

2011 ZONING UPDATE PROGRAM PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

RCW 36.70A.130 (2) (a) requires that local governments establish a public participation program for the review and update of its comprehensive plans and development regulations. In establishing a public participation program, Benton County must ensure the following:

- 1) That notice of the update process is broadly and effectively disseminated (RCW 6.70A.035).
- 2) That the notice identifies the procedures and schedules by which updates will be considered.
- 3) That the program provides for early and continuous public participation (RCW 36.70A.140).

This 2011 Zoning Update Program describes the steps that Benton County will take to involve the county residents in decisions regarding the proposed zoning ordinances that implement the ***Benton County Comprehensive Land Use Plan***. The goal is to provide the public with timely information, an understanding of the process, and the opportunities to review and comment on decisions regarding the proposed zoning regulations before they are made.

Citizen Participation

Opportunities for public involvement will be provided to encourage early and continuous public participation. Citizens are encouraged to actively participate in the program by attending advertised public meetings, workshops, and hearings, of the Planning Commission and Benton County Board of Commissioners, visiting Benton County's website, or contacting planning staff. Benton County will use a variety of methods to inform the public about upcoming public hearings, the availability of relevant planning documents, and important milestones related to the 2011 Zoning Update Program including, but not limited to the following:

Planning Commission Meetings:

The Planning Commission (PC) is designated by the Benton County Code as the responsible citizen panel for advising Benton County on comprehensive plan and land use issues. Accordingly, the PC will be the primary source of public involvement in guiding the 2011 Zoning Update Program.

Benton County Planning Department staff will perform research and analyses, preparation and response to comments, and will facilitate the workshops, meetings and hearings, which are open to the public for comment.

In addition to workshops with the Planning Commission, portions of the regularly scheduled monthly PC meetings may be utilized. All meetings are open to the public, and a general public comment period will be provided. PC meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month in the Hearing Room at the Benton County Planning Department, 1002 Dudley Avenue, in Prosser starting at 7:00 p.m. Formal opportunities for citizen review and comment on the various zoning districts of the proposed 2011 Zoning Update Program will be provided at the PC

public hearings as shown in the **Benton County 2011 Zoning Adoption Schedule** attached. The attached schedule is subject to change, if so the revised meeting schedule will be shown on the Planning page of the County's website.

Public Hearings:

All public hearings scheduled before the Planning Commission and Benton County Commissioners will be held after effective notice and include opportunities for oral and written comment. All persons desiring to speak will be allowed to do so, consistent with time constraints. All comments and recommendations of the public will be considered. Adequate time should be provided between the time of any public hearing and the date of adoption to evaluate and respond to public comment. Public comments received and an explanation of what action was taken in response to them will be included in the record of adoption of the plan.

Written Comments:

Written comments are welcome throughout the 2011 Zoning Update process. Opportunities for formal public will be provided at public hearings before the Benton County Planning Commission and the Board of Benton County Commissioners. The 2011 Zoning Update Program & Adoption Schedule, attached, shows when public hearings are likely to be held. To ensure consideration, written comments must be received by Benton County by 5:00 p.m. or if by email prior to 1:00 p.m. on the day of the hearing or in person by the close of the public hearing. All written comments submitted by mail or fax should be sent to: Benton County Planning Department, P.O. Box 910, Prosser, WA 99350-0910, Fax: (509) 786-5629.

Web Page:

The Benton County Planning Department will provide and maintain a web page for the 2011 Zoning Update Program available from the County's homepage at www.co.benton.wa.us, which is an effective means for the public to follow the zoning update process. A 2011 Zoning Update Program link can be found on the Benton County Homepage. Interested county residents may go to the website for informational updates; i.e., hearing, meeting, and adoption notices, agendas, and other program information. On the 2011 Zoning Update Program page, a special link called "Resident Feedback" will be available for interested parties to provide their comments or to leave their email addresses for email notification of future meetings and hearings.

Mailing List:

Benton County maintains and will utilize a list of interested persons and organizations who have requested to receive notices of scheduled 2011 Zoning Update public meetings. Noticing may be provided by mail or email. Individuals and organizations interested in being placed on the mailing list should contact the Benton County Planning Department, at (509) 786-5612 in Prosser or (509) 783-3086 from the Tri-Cities.

Notification and Dissemination of Information

News Releases

Benton County will issue news releases announcing public meeting and hearing times, dates and locations to the local media including, but not limited to: Tri-City Herald, Benton City Bulletin, Prosser Record Bulletin, local television and radio stations, and those who request to be notified.

Hearings & Adoptions

Public notice of all public hearings and adoptions regarding the 2011 Zoning Update process will be published under "Legals" in the Tri City Herald classified section. Public notification of all hearings will be provided at least 10 days before the date of the hearing. The notice shall include the date, time, location and purpose of the hearing. Public notification on County adoption of the Zoning Ordinances or development regulations shall be published in the Tri City Herald following adoption (normally within 10 days). The date of publication of such notices shall initiate a 60-day appeal period pursuant to RCW 36.70A.290 (2).

