

James City County 2045 Comprehensive Plan

Public Engagement and Communications Plans

DATE: August 30, 2019

This document supports the public engagement and communications work for the update to the James City County Comprehensive Plan. It will be a living document that will be refined and executed collaboratively by the Planning Team (consultant team and County staff) and the Community Participation Team (CPT) members throughout the process. This document is organized into two main sections:

1. **Public Engagement Plan** – Part 1: Public Engagement Plan sets out the framework for public engagement and the general approaches that will be used to engage the public, gather input, and guide decision-making based on community feedback in different phases of developing the plan. Individual engagement activities will be developed collaboratively by the Planning Team and the CPT during the project.
2. **Communications Plan** – Part 2: Communications Plan defines the key messages that will be used by project ambassadors as we seek to educate the public about the Comprehensive Plan update and to promote input opportunities throughout the process. This section sets out key messages to be used in project communications and specific approaches for publicizing the process.

Both plans were developed using the knowledge and ideas shared at the CPT meetings held on August 19th (#1) and 26th (#2).

Part 1: Public Engagement Plan

Public Engagement Objectives

The following public engagement objectives will guide outreach efforts. They can be used throughout the process to evaluate public engagement success. These objectives are based on the “Defining Engagement Success” inputs provided by CPT members at the August 19th CPT kickoff meeting.

- All community members will be given the choice and access to engage in the planning process through multiple activities.
- Educational opportunities will advance the community’s understanding of critical planning issues.
- Opinions shared during the process will be representative of the community and its diversity of residents.
- Participants’ opinions will be respected, well documented, and will form the basis for policy direction in the Plan.
- Public engagement efforts will inspire trust and continued interest and involvement in the process.
- Clear documentation, project publicity, and engagement activities will articulate how public inputs have been used to inform policy direction throughout the process.
- Community engagement will be record breaking and surpass statistics of past planning efforts.

The Public Engagement Framework

The JCC Comprehensive Plan public engagement framework is organized into four phases: (1) Listen and Envision, (2) Explore and Test, (3) Decide and Affirm, and (4) Plan and Implement. This framework is designed so that each phase will build off the progress made in the previous phase. Each of the three later phases will include an opportunity for sharing and confirming the synthesized and themed inputs from the previous phase and will provide explanations to residents on how these inputs will be used. The Planning Team and CPT will work collaboratively to evaluate and synthesize inputs and report on progress made during each phase.

- 1. Listen and Envision** - The Listen and Envision phase focuses on educating residents on the existing conditions and planning influences that will likely have an impact on the County's future and provide residents with an opportunity to respond to these influences. Informed by trends and conditions, participants will engage in activities that reveal their aspirations and ideas for the future. Community inputs will be used to develop the vision and goals for the Comprehensive Plan and will help inform development of growth alternatives being tested in Phase 2.

Timeframe: August 2019 – January 2020 | Aligns with Laying the Foundation and Scenario & Model Building Phases of Project Work

- 2. Explore and Test** – The Explore and Test phase will build off the Listen and Envision phase by confirming the Comprehensive Plan draft vision and goals and exploring growth alternatives for JCC. The growth alternatives will provide an opportunity to explore and test different land use approaches for implementing plan goals and learning about the tradeoffs and choices associated with future alternatives and related fiscal, transportation, and community infrastructure impacts. Participants will be given opportunities to express their preference for a future outcome and interest in supporting different land use approaches.

Timeframe: February 2020 – October 2020 | Aligns with Alternative Futures Phase of Project Work

- 3. Decide and Affirm** – The Decide and Affirm Phase will build off the Explore and Test phase by confirming the reactions to growth alternatives and related land use policy direction. It will build off this work by offering opportunities for residents to react to policy approaches and gauge community willingness for new implementation strategies. These inputs will be used to inform development of the Plan's policy direction and implementation actions.

Timeframe: November 2020 – April 2021 | Aligns with Affirming the Direction Phase of Project Work

- 4. Plan and Implement** - The Plan and Implement Phase is the culmination of all previous phases. It will focus on developing the JCC Comprehensive Plan and sharing the draft Plan through the public hearing process with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Timeframe: May 2021 – September 2021 | Aligns with Implementation Phase of Project Work

Phase 1: Listen and Envision

- 1. State of JCC Video** – The Planning Team with input from the CPT will develop a short video message that will educate residents about critical facts and trends important to JCC's future. This could include demographic information, growth trends and projections, and even include key results from the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Survey recently conducted. This video will provide a preamble to the Comprehensive Plan process and could be launched prior to the kickoff summit.

2. **Public Intercept Events** – Planning Team and CPT members will set up booths at widely attended entertainment venues or community events or where targeted efforts are needed (for example, WATA buses or Human Services Building lobby) to educate participants about the plan and encourage them to attend the summit or complete a Vision and Values questionnaire. Trivia boards and other fun activities can be included to engage participants within short time spans. Paper questionnaires can be provided to those not comfortable participating online. The specific events and venues are to be determined. Incentives such as small giveaways (popsicles for “pop” up events, candy, or tchotchkes) can be used to encourage participation.
3. **Meeting in a Box** - Planning Team and CPT members can present the State of JCC Video or provide short presentations to community groups, HOAs, and other organizational meetings to generate interest in the process, drive participants to the project website, and encourage participation at the summit and through the online Vision and Values questionnaire. Paper questionnaires can be provided to those not comfortable participating online. The specific meetings are to be determined.
4. **JCC Summit on the Future** – Serving as the community kickoff event for the planning process, the JCC Community Summit on the Future will provide participants with an opportunity to learn about the value of a Comprehensive Plan and key trends and issues that may impact the future of James City County and to provide reactions to these considerations. Activities will be focused on advancing the understanding of community interests and will build off the recently conducted Comprehensive Plan Citizen Survey. Exercises will be designed to help inform development of the Plan’s vision and goals. An exit questionnaire will track critical information about participants to identify any groups to target for future outreach. A raffle or door prize from local establishments can be used to break up the meeting and create a fun incentive that can be advertised to gain participation at the workshop.
Target Date: November 2019 | Potential activities could include presentation on key trends and influences, keypad polling exercise to test reactions to trends, small group discussion sessions on vision/goal topics, mapping exercises to identify key place to maintain and change, vision wall, JCC trivