

# Port of Bremerton Community Outreach/Participation Policy

## 1. Preamble

From President Lincoln's profoundly stated, "government of the people, by the people and for the people" to Washington State's history of its citizens expecting generous access to its governments, the public's involvement in its government has been seen as vital to its success.

Additionally, the laws of the state have, since the early 1970's, reinforced this heritage through laws, granting access to public records, to the openness of elected officials' actions in their public roles and meetings.

The public's access to its government and that government operation is an absolute right of the electorate.

It is the purpose of this policy to formally express the Bremerton Port Commission's vision and expectations of itself and its retained staff regarding access to the Port's public meetings, its public records, its processes and its projects.

## 2. Goal

The mission of the Port of Bremerton ... *"is to plan, develop, maintain and promote business, industrial maritime and aviation facilities and services for the purpose of inducing capital investment and creating economic development, employment, transportation and recreational opportunities in a financially and environmentally responsible manner, dedicated to the general welfare of the citizens and business of the Port district and the region."* This cannot be achieved without the full public participation from the residents, business persons, and other stakeholders of the Port district.

The Port's mission will not be achieved without the organization and the people operating it becoming dedicated to informing, listening and interchanging ideas and to openness and transparency.

**Therefore: The goal of this policy is enable the citizens, business persons and other stakeholders of the Port district to become better informed and engaged in Port business and its processes.**

## 3. Policy and Strategy

Our Policy is to provide our constituents with full and understandable information regarding Port business and to empower citizens in the final decision making process by consulting with the

public and stakeholders regarding Port decisions, by involving them directly to ensure that their concerns are considered and included in decisions where possible.

Further, it shall be the policy of the Port of Bremerton to adhere not only the legal requirements of public notification, but the spirit and intent of public notification of, and public participation in, its activities in order to achieve genuine public participation and transparency in decisions made by the Port Commission and Port staff.

To reach the overall goal the following strategies shall be employed:

- Communicate with the public about Port issues and activities regularly and thoroughly through a variety of methods;
- Provide timely and complete information and meeting notices;
- Provide public access to Port processes and pertinent information unless otherwise provided by state law;
- Employ a number of methods for early and thorough public involvement at all stages of decision making;
- Identify and engage a variety of individuals, interest groups and stakeholders;
- Collaborate with the public to incorporate as many viewpoints as practical in the Port's business and decision making.

#### **4. Implementation**

This policy and its goals will be implemented in three general areas. They are:

- 1) Public Outreach...the ways that the Port will provide information to the public; essentially a delivery of information.
- 2) Public Notice ...the ways that the Port will provide notice of its events and activities to the general public, business persons and stakeholders.
- 3) Public Participation and access to public records...the ways the Port will facilitate and enable a two-way dialogue between the Port, its officers and staff and the Port's citizens, business persons and other stakeholders and provide access to its records.

The Port will reach out to the various communities within the District and establish a number of ways for citizens to become informed, participate and present input into the Port's business and plans.

The Port's communication techniques shall be designed and maintained to assure that public involvement opportunities are easy to identify and that information about Port activities and issues is easy to locate and is timely.

Each major Port planning effort (e.g., large capital projects, facility master plans, etc.) shall include informational and public involvement opportunities.

Each major Port activity or action shall include a clear definition of what decisions will be made, who will make those decisions, the timing of the decisions, how the public can learn of the activity or action, how the decision-making process will proceed, and how the public's participation will be considered in the decision-making process.

Adequate notice of specific public involvement activities and the time for public participation at key decision points shall be provided. Whenever possible, such notice shall exceed the minimum requirements of the law or rules that apply to the decision.

When there is public involvement and comments are made, a summary record of these comments shall be maintained. Feedback to the public about how the interests reflected in those comments were included in decision making shall be provided.

#### **4A. Public Outreach:**

This Public Outreach section describes the means and methods by which the Port will provide information to the community. These actions are essentially an outward delivery of information.

The Port of Bremerton shall provide its constituents every opportunity to become informed about Port business. This will be accomplished in a number of ways:

1. The Port Commission will provide regular opportunities for evening meetings at convenient locations and times.
2. The Port Commission will provide access to its regular meetings, if practicable, through use of web streaming, televising, digital recording or other electronic means.
3. The Port of Bremerton shall maintain and regularly update a website that is easily navigated and provide information about Port activities, proposed actions, actions taken, plans, projects, agendas, and contact information.
4. The Port of Bremerton shall publish an annual "report to the community" reporting Port background, initiatives and projects. Additionally, the Port will publish quarterly financial reports as determined by the Port Commission on the website or alternative methods.
5. All regular, special meetings and committee meetings of the Port of Bremerton Commission shall be open to the public, except as allowed under Washington State Open Public Meetings Act.
6. Port Commissioners and staff will, as a regular part of Commission and staff activities, seek to make presentations about the Port and its projects to service clubs and other community organizations.

7. The media and the press provide a ready means of providing information to the Port citizens and stakeholders. Active engagement of the media and press, their reporters and editorial boards will be a regular part of Commission and staff activities.

#### **4B. Public Notice**

This Public Notice section describes the means and method by which the Port will provide notice of its events and activities.