Additional Public Involvement Methods

In addition to the public participation procedures described above, Benton County may utilize the following means to increase public involvement and to disseminate information:

1. **Additional Meetings:** In addition to the meeting outlined in this section, Benton County may elect to hold additional meetings if it is determined that more meetings are needed to provide project information and/or provide additional opportunities for gathering public comments and public participation.
2. **Information Sheets:** Benton County may utilize one or two page information sheets to facilitate the dissemination of public information. These sheets will cover topics, including, but not limited to: comprehensive planning and development regulations.
3. **Access to Staff:** Benton County will have staff available to answer questions and provide information regarding the 2011 Zoning Update Program. Staff may also be available to meet with civic groups, as work schedules allow.

PROJECT FILES

An official project file containing adopted project materials will be available for public inspection during regular business hours Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Benton County Planning Department. The address is:

Benton County Planning Department
1002 Dudley Avenue
Prosser, Wa. 99350

RECORD OF MEETINGS

All meeting and hearings before the Benton County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners will be audio recorded. Minutes of all public hearings related to the 2011 Zoning Update Program will be prepared and made available upon request using the County's Request for Information procedures. Meeting minutes will be made available on the County's Internet

site via the 2011 Zoning Update Program page linked from the Benton County homepage at: www.co.benton.wa.us.

Distribution & Access

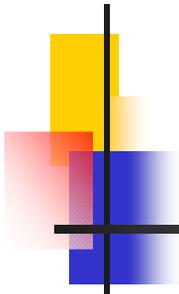
A copy of the official Benton County Zoning Code and Zoning Maps will be located in the Benton County Planning Department, 1002 Dudley Avenue, Prosser, Wa. 99350. The Zoning Code and Zoning Maps will also be made available on the Internet from the Benton County Code link on the Benton County homepage at: www.co.benton.wa.us. Benton County views this Public Participation Plan as establishing the basic public involvement processes that will be followed during the 2011 Zoning Update Program.

Who can I contact for more information?

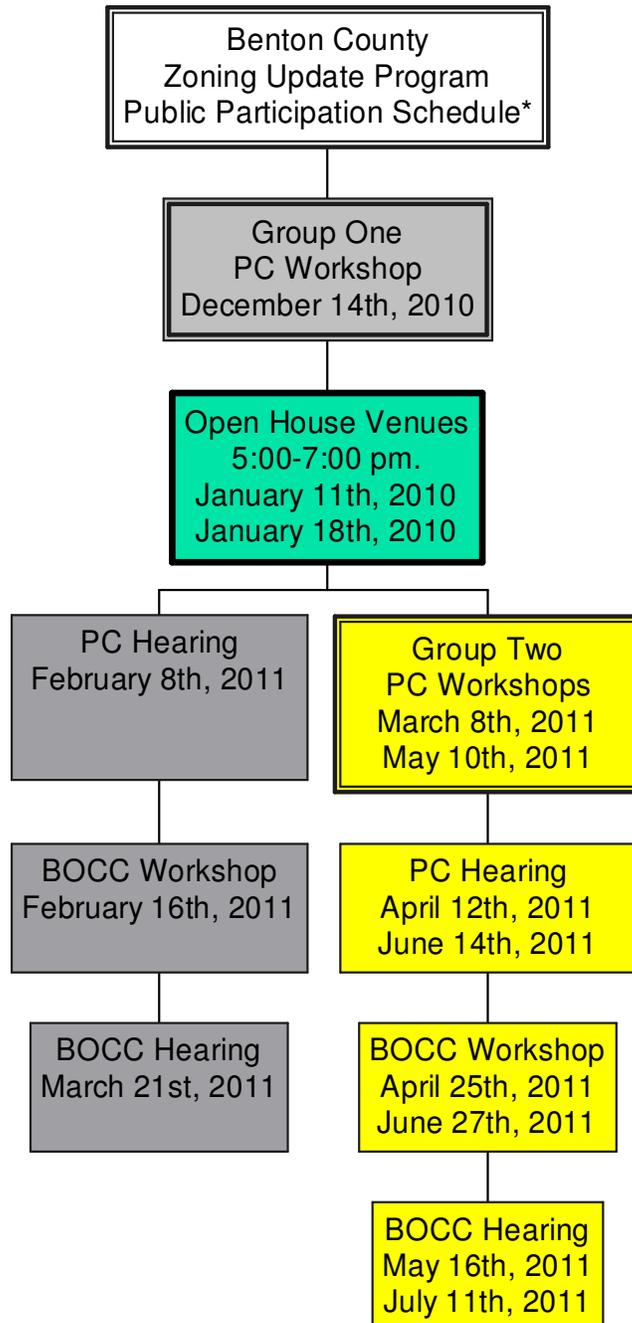
For more information, please contact the following staff at the Benton County Planning Department by calling (509) 786-5612, in Prosser.

Susan Walker, Senior Planner
Michael Shuttleworth, Planning Manager

Valerie Smith, Associate Planner



2011 Zoning Adoption Schedule



*Schedule is subject to change

2011 Zoning Update Program

