

## Hodgson, Laura (COM)

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**From:** Hodgson, Laura (COM)  
**Sent:** Friday, September 4, 2020 2:11 PM  
**Cc:** Hodgson, Laura (COM)  
**Subject:** Follow-up from VM on Public Engagement, Including Notes  
**Attachments:** Housing Element Guidebook Outline Aug15 2020.pdf

Good afternoon!

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend Wednesday's virtual meeting on Public Engagement During COVID-19! For those of you who were not able to attend, a summary of some of the notes I took is in the PS below. And a special thank you to all of those who shared their experiences with public engagement so far!

We received a question from an audience member about legal guidance regarding providing food and drink at public meetings. Thanks to Laura Crandall's research, we wanted to follow-up with more guidance from MRSC.

### **GUIDANCE:**

Limited spending on food and drink for public meetings is allowable under certain circumstances. The event or meeting should be for a valid public purpose. In analyzing whether there is a gift of public funds, courts look at whether the municipality has "donative intent," which refers to the extent to which a municipality gives away something of value for no recognizable municipal purpose. To provide food and/or drink for a public engagement event, the expense should be reasonable, in line with an existing policy (or one should be created), and for a valid public purpose.

Also, the State Auditor's Office has a helpline and MRSC always advises governments to call them if they have doubts about what they are about to do.

### **And an additional caveat from MRSC's legal arm:**

The State Auditor's Office (SAO) also looks at whether the meeting takes place during a lunch time or dinner time (i.e., there is more likely to be a shown need during lunch or dinner hour meetings). No alcohol is allowed. There also needs to be a policy in place in advance about when and how to provide refreshments.

Please let me know if were any other questions we were not able to answer during the webinar. Also, please send any feedback on the Housing Element Guidebook Outline by September 9<sup>th</sup> (see attached), any feedback or edits on the Guidance for [HNAs](#) or [HAPs](#) by September 30<sup>th</sup>, and let us know if you have any additional requests for virtual meetings or assistance.

Have a great Labor Day Weekend everyone!  
Laura Hodgson

**Major Take-Aways from the Presenters and Voluntary Speakers:** (my apologies if I did not capture this material 100% correctly)

Bonnie-Lake/Sumner (joint Housing Action Plan (HAP))

- Outreach: Using Bang the Table website, conducted virtual workshop, HAP Committee with great representation and diversity, reaching out to groups and known organizations to spread the word, posting fliers, translating materials, offered to go to community meetings virtually, sending out info to HOAs.
- Pre-planning is important for virtual meetings. Know in advance who is going to talk, what roles individuals have, know how to work through various topics, have materials prepared. These cities opted to post HAP

Committee meetings after the live sessions for the public to see. Also plan to start ½ hour early to help people with technical issues.

#### Shoreline (HAP)

- Outreach: Technical Advisory Group, stakeholder meetings on different topics, online survey, website with GIS and translation, postcard invitations, live notes were taken during meetings to show people were being heard and to keep people engaged.
- Adaptations: Although staff had planned to supplement the outreach with meetings, the plan had to be adapted. The team expanded the online survey into an online open house. Also, initial results of survey did not match the community demographics so they are going to adjust their outreach accordingly.
- Tips: (1) Make online engagement interactive and engaging. (2) Leverage partnerships with local organizations with people who are working with hard to reach populations. (3) Make the work relevant to the group/organization/individual. (4) Have ground rules for meetings.
- Goal: Hear from those most impacted. One way that did that was to work with school district's equity point of contact to interview and set up a focus group.

#### Airway Heights (subarea plan and code change)

- Outreach: Vision workshop on Zoom including polling and follow-up survey (changed from pop-up storefront studio), West Chamber presentation, [storymap website](#), mailed postcards, Facebook and social media, website. Scroll down [on this page](#) for a link to their workshop materials. Newsletter through Mail Chimp.
- Suggests social media may be more effective and cost efficient than post cards. Addresses for mailings, however, can be gathered from utility and billing records, and other city lists.
- Their Storymap website (link above) has been a great tool to pull information together from previous plans and studies and present it in a cohesive way with the work they are doing on this subarea plan.

#### Lakewood (subarea plan, planned action, form-based code)

- Outreach: Translating material into multiple languages and online survey. (If you need a name of a contact who can provide translation services for Asian pacific cultures, please let me know – I have one from the city.)

#### Lynnwood (HAP)

- Outreach: branding has been very impactful, stakeholder advisory group, kids summer camp – asked them to envision the future of Lynnwood, translation, surveys, online open houses including in other languages, handing out fliers at public locations

#### Renton (HAP)

- Outreach included engaging community representatives to host meetings and providing a stipend for their time and effort

#### **Laura Hodgson | ASSOCIATE PLANNER**

Growth Management Services | Washington State Department of Commerce

1011 Plum Street SE, Olympia, WA 98504-2525

Desk: 360.725.3052 | Cell: 360.764.3143 | Email: [Laura.Hodgson@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:Laura.Hodgson@commerce.wa.gov)

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