Meeting notices are required by state law. The Port of Bremerton desires to go beyond legal requirements to ensure citizens of the Port district are informed in a timely manner of Commission meetings. This will be accomplished in the following ways:

1. All regular meetings and committee meetings of the Port of Bremerton shall be open to the public, except as provided under the Washington State Open Public Meetings Act.
2. Notification of all public meetings will be provided to the local news media and to any individuals or organizations requesting notification. In addition to the means provided by law, notification of the time, date and location of the Commission meetings may be made by mail, electronic means, posting on the Port of Bremerton website, press releases, legal notice or paid advertisement or other methods as most appropriate to the circumstances.
3. Public notification of all regular meetings of the Port of Bremerton shall be made in accordance with state law and shall be made at least 7 days in advance of the meeting. Notices may be made by means of press releases, legal ads, targeted mailings, or paid ads either separately or in combination, as may be appropriate. Notice of all regular meetings shall be posted on the Port's web site. Special and unanticipated meetings will be announced in keeping with state law.
4. No less than twenty four (24) hours public notice shall be given in the event a special meeting is required. The public notice shall give the reason for the special meeting. Emergency meetings may be called as provided in RCW 42.30.
5. Agendas of Port meetings will be stated in clear, simple language and format and shall, when known, include the next meeting date as well as dates of meetings requiring Port representation. Additionally, the Port will provide the supporting documents for the agenda via email to any individual or organization upon request.

#### **4C. Public Participation/Access to Public Records**

This Public Participation/Access to Public Records section describes the means and method by which the citizens and stakeholders have the opportunity to communicate with the Port Commissioners and staff on topics and projects.

Public involvement, input and feedback is important to the Port of Bremerton. A key part of this participation is access to the Port's public records. Input from the public and the interchange of ideas is vital in the decision-making process and shall be accomplished in the following ways:

1. A public comment period shall be provided during each regular meeting of the Port of Bremerton.
2. The public shall be given an opportunity to voice their concerns, ask questions and comment on any action item during regular meetings of the Port of Bremerton.
3. The public shall be given the opportunity to comment on Port plans and projects by a variety of methods. These include but are not limited to formal and informal contact, written or oral, with Commissioners and staff and through the Port's website.
4. The Port will provide periodic open house events or tours of its facilities and open house events.
5. The Port shall endeavor to establish a number of groups to further its efforts to both inform the community and further joint economic development in the community. Each group will meet regularly for briefings and discussions of common issues. Examples of these include:
  - A community alliance made up of representatives of community clubs, service clubs and similar organizations.
  - An economic development stakeholder coalition made up of SKIA partners, commercial developers and commercial real estate brokers.
  - Stakeholder groups for the Port's major facilities, including the Port Orchard and Bremerton marinas, Bremerton National Airport and Olympic View Business and Industrial Park.
  - Economic or infrastructure development partnerships with cities, the county, area development associations, Chamber of Commerce's, Olympic College, real estate/homebuilder associations, and school districts.
6. Any proposal to increase the property tax collections beyond that which is provided by state law for the Port's regular levy shall be submitted to Port district voters. Additionally, the public shall be informed of planned issuance of General Obligation bonds via press release and Port web site posting.
7. The public shall have access to Port of Bremerton documents including but not limited to minutes of public meetings, plan documents, project documents and emails as provided by state law.

8. The Port of Bremerton shall make documents available for public review at Port offices. To the extent possible, copies of significant Port documents and plans will also be distributed to public libraries and posted on the Port of Bremerton website.
9. Documents will be made available at the lowest charge under state law. This generally covers only reproduction and mailing costs. Electronic copies will be distributed at cost, if any.

## 5. Schedule of Implementation

Action	Schedule of Implementation	Notes/Responsibility
<b>PUBLIC OUTREACH</b>		
4A1 Regular evening meetings	Now being done	First meeting of the month, regular business meeting
4A2 Web streaming or televising of regular meetings	To be included in 2009 budget	
4A3 Maintain and update an easily used website	Website is established and updates are ongoing	
4A4 Publish a periodic report to the community	Reestablish in the second half of 2008	
4A5 All Commission meetings to be open	Now being done	
4A6 Involvement in service clubs and community organizations	Now being done, expand involvement	
4A7 Active use of media/press	Now being done	
4A8 Agenda clarity	Now being done	
<b>PUBLIC NOTICE/ ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS</b>		
4B1 Open public meetings	Now being done	
4B2 Notification and Methods	Now being done	
4B3 Regular meeting notification	Now being done	
4B4 Special meeting notice	Now being done	
4B5 Next meeting announcement	Now being done	
4B6 Access to documents	Now being done	
4B7 Document availability and review	Now being done	
4B8 Cost of documents	Now being done	
<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b>		
4C1 Regular meeting public comment	Now being done	
4C2 Comment on action items	Now being done	
4C3 Comment on plans and projects	Now being done	
4C4 Tours and open houses	Now being done	
4C5 Forming dialogue groups	First group to be formed by July 1	A SKIA infrastructure funding group is likely the first to be formed
4C6 Excess levy vote	As required	

## **6. Evaluation**

The Port Commission will, at least annually, review this policy, its goals and action steps, and amend it as appropriate.

Evaluation criteria will include how the policy and actions are resonating with the community, the level of participation and discussion, level of understanding of Port activity and projects.

In addition to the Actions and Means of Implementation described in 4 above for Public Outreach, Public Notice/Access to Public Records, and Public Participation, the Port of Bremerton shall comply with all state and federal laws, including but not limited to:

- State Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30)
- State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C)
- State Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A)
- State Open Records Law (RCW 42.17)
- American Disabilities Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-336)
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C.2000d)
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101)