TO: Hood River Development Code Update Project Management Team

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RE: Hood River Phase 2 Public Engagement Plan

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Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of the Hood River Development Code Audit (Code Audit) is to identify inconsistencies with State land use law and existing City Comprehensive Plan policies, internal conflicts, as well as to develop a framework to amend Development Code provisions that need improvement or clarification. A primary goal is to make the development code more workable, clear, and objective. While not focused exclusively on housing, it is anticipated that this audit will lead to amendments that help the City ensure consistency with several recent State strategies and requirements to increase housing availability and affordability.

This Public Engagement Plan is part of the Code Audit, and its purpose is to outline the approach to achieve a thorough and effective engagement process for Phase 2 of the Hood River Code Audit and Update. Phase 2 of the project will be used to draft specific amendments to the Development Code to implement the recommendations from Phase 1. Phase 2 is expected to have a significantly more robust engagement process than Phase 1. This document describes the goals, metrics, tools, and major activities of providing information and engaging community members as a part of the process. This is intended to be a living document to refer to and update as needed throughout the project.

Engagement Goals

As noted above, this Engagement Plan is a living document that may be updated to adjust to changing conditions and needs as the project progresses. The Project Management Team (PMT), consisting of the consultant team and key City staff members, will use this document to measure the effectiveness of outreach efforts to ensure all key audiences are represented. These metrics will be periodically evaluated to respond to gaps in representation and assist the PMT on focused engagement strategies. Overall goals of the engagement process include the following:

- Identify barriers to participation and ensure an accessible planning process.
- Leverage local networks, community events and existing community engagement efforts and relationships.
- Identify direct and indirect impacts of the Code Update on members of the community, particularly people with lower incomes, people with disabilities, and Spanish speaking people and others with limited English proficiency.
- Conduct targeted efforts to reach Hispanic/Latino residents whose perspectives have often been missing in past planning efforts.

- Help community members better understand the Development Code Update process and why it is important that they stay informed or engaged. This includes why the City is undertaking the process and how the amendments are intended to achieve City wide goals.
- Promote two-way communication by providing summaries, updates, and useful information to report back to the community and decision makers about how their input was used to shape the Code Update and the overall process.
- Ensure transparency throughout the process.
    - Clearly communicate to community members how feedback will be used to help inform and shape the code update.
    - Explain how comments have been addressed previously in the Code Audit process and incorporated in drafting the recommended amendments.
- Understand the perspectives of specific stakeholder groups, including those which may have had less influence traditionally in Hood River.
- Prepare engagement and informational materials using plain language and graphics to help clearly describe and illustrate code requirements and concepts, as well as land use planning and permitting processes.

Key Audiences

In addition to the general public, the following are key audiences for our outreach efforts.

- Latinos and other communities of color.
- Communities with limited English proficiency.
- Accessibility advocacy organizations and individuals experiencing limited mobility and disabilities.
- Builders and developers, including those who develop at a range of sizes and scales including Affordable Housing advocacy groups and builders.
- Partnering public agencies who engage in the development process, help provide public services and facilities, and generally support community and economic development goals.
- The Hood River Mayor, City Council and Planning Commission.
- City Landmarks Review Board.
- Various Advocacy and Interest Groups.
- Senior or youth community members or groups

Key Information

The following are key points of information that this project needs to communicate and inquire about. While these points include some technical language, the messages and questions for the community will be simplified as much as possible to aid in clear understanding.

- What is the Development Code?
- Why is the code being amended?
- Who has been impacted negatively from the Code and how might people benefit from changes to it?
- Why is the code being amended now?
- How were code sections identified for amendment?
- How can I be involved in the discussion?

Engagement Metrics

The PMT will track the following metrics to help evaluate the success of this Engagement Plan and its strategies. The PMT will pause between major phases of the work to reflect on the available metrics and adjust as needed to provide robust opportunities for the identified key audiences in the community to participate in the process and help shape its outcomes.

Accessibility

Metrics may include use of or availability of translation/interpretation; use of a broad array of methods that allow different audiences to participate in meetings or hearings, including historically underrepresented groups; and scheduling engagement activities at various times and in accessible locations for ease of participation, using both digital and non-digital methods.

Extent or Reach

Metrics may include recruitment data for focus groups; registration and attendance records for meetings and hearings to confirm participation of key audiences; number of survey responses via all methods and languages; and digital media outreach analytics.

Diversity and Equity

Metrics may include for the range of perspectives and backgrounds of people who participate in focus groups; the extent of participation of different demographic groups in online surveys; documentation of how the perspective of different community or demographic groups differ from the broader public; and input from organizations engaging with diverse populations or promoting equitable solutions and policies.

Follow-through and Feedback Loops Completed with Stakeholders

Metrics may include engagement summaries shared with stakeholders and/or the general public as appropriate; and stakeholder and public feedback on summaries and deliverables received and incorporated as appropriate.

The most useful metrics in each category will be determined by the PMT at the first review point and then tracked for progress through the project.

Engagement Tools

Community engagement will be spread throughout all phases of the project to gather community input and integrate community needs, priorities, and feedback into every step of the planning process.

Project Website

The project website will be hosted by the City in the Planning Department section of the site. The project website will be used as an outreach tool to connect online with audiences throughout each phase of the amendment process. The website will provide a broad spectrum of information including information on the planning process, background information, a project timeline, project documents, announcements about upcoming meetings and engagement activities, a summary of Frequently Asked Questions, ability to be added to a contact list, options for submitting comments or questions, and links to online surveys or other platforms.

