municipalities. She thought that by looking at the infra structure, a particular plot could be considered appropriate

for annexation. Per K. Woodrich, City attorney, the City didn't function on that level. He continued however, that by analogy, the City Council, in conjunction with the Planning Commission, could look to a vision for the City and County. M. A. Duncan-Cole mentioned that the water and sewer worked in that realm. K. Woodrich then advised the point of growth management planning was avoidance of sprawl and keeping an intact transportation hub. He further noted that the City was tightly bound within its urban growth boundaries in the Gorge.

There was a general discussion regarding the growth projections for the city and some heated argument regarding realistic projections. Discussion continued. (February 21, 1991)

3865B

- C. Ford asked for criteria specifics concerning State agencies and growth management. M. A. Duncan Cole explained that the Boundary Review Board oversaw annexations and it had to be adopted by various agencies prior to green lighting.
- J. Granholm mentioned the Beard annexation and explained that the Notice of Intent had been approved. He said that the annexation would have no major impact on the area as it had an existing road and water system intact.

Mayor McKenzie suggested putting a time frame of 12-18 months on exploring the issue. It was believed that no RCW regulated the time factor and K. Woodrich said he would research the Statutes regarding the matter.

February 16, 2006

<u>Appendix B – Public Involvement Framework</u>

The following represents a recommended procedure to evaluate and establish topic-specific public involvement plans. As used in this appendix, "Public Involvement" is an umbrella term incorporating a broad range of ways in which the Planning Commission interacts with the public. This range begins with the minimum requirements established by State statutes where information is shared in a uni-directional manner to ensure public awareness of Commission actions. The Public Involvement umbrella embraces bi-directional dialogue wherein the public informs decisions through their meaningful input. At another end of the range, Public Involvement could result in direct decision-making by the public via referendum to the voters. Along the way the term Public Involvement embraces other public participation methods, whether they are suggested in this appendix or not.

This Public Involvement Framework was recommended in summer 2021 by a subcommittee of the Planning Commission. The committee was composed of residents, property owners, Planning Commissioners, and City staff.

The Public Involvement Framework incorporates 7, non-linear, categories of action beginning with a "Call to Act". As appropriate within this framework the Planning Commission should "Conscientiously Select Public Involvement Methods" to "Define" the issue identified in the "Call", "Inform/Educate/Reach-Out" to the public about the issue, and "Engage" community stakeholders to exchange information on the issue. These conscientious efforts allow the Commission to "Refine" the issue based on information received, "Check-in" with the public after the issue is refined, and to eventually "Decide" on an action to address the "Call".

The intent of the Framework is to allow the Planning Commission to conscientiously evaluate each "Call to Action", right-size its approach to the action, and communicate its expectations and actions to the public. The non-linear aspect of the framework means that the Planning Commission can evaluate and establish independent Public Involvement expectations for each category in the framework and can reevaluate established expectations as necessary.

Documents assisting this conscientious effort include:

- Exhibit B.1 Visual Public Involvement Workflow Template. During any topic the Planning Commission chooses to address, this template can be edited and used to convey the established topic-specific public involvement plan and update its progress while the topic is being address.
- Exhibit B.2 Menu of Public Involvement Methods. This exhibit is not intended to be static. As time goes on, this menu of methods may be supplemented, refined, or edited without a formal amendment to the Planning Commission bylaws.

• Exhibit B.3 – Example Public Involvement Materials. Like the menu of methods, the example materials of this exhibit are not static. Dynamic updates to the example materials can be added at any time without amending these bylaws.

