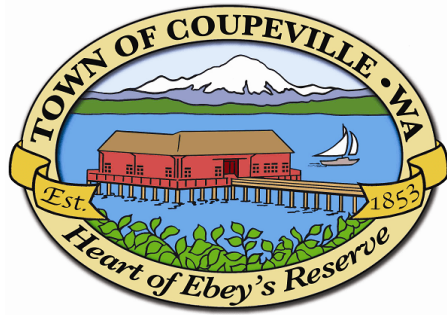




2024 Coupeville Middle Housing

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

April 23, 2024



Table of Contents

Middle Housing Code Update: Project Overview 3

Purpose of Middle Housing Public Participation Plan 4

Public Participation Plan Guiding Principles 4

Outreach and Engagement Goals 6

Key Interest Groups and Participants 7

Engagement Methods 8

Tools for Engagement 8

Engagement Approach Details 11

Decision-Making Process 13

Communications Plan..... 14

Evaluation and Accountability..... 16

Public Involvement Evaluation..... 17

Tentative Schedule..... 17

Appendix A: Rules of Engagement 18



Middle Housing Code Update: Project Overview

Recent Washington State Legislation has passed to increase housing stock affordable to those within the low (50-80% AMI) and moderate (80-100% AMI) income groups. House Bills 1110 and 1337 focus on increasing the availability of Middle Housing and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) (respectively) by requiring certain local jurisdictions to allow their development in residential zoning districts. The legislature has directed the Department of Commerce to administer \$4.5 million in grant funding for jurisdictions to implement House Bill 1110 through the Middle Housing Grant. The Town of Coupeville won \$35,000 of state grant funds to implement HB 1110 (middle housing). In addition, the Town will utilize \$5,000 of Town budget to incorporate HB 1337 (ADUs) into the project.

By the end of the project, the Town will have passed an ordinance which updates the Coupeville Town Code to comply with these two bills and reflect the community vision for the bills' implementation. The scope of the project includes the following tasks:

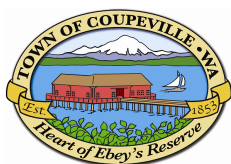
- Public Engagement with the General Public and Planning Commission;
- Develop a Middle Housing ordinance amendment for duplex and ADUs; and
- Adopt a Middle Housing ordinance.



Left: An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) in Langley, WA. Photo Credit: City of Langley



Right: A duplex unit in Coupeville, WA. Photo Credit: Town of Coupeville



Purpose of Middle Housing Public Participation Plan

The intent of the *Public Participation Plan* is to educate the public, communicate with them, and empower the community to inform the update. The Guiding Principles described below further defines the intent. The Public Participation Plan outlines a method to collect concerns, aspirations, and advice from the community to integrate into the update process. Community feedback will be used in the development of the final code update.

Public Participation Plan Guiding Principles

Inform the Community

- Explain the requirements of HB 1110 and HB 1337.
- Provide objective information to assist the public and key entities understanding of opportunities, strengths, weaknesses, and constraints in new housing typologies and code integration.
- Provide educational resources to the public that answer commonly asked questions.
- Identify and define the proposed types of housing. Describe each type of housing's minimum siting and density requirements.
- Develop and update a webpage on Coupeville's website to distribute information on the code update process.
- Inform interested stakeholders of the progress, status, and key policy discussions throughout the update.
- Use non-technical language and graphics to explain the technical or complex subject matter to the public.
- Continuously demonstrate the intent and purpose of the code update and the value engagement brings to the planning process.

Consult Stakeholders

- Seek community feedback on concerns, needs, and visual appearance of new housing typologies.
- Identify key constraints, barriers, and opportunities from stakeholders in the code update and minimum needs that should be considered for the future code to be implemented.
- Acknowledge and address comments and concerns received from the community and stakeholders.
- Communicate how public engagement has influenced the code drafting process.



Involve the Public

- Encourage public involvement in the Code Update process by using multiple forms of communication: print, Coupeville website, and public surveys to gain the public's comments and concerns.
- Enhance two-way communication between the public and the Town by sharing information using a variety of methods to include those traditionally unreachable in Town communications.
- Utilize virtual and in-person engagement opportunities accessible to a wide audience.
- Find a united vision that envisions the future code.

