

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

### Purpose:

The proposed Public Participation Plan is intended to be used in the application for an amendment (rezoning) to the official zoning map of Cherokee County.

### Background:

The rezoning process, by nature, often creates a contentious atmosphere for all parties involved. This is primarily because of lack of meaningful interaction between the parties. This, therefore, creates an “information void”, leading to a misunderstanding of the issues at hand among the involved parties.

### Goals of the Plan:

In light of the above observations, the proposed Public Participation Plan is designed to facilitate on-going communication among the proponents of the rezoning proposals, the adjoining property owners, interested citizens, elected officials and staff throughout the application review process. Specifically, the Plan is aimed at ensuring the following:

That the adjoining property owners and interested citizens have adequate opportunity to learn about applications that may affect them and to work with applicants to resolve concerns at an early stage of the process.

The applicants pursue early and effective citizen participation in conjunction with their applications, giving them the opportunity to understand and try to mitigate any real or perceived impacts that applications may have on the community. The proposed plan is not intended to produce complete consensus on all applications, but to encourage applicants to be good neighbors and to foster an atmosphere for informed decision making.

### Contents of the Plan:

At a minimum, the Public Participation Plan shall include the following information:

- Which property owners, interested parties, political jurisdictions and public agencies may be affected by the application.
- Which property owners, interested parties, political jurisdictions and public agencies may be affected by the application.
- How those interested in and potentially impacted by an application will be notified that an application has been made.
- How those interested and potentially impacted parties will be informed of the substance of the development proposed by the applicant.
- How those potentially impacted and interested parties will be afforded an opportunity to discuss the applicant’s proposal with the applicant and express any concerns, issues or problems that they may have with the proposal, in advance of the public hearing.
- The applicant’s schedule for completion of the Public Participation Plan process.

### Minimum Public Notification Target Area

The minimum public notification target area for the public participation meeting will include:

- (1) All properties that lie within 750 feet of the legal boundary of the subject property.
- (2) Any homeowners associations which represent subdivisions or properties, that falls within the 750 foot boundary.
- (3) Other interested parties who have requested that they be placed on the Interested Parties Notification List, to be maintained by the Planning and Land Use Office.

These requirements will apply, in addition to the formal notification provisions typically undertaken by the County. The basis for this target area is to provide an expanded notification area beyond the legal notification required for rezoning requests (adjacent properties) to enhance public participation opportunities.

### Public Participation Meeting and Report:

**It is mandatory for the rezoning applicant to schedule and hold a public participation meeting. The public notification letter sent shall identify the date, time, and place of the meeting.** In order to formalize the Public Participation Plan process, the applicant shall provide a written report on the results of the public participation meeting **to the Planning and Land Use Office one (1) week prior to the Planning Commission Work Session.** This report will be attached to the Planning and Land Use Office's Technical Staff Report, which is prepared for each rezoning case and is sent to the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners. At a minimum, the Public Participation Report shall include the following information:

- a. Details of methods of applicant used to involve the public, including:
  - (1) Dates and locations of all meetings where citizens were invited to discuss the applicant's proposal;
  - (2) Content, date mailed and numbers of mailings, including letters, meeting notices, newsletters and other publications;
  - (3) Where property owners and interested parties receiving notices or other written materials, are located; and
  - (4) The number of people that participated in the process.
- b. A summary of concerns, issues and problems expressed during the process, including:
  - (1) The substance of the concerns, issues and problems;
  - (2) How the applicant has addressed or intends to address concerns, issues and problems expressed during the process; and
  - (3) Concerns, issues and problems the applicant is unable or unwilling to address and why.
- c. Submittal Requirements
  - (1) The Public Participation Plan shall be required for all rezoning applications that require the submittal of a site plan. This includes all office, commercial, multi-family residential, industrial, and single family residential rezoning requests that consist of five (5) or more lots. (This

excludes rezone requests to R-80, R-60, R-40, R-20, and R-15 for minor subdivisions of 2 to 4 lots that do not create new public streets.)

(2) A site plan and public participation report will also be required for AG rezoning requests proposing any commercial agriculture activity. (e.g. Breeding of livestock, sales of produce). This would exclude and AG rezoning request that is proposed for non-commercial agricultural uses. (e.g. livestock for personal pleasure, single family home).

(3) The applicant will be required to submit a certificate of mailing for those property owners within the public participation target area.

(4) The applicant may submit a Public Participation Plan and begin implementation prior to formal application at his discretion; however, implementation shall not begin prior to a pre-application meeting and consultation with the staff of the Planning and Land Use Office.

d. Meeting Requirements and Protocol:

- 1) The applicant or authorized representative shall be available to answer questions of the general public for at least 30 minutes.
- 2) The meeting location shall be held at a public facility within the community for which the applicant is seeking re-zoning request.
- 3) The meeting shall not begin prior to 6:30 p.m. on the evening the meeting is to be held.
- 4) The applicant or authorized representative shall provide the following material for the general public to view:
  1. Cherokee County Future Development Map.
  2. Site plan proposed on application.
  3. Contact information (name and phone number and/or e-mail address) for the applicant or authorized representative.
  4. Procedure and contact information provided by Cherokee County Planning and Land Use Department.  
<http://www.cherokeega.com/ccweb/departments/pz/zoningprocess.pdf>
  5. The application as submitted.

Notice of the actual meeting shall be submitted to the Cherokee County Planning and Land Use Department to be kept in the re-zoning file.

Conclusion:

These are just minimum requirements, prepared in the hope that applicants will reach out further. This plan is not put in place to ensure that the citizens' needs or demands are met entirely. The plan does, however, envision an interactive process whereby applicants and citizens treat each other honestly, fairly and with respect and defuse the contentious nature of the rezoning process. Emerging out of the process should be a better understanding of the issues and, therefore, an atmosphere for informed decision making.