Framework Components

Component	<u>Actors</u>	Actions Actions
Call to Act		
The Call to Act is the instant when an issue is identified. The Call to Act can be considered the identification of an Issue or a Need . The Call results from a disturbance, an opportunity, a problem, a request, or any other catalytic moment when the Planning Commission is asked to act. Define the Issue	 The Caller can be anyone from the community: A City elected official A Planning Commissioner City staff Consultants A partner agency or interest groups, etc. 	Determine whether to answer the Call: Determine whether Issue or Need is accepted Assess City agency/ability to impact Assess City responsibility to impact Assess City capacity
Defining the Issue creates clarity by	The Planning	Determine Stakeholders:
exploring how the Call to Action was created and by whom, identifying who is driving and who is impacted, and identifying available information, observations, public concerns, and determining whether existing data is adequate or more data is required. Defining the issue leads to a reconsideration of whether to answer the Call. Doing so transforms Need into Purpose .	Commission identifies Potential Stakeholders as necessary. Potential Stakeholders include: Businesses City officials Developers Low Income and/or under represented Long-term residents New residents Those Privileged and Disadvantaged by the issue/topic Property Owners Renters, etc.	 Understand who the Caller represents Understand who benefits/suffers from the Issue or Need Understand who benefits/suffers from the Solution to the Issue or Need Propose Solutions Determine when a solution is proposed Determine who proposes solutions Determine how many solutions are proposed Select Public Involvement Strategies Assess City capacity to implement individual Public Involvement Methods. Establish who should be involved Select level of involvement (Inform, Educate, Engage, Ask) Select specific Pubic Involvement Methods (Exhibit B.2)
Inform, Educate, and Reach-Out to Pub		Make Materials Accessible,
Informing, Educating, and Reaching Out to Stakeholders provides <i>uni-</i> <i>directional information sharing</i> from	The Planning Commission and City staff activate Networks (e.g., SDA,	Understandable, Timely, and Compelling

stand alone as a form of open governance. Informing, Educating, and Reaching-Out to the Public shares the Purpose with the community to generate greater Communal Understanding . Engage Stakeholders Engaging Stakeholders provides bidirectional information exchange between the public and city staff/elected officials. Engaging	The Planning Commission and City staff activate Networks to help engage identified	and reference materials Surface Latent Stakeholders • Provide opportunities for the Public-At-Large to become more involved Match the Level of Engagement to the Need for Input and the Impact of Change. • Share simple information broadly • Provide access to more detailed
Stakeholders results supplements Communal Understanding with Collective Wisdom. Refine	Potential Stakeholders and previously Latent Stakeholders.	 Provide access to more detailed information Make available source documents and reference materials Ensure Engagement is Multi-Faceted. Select specific Public Involvement Methods (Exhibit B.2) Solicit Input and Expertise Building upon Work of City Officials.
Refining involves validating or reconsidering decisions made in earlier steps. Refining applies Communal Understanding and Collective Wisdom to the Purpose. If the issue is complex, refining may	The Planning Commission and City staff respond to stakeholders based on input received.	Distill stakeholder input for Planning Commission to inform next steps and/or a decision.
involve several iterations of earlier steps and/or offer widening ranges of options. At one end of this range, refining could even lead the Planning Commission to reconsider whether to answer the original Call to Act.		
steps and/or offer widening ranges of options. At one end of this range, refining could even lead the Planning Commission to reconsider whether to	The Planning Commission and City staff re-activate networks, updating stakeholders on the issue's evolution through the Public Involvement efforts.	Create a feedback loop to determine whether additional Public Involvement is necessary before a decision can be made. Respond to Stakeholders to Improve Upon or Help Inform the Final Decision.

action should integrate the Collective	
Wisdom received through	
implementation of the Public	
Involvement Plan. Through Action a	
Need is addressed, the Seed of	
Community is born and the ground is	
prepared to receive the next Call.	

Exhibit B.1 – Visual Public Involvement Workflow Template

The following template can be customized to document the topic-specific Public Involvement Plans.

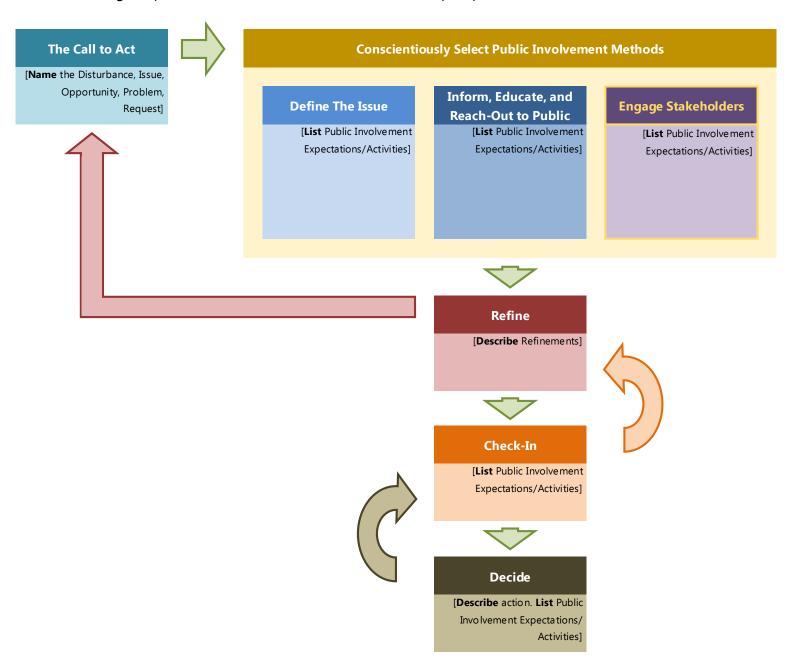


Exhibit B.2 – Menu of Public Involvement Methods.