The webpage will include information in English and Spanish or allow for convenient translation of English to Spanish and will be updated approximately monthly to incorporate updated information or new project deliverables. In general, MIG staff will provide content for the website with input and support from City staff who will be responsible for also posting information to the website. The website will also include a project email address for community members to submit general comments or questions.

Planning Commission Meetings

The role of the Hood River Planning Commission is to make recommendations to the City Council for proposed Development Code amendments and other legislative matters. The Planning Commission will receive briefings of the work in process and provide comments on key deliverables or milestones. At least three Planning Commission briefings are anticipated. At these meetings the PMT will provide their perspectives on proposed approaches to updating and improving specific aspects of the code.

MIG will work with City staff to prepare presentation materials reviewing the draft Code Update, conduct presentations at the Planning Commission meetings as well as follow-up discussions, and help to identify any follow-up actions.

City Council Meetings

The role of the City Council is to approve the amended Development Code. The City Council will have regular opportunities to guide the process, participating in project events, receiving briefings of the work in process, and providing comments on key deliverables or milestones. At least three Council meetings are expected to address the Development Code in some fashion. The meetings will update the Council on project progress and solicit questions and comments for the next phase of the project, including ideas on the emerging amendments.

As with the Planning Commission meetings, MIG will assist with preparing presentation materials and in conducting presentations and discussions. MIG will also work to follow up on any actions discussed during the meeting.

Interested Party and Community Group Meetings

MIG and City staff will conduct targeted meetings with development community representatives and other community members and interested parties to review specific code update recommendations and/or provisions, particularly those that may impact development feasibility, impacts on surrounding uses, efficient development review and permitting, and similar issues. A total of up to 10 small group or one-on-one meetings are assumed. Meetings will be conducted by telephone or online meeting platform. Potential stakeholder groups may include the following:

- Developer or builders
- Landmarks Review Board
- Mid-Columbia Economic Development District/Chamber of Commerce
- Mid-Columbia Housing Authority/Columbia Cascade Housing Authority
- Mid-Columbia Community Action Council
- Hood River County
- Port of Hood River
- City of Hood River Public Works & Engineering, Building, Fire, and Police Departments
- Spanish-speaking community members (up to two meetings)

The PMT will refine this list and agree on a final list of stakeholders.

The meetings with Spanish speaking residents will be organized and facilitated in collaboration with a third-party organization (e.g., The Next Door, Inc.). That group will solicit and confirm participants, work with the PMT to prepare meeting materials, facilitate the meetings in Spanish, and summarize the results.

Social Media Communications

City staff will use its newsletter as well as its social media platforms to provide information about the project, including key milestones and opportunities to engagement in outreach activities. MIG will coordinate with the City to provide content for social media communications (approximately monthly on average) that will help to share information about the project and spark conversations.

Online Survey and/or Comments

MIG will prepare and work with City staff to conduct an online survey and/or provide other opportunities for people to submit comments online. If a survey is undertaken, it will focus on several key code topics or concepts, including options for addressing these topics. This could be done through a single survey or through a series of very short surveys, each corresponding to a specific code-related question or topic, with just one to three questions. Whichever approach is used, the City will publicize the survey(s) through a variety of channels, including the City's website and project webpage, interested parties email lists, social media platforms, requests to partner agencies to notify their constituents, and presentations to or meetings with community organizations. The survey will be conducted in English and Spanish. MIG will prepare a draft survey questionnaire; work with the City to determine the appropriate platform to host the survey; host the survey if that is deemed to be the best approach; and summarize the results. In addition to or in lieu of a survey, the City can continue to provide a basic comment feature on the project Webpage to allow people to provide comments in a more free-form fashion about any code topic or issue of interest or concern. The project team can review and respond to these questions through an FAQ section on the project Webpage.

Short Videos

The team will prepare up to three short videos which will be posted on the project Webpage. One video is expected to describe how the Development Code generally works, how it impacts community members, how it is implemented. Other videos would describe specific code issues, how they are may currently present barriers to community growth or vitality, and how they are anticipated to be addressed.

Note: The project team does not recommend conducting large-scale public meetings as part of this process. Those types of meetings are not anticipated to be effective in either explaining the Code Update process or in soliciting constructive feedback on the process. Other tools in this Engagement Plan are expected to be more effective in that regard.

Roles and Responsibilities

City Roles and Responsibilities

- Scheduling and making logistical arrangements for briefings with the PC and CC
- Publicizing and encouraging participation in all engagement activities
- Creating a project webpage within the City's website and posting project information.
- Tracking and responding to inquiries from community members regarding project issues, documents, and activities.

MIG Roles and Responsibilities

- Convene regular project management meetings to discuss project progress, current work efforts, and next steps.
- Prepare presentation materials, conduct, and summarize results of interviews or meetings with interested parties and community groups.
- Prepare for, conduct and summarize results of community meetings.
- Prepare content for project webpage.
- Prepare content for social media communications.
- Prepare, conduct and summarize results of online survey.
- For staff-level review, provide materials with three (3) days turn-around.
- For the City's Planning Commission and City Council:
    - Agenda items, provide information 10 days in advance of the meeting to allow staff three days, and the Commission/Council one week of advance review.
    - Presentations, provide three days in advance of the meeting.

Accessibility and Accommodations

MIG strives to take an inclusive and universal approach to accessibility in community engagement. Throughout this process, we will be working to reduce the barriers people encounter and engage more people in community conversation about the Development Code.

Building from here, MIG will ask at every opportunity if there are barriers to participating in the process that we can remove. Depending on responses to this question, we may seek to provide alternate formats of materials, online access to meetings, translation or interpretation services or other accommodations within the resources of the City and project.