Collaborate Inclusively

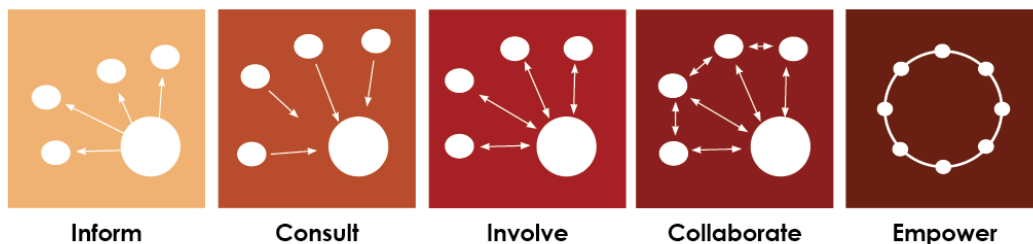
- Build trust by providing timely and accurate information between stakeholders, the General Public, and Town staff.
- Offer continuous opportunities to provide feedback on the draft code in Planning Commission meetings and on the Town's dedicated webpage.
- Share comments, concerns, and ideas raised in stakeholder and public discussions to identify common desired changes or Coupeville's characteristics that should remain intact.
- Realign the stakeholder and public ideas into a commonly shared vision.

Empower The Community

- Present the final document in concise, laymen's terms with graphics that break down complex ideas or processes in the public review and hearing process.
- Address community feedback in a timely manner and evaluate code alternatives with the community at large.
- Maintain the code update webpage to demonstrate the Town's planning process and methodical steps taken to achieve public engagement.
- Encourage the Planning Commission and Town Council to evaluate community comments and weigh alternatives to the draft code.

Exhibit 1: Successful Engagement Process: The Full Spectrum of Engagement

What Does a Successful Public Engagement Process Look Like?



Engagement Objectives and Goals

The overall goal of the Middle Housing public participation effort is to craft a revised code that aligns with the public's community vision and helps developer stakeholders understand the allowed uses of the code. Ensuring that the code conforms to the community vision for Coupeville is essential to ensuring community character continues throughout the development and use of Middle Housing. Creating future housing options for Coupeville residents that preserves the character of the town will create a vibrant and inclusive community. Developers will be engaged to ensure that Middle Housing projects are feasible once the code is implemented. Specific objectives of the engagement process have been identified as:

1. Understand the barriers and constraints of developing Middle Housing in Coupeville.
2. Communicate with workforce and income groups that benefit from Middle Housing types.
3. Incorporate commonly shared design considerations from the community into the Town Code.
4. Understand the community's goals for homeownership and stable housing opportunities.

Outreach for the Middle Housing ordinance will touch on all aspects of engagement, from informing the public of project goals to empowering the community to engage in the decision-making process. The Public Participation Plan will help ensure that stakeholders and the public know how to engage with the code update process. The following are five goals for public engagement:

1. **Inform and consult** with the public, stakeholders, staff, legislative bodies, and other relevant parties with information to help them understand the required and optional elements of the code update.
2. Make public participation a **meaningful and productive** use of the community's time.
3. Actively seek out and engage community groups and populations that are historically under-represented in traditional planning processes, and **ensure input is representative** of Coupeville's cultural and demographic diversity.
4. Conduct appropriate engagement activities, such as focus group interviews, Town webpage, surveys, and community meetings, that foster **involvement and collaboration** with the public.
5. **Build a public engagement results summary** containing findings and results of the public engagement process and how feedback was incorporated into the code update.



Key Interest Groups and Participants

The Town will use multiple means of communication to educate, communicate, and encourage participation in the Middle Housing Code Update and will seek out the following participant groups:

Category	Participant Groups
<i>Residents:</i>	Homeowners Associations (Townhouse, Cottage, Condos) Mobile Home Community Retirement Community
<i>Housing Developers</i>	Cascade Custom Homes Eagle Building Company Habitat for Humanity of Island County Jade Construction Next Generation Construction
<i>Business Community:</i>	Coupeville Chamber of Commerce Coupeville Historic Waterfront Association Coupeville Employers and Local Workforce
<i>Elected and Appointed Officials:</i>	Town Council Planning Commission
<i>Non-Town Service Providers:</i>	Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue Puget Sound Energy Island Disposal, Inc.
<i>State Agencies:</i>	Washington State Department of Commerce Washington State Department of Ecology Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Washington State Department of Transportation
<i>Regional Agencies:</i>	Puget Sound Regional Council Puget Sound Clean Air Agency Island County Planning and Community Development Association of Washington Cities
<i>Local Governments:</i>	Island County Island County Housing Department City of Langley City of Oak Harbor
<i>Tribal Governments:</i>	Swinomish Tribe Tulalip Tribe
<i>Other Groups & Agencies:</i>	Coupeville School District Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve



Engagement Methods

Coupeville is committed to authentic public engagement and recognizes that it is an essential tool for successful code development efforts. Public participation efforts will be designed to actively seek out and engage community groups and populations that are historically under-represented in traditional planning processes, and ensure input is representative of Coupeville’s cultural and demographic diversity. Additionally, the process will gather feedback from developers who actively work in Coupeville or actively develop duplex or ADU units in the Puget Sound region to understand the minimum development conditions needed to build these forms of housing.

With the evolving factors around the COVID-19 pandemic, outreach is planned for both in-person and virtual options to provide accessible and equitable opportunities for all community members to contribute to the Middle Housing code update process.

Tools for Engagement

Middle Housing Code Update Webpage

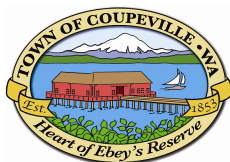
The Town of Coupeville will develop a project webpage within the Town’s website to maintain a calendar of public participation events and project documents. Atwell will prepare the materials to be posted on the Middle Housing Code Update webpage while Town staff coordinate updates to the webpage. These materials will include a project term glossary, information on various housing types, project timeline and steps, a project description, upcoming event posts, and opportunities to submit comments and questions to staff.

Community Survey

A survey will be developed to invite every Coupeville community member and/or property owner to provide their opinions and ideas. This will provide community members an opportunity to submit input on visual preferences, project concerns, and community priorities. This will be an online survey that will be posted on the Town’s website and other available online outlets. Paper versions of the survey will be distributed to residents in their water utility bills, during in-person events, and at Town Hall.

Focus Group Meeting

The focus group meetings will be geared towards collecting input on the updated code from developers. Gathering developer input will help ensure that the implemented code will create feasible opportunities for Middle Housing and ADU development in the Town. The focus group meeting will be hosted virtually and will focus on minimum requirements from the GMA, Middle Housing solutions, and barriers to development. An online survey will be distributed after the meeting to gather feedback from developers who cannot make the meeting.



Town Utility Bills and Town Newsletter

Coupeville will mail out information about the survey and code update in utility bills and the Town Newsletter. Atwell must have all materials submitted to the Town residents prior to the mailing of utility bills. Utility bills and the Town Newsletter are mailed together on the first of every other month (April, June, August, October, and December).

Planning Commission Meetings

Planning Commission meetings fall on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:00 PM in the Island County Commissioner's Hearing Room. Meetings are currently held in person. The Planning Commission shall participate by reviewing draft code and providing recommendations to Town Council for consideration.

Three Planning Commission events will occur to empower the commission to participate in the code development process. The first phase will occur on May 7th, 2024, and consist of one meeting to give an informational overview of the project intent, timeline, and work plan. The second phase will include two presentations oriented towards receiving direction from the commission. The first directional meeting is scheduled for June 4th, 2024, and will be oriented towards general desires for the code before input from the community or developers. The second directional meeting on July 2nd, 2024, will show engagement findings and find middle ground for final commission considerations on code development direction.

Public Hearing and Comment Periods

Community members will have an opportunity to provide comments and testimony directly to the Planning Commission and Town Council during the legislative process. In addition, both the Commission and Council accept comments at all meetings that pertain to items on that evening's agenda. The public hearing process will provide opportunities for the public to provide feedback on the draft code.



*Above: Coupeville Town Hall
Photo Credit: Town of Coupeville*



Exhibit 2: Engagement Process Chart

Opportunity Type	Virtual	In-Person	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Planning Commission meetings	X	X					
Public Hearing and Comment Periods		X					
Middle Housing Code Update Webpage	X	X					
Focus Group Meeting	X						
Community Survey	X	X					
Town Newsletter		X					
Town Utility Bills		X					

Goal of Engagement
Primary
Secondary
Tertiary



Engagement Approach Details

Community Survey

The community survey will serve to share information and request public feedback at an early phase. The survey will help participants understand “the why behind the what” and incorporate the community’s perspective into the code. Soliciting input from as many community members as possible allows the participants to understand the roots of any problems, who it is most affecting, and any changes to the code that can be made to maintain a vibrant resident community and economy.