This exhibit presents several public involvement methods. Some are simple, some more complex. A basic assessment of the impact and associated costs associated with each method is included. This list is dynamic and will grow according to more input and testing of methods.

The menu can be attached to early issue report as a tool for the Planning Commission and shared with the public to share expectations on each Public Involvement Plan.

In general, selected methods to Inform, Educate, and Reach-Out should provide an 1-month timeframe.

Method	Impact	Resource Need	Notes	Included in Plan?		
Methods to Inform, Educate, Reach-Out						
Physical Media (posters, informational flyers, newspaper ads)	L M H	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Consider posting on bulletin boards and around town (laundry, apartments, post office, workplaces, school/government/ semi-public spaces)	Y or N		
Targeted Media (postcards with links, invitations to participate)	LMH	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$		Y or N		
Requests for neighborhood/group participation	L M H	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Planning Commissioners and/or Staff	Y or N		
Electronic Media (Facebook page, nextdoor, websites of partners and City)	L M H	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$		Y or N		
Press Release, Interviews, Guest Editorial	L M H	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$		Y or N		
Sandwich Boards	L M H	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Consider placing at Stevenson Downtown Association office, front lawns	Y or N		
Guest appearances at events and meetings	LMH	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Planning Commissioners and/or Staff	Y or N		
Informal community and interest networks	L M H	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$		Y or N		
Concise, short and well written flyers delivered to resident's front door by volunteers	L M H	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$		Y or N		
Methods to Engage						
Public Workshops	L M H	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Accessible and welcoming to all	Y or N		
Survey Monkey	L M H	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Special attention to language and readability needed	Y or N		
Meet & Greets with staff or elected officials	L M H	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Requires data collected and staffing of elected, along with public notice	Y or N		
Council/Commissioner meetings with focused methods for input/dialogue	∟ M H	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Build upon Commission meetings and allow for back and forth between electeds and community. Add more time for PI (Public Involvement).	Y or N		

					Change physical arrangement. Actively promote/welcome PI	
Town Hall - debates or educational forums	L	M	Н	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Cross talk between electeds, experts, staff with Q&A from audience	Y or N
Story boards - data collection or voting	L	M	Н	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Placing story boards in key location to collect input about very specific things OR to get votes on X or Y preference Mimicking this on social media also	Y or N
Listania a sasisas hatuusa	1	N /I		ሶ	*Key to have right issue and right language	
Listening sessions between staff/electeds and public	L	M	Н	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Planning Commissioners and/or Staff	Y or N
Attend existing meetings of currently organized groups, events and board meetings.	L	M	Н	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Social service agencies, neighborhood groups, special interest networks, etc	Y or N
Attend large employers meetings (as applicable)	L	М	Н	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Planning Commissioners and/or Staff	Y or N
Pioneer articles from Council/Commission with key topics needing to be discussed and solicitation of questions for next issue to be answered	L	M	Н	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$		Y or N
Form task forces, interest groups, focus groups, etc	L	M	Н	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Planning Commissioners and/or Staff	Y or N
Pizza party/cook off - casual event	L	M	Н	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$	Planning Commissioners and/or Staff	Y or N
Postcards soliciting input	L	M	Н	\$ \$\$ \$\$\$		Y or N

Exhibit B.3 – Example Public Involvement Materials.

This exhibit presents examples of public involvement materials to effectively implement public involvement plans. These examples will change and supplements will be added in response to the implementation of topic specific public involvement plans.

List of Examples

• Flyer Example.

Flyer Example

ZONING - Your neighborhood could change
We will be discussing how it might change at a meeting next week. Please come.
Then we'd give the time and place where the meeting was going to be held.
Then we would have ended the flyer this way:
For more information on the proposed changes contact ______. Then we'd give three ways to contact this person.