One barrier to inclusive surveys is unnecessary jargon or convoluted questions. The community survey will be a simple tool, using multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. Questions will touch on siting, visual preference, and minimum development requirements. These questions will allow the responder to rank priorities, design elements, and offer opinions about what they like or dislike about specific code elements. Results will be summarized in the Public Engagement Summary.



Above: An aerial view of Coupeville. Everyone deserves the opportunity to evaluate how new forms of housing can fit into the community. Photo Credit: Town of Coupeville



Focus Group Meeting

The focus group workshop will provide information to the developer community about the goals, objectives, and development of the Middle Housing Code Update. This meeting will be advertised, and meeting materials will be available on the project website. Additionally, documents and a recording of the virtual presentation can be posted on the project webpage, allowing the community to revisit the meeting or attend after the fact if they could not make the initial meeting but would like to provide feedback and comments. An online survey will be distributed after the meeting as well to gather feedback from developers who cannot make the meeting.

Discussion Topics

After presenting an overview of the code update and required update elements, facilitators will provide the opportunity for questions and answers and will gather information from participants on topics such as:

- What are the most important issues to address in the code update?
- What are the barriers to development present in the code right now? Are there any constraints on development caused by local conditions?
- How do development conditions in Coupeville and on Whidbey Island differ from the region in general?
- What are existing points of contention between developers and the community?
- What development considerations should the Town make to encourage greater affordability to low- and moderate-income groups?
- Are there ways the Town can improve communication or enhance transparency on the development process?
- What attracts developers to the Coupeville area? How can the Town encourage greater interest in Middle Housing and ADUs?
- What suggestions do developers have on minimum design and development standards?



Decision-Making Process

Town staff and Atwell will coordinate with Town Council and Planning Commission to provide status updates and obtain feedback regarding the Middle Housing Code Update. This Public Participation Plan outlines two Planning Commission meetings and one Town Council workshop to discuss the project and receive input on the planning process. Once the code update is drafted, Planning Commission will review the code and provide a recommendation before its presentation to Town Council. Coupeville staff will provide updates to Town Council through memorandums, presentations, and other methods throughout the preparation of the updated town code.

Planning Commission Meetings

The Planning Commission will provide policy recommendations for the Middle Housing Code Update and will assist in ensuring the public is involved in the process. Planning Commission members will be notified of all community activities and events. All public workshops, hearings, and other activities with the Planning Commission will be noticed per the Town Code. The Commission will receive regular briefings on the update and will review all drafts on a section-by-section basis, providing opportunities for public comments.

The Planning Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Town Council and will provide recommendations to Town Council on the Middle Housing Code Update project. The Planning Commission will hold at least one public hearing to receive further public comment before providing a recommendation on the Middle Housing Code Update to Town Council.

Town Council Meetings

The Town Council will provide policy guidance and is the final decision maker on the Middle Housing Code Update. Council members will be notified of all public activities and events. All public workshops, surveys, hearings, and other activities with the Town Council will be noticed per town code. The Council will also receive periodic briefings throughout the update process and will review the Planning Commission's recommendations. The Council will hold a public hearing on the final draft of the update before taking final action on the Middle Housing Code Update. Legal notices for public hearings will be circulated ten (10) days in advance of the meeting.

Final decisions regarding the outcomes of the planning process will be made by the Town Council based on recommendations from Planning Commission and public input. The Town Council will review and discuss any recommended revisions. In addition, the Town Council will hold at least one public hearing to receive further public comment before adopting the Middle Housing Code Update.



Communications Plan

Techniques for public participation vary in scale, technology, structure, and timing. Community members are busy and active people and in the age of Covid-19, new innovative ways of communicating will be necessary. We will bring activities to places where people are already going and provide online platforms for public discussion. The Town recognizes the need to involve community members in a variety of outreach methods continuously throughout the update process.

The following tables provide lists of outreach methods and communication tools that will be used to foster broad and ongoing community involvement. These are not meant to be an exhaustive list, and if other processes are requested, the plan is meant to be flexible to accommodate those requests.

Table 1: Outreach Methods

<i>Public Meetings:</i>	Planning Commission and Town Council meetings will be held throughout the update process. Staff reports will include a combination of educational and technical information describing proposed code updates in addition to other project updates, such as public engagement summaries.
<i>Public Surveys:</i>	The Town will hold an online and paper public survey to gather public feedback on the Middle Housing Code update.
<i>Focus Group Meeting:</i>	An online developer focus group meeting will provide an opportunity for developers to provide input into the code update. A follow up survey will allow developers who couldn't make the meeting to give their input.
<i>Website</i>	The Town will develop a project page within the Town's website to maintain a calendar of public events and project documents.
<i>Public Hearings:</i>	Public hearings will be held with the Planning Commission and Town Council prior to adoption. Written, electronic, and oral testimony will be accepted at public hearings.



Table 2: Communication Tools

<i>Written Materials:</i>	Written materials will be accessible at Town Hall and will be shared during regularly scheduled Planning Commission and Town Council meetings.
<i>Coupeville Website:</i>	The Town's webpage will include access to all written materials and information regarding proposed amendments, meetings, events, and resources. This effort is primarily coordinated by the Town's staff with Atwell providing the resources.
<i>Social Media:</i>	Coupeville will use existing social media sites such as Facebook to notify the community about the Middle Housing Code Update project.
<i>Press Releases and Newspaper Articles:</i>	Town staff will provide legal notices as required by the Coupeville Town Code and will request that the local newspaper publish articles regarding the update at key points during the process.
<i>Utility Bill Notice</i>	A leaflet will accompany utility bills to inform residents of the ongoing code update process and accompanying survey. The notice will also outline the other ways that the public can engage in the planning process.
<i>Town Newsletter</i>	Information will be provided throughout the life of the project on the Town Newsletter and outline the other ways that the public can engage in the planning process.
<i>Translation Services</i>	The two most predominant non-English languages in Island County are Spanish and Tagalog. Materials should be coordinated to be translated and available upon request. The end of each document in English should describe materials being available in Spanish and Tagalog upon request.



Left: The Town Newsletter will be utilized to update residents on engagement opportunities and the overall project's progress.

Credit: Town of Coupeville

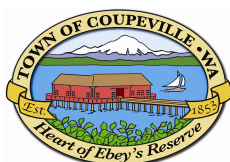


Table 3: Communication Objectives

Understand the barriers and constraints of developing Middle Housing in Coupeville.	Town and Atwell staff will identify the barriers and constraints developers vocalize and proactively address barriers to development of duplex and ADUs in the project. Collaboration between the community, decision bodies, developers, and staff will be weighed to find a suitable approach.
Incorporate commonly shared design considerations from the community into the town code.	Design criteria from the Ebey's Landing Historic District as well as community character will be incorporated into development standards. Community engagement will touch on preferred design approaches and visual preferences and will be vetted by Town and Ebey's Reserve staff.
Understand the community's goals for homeownership and stable housing opportunities.	The code and public engagement summary shall reflect community concerns and interests regarding homeownership and income level housing opportunities. The summary will explicitly define how feedback was integrated into the draft code.

Evaluation and Accountability

The overarching goal for the Coupeville Middle Housing Code Update is to align the Town Code with new legislative requirements and reflect the desires of the community it serves. Coupeville is committed to purposeful and equitable public participation efforts to include residents and property owners as full and equal partners in the Town's decision-making processes. Town staff and Atwell (the Town's planning consultant) will be responsible for gathering and disseminating the public's input to decision-makers (Planning Commission and Town Council). Engagement results will be provided to the public at large through the public engagement summary. Above all, the Middle Housing Code Update process will be transparent and collaborative with the community, ensuring that public input guides the update process.

As public participation ensues, comments and feedback will be compiled throughout the process and integrated into ongoing work. Staff will brief the Planning Commission and Town Council on the progress of the project, which will occur frequently throughout 2024 – 2025, as the project is in progress. Commission and Council decisions will be communicated to stakeholders and the General Public through the website, electronic/hard copy mailings, and local media outlets.



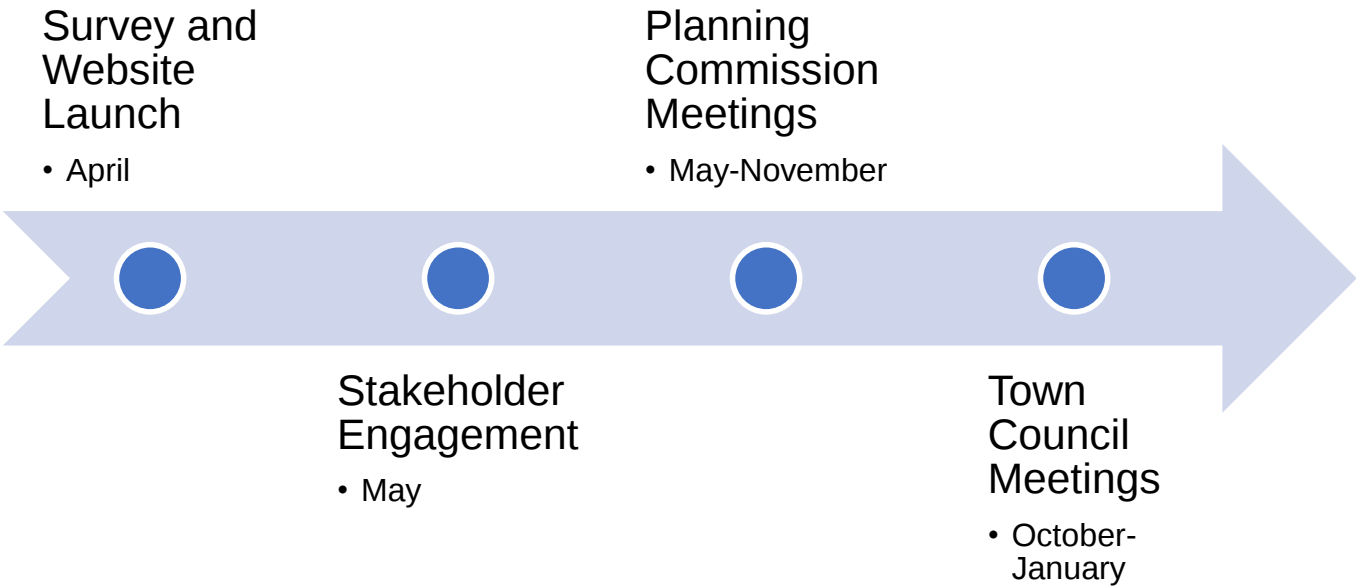
Public Involvement Evaluation

Evaluation of public involvement will be conducted on an ongoing basis, with changes made as necessary to this Public Participation Plan. Once public participation is completed, a full evaluation will be compiled so that clear connections can be made from public feedback to planning outcomes. Tools for evaluation will include:

- Informal feedback from focus groups;
- Short questionnaires following events;
- Planning Commission feedback following recommendation; and
- Team debriefs following meetings and events to discuss needed adjustments.

Schedule

It is the goal of Coupeville to adopt the updated Town Code by January 2025. Work shall be completed over the course of nine months using the following tentative schedule as a guide.



Appendix A: Rules of Engagement

Introduction

The purpose of establishing rules of public engagement is to ensure that public events and hearings are a safe space for everyone in the community to speak their mind and elevate their concerns in a civic, constructive manner. All participants are present because there is interest in maintaining the quality and functionality of the Town of Coupeville. Staff respectfully ask that the participants abide by the rules outline below.

Purpose

1. Our overall goal is to improve the quality of life, accessibility, equity, and inclusiveness of the Coupeville.
2. Town staff and consultants are present to help educate, inform, and seek guidance from the community.
3. The intent of public meetings and events is to create opportunities for all participants to share honest thoughts and opinions while being respectful and provide feedback in community problem solving.

Rules of Engagement:

- Engage staff and representational bodies with respect and intention.
- One person speaks at a time.
- Work collaboratively with the community.
- Listen to staff and participants with an open mind and consider different perspectives.
- Please do not interrupt staff or consultants when they are speaking.
- Ask questions to better understand anything that is unclear or troubling.
- Do not use expletives, insults, or aggressive tone of voice that are not appropriate or facilitate a constructive conversation.
- Public meetings are a space to discuss and evaluate topics. It is not an occasion to debate, advertise, or campaign for political opportunities.
- Maintain a civil distance from one another and avoid physically intimidating or crude gestures.
- Allow opportunities for everyone to participate and avoid governing the conversation or rob others of the time they need to share their perspective.
- Recognize there are additional opportunities to provide feedback outside of a public meeting. Please reach out to Town staff if you did not feel like you received an opportunity to comment on a particular topic.
- Input will be summarized and made available for broader public distribution. The information will not be attributed to any individual without participant's explicit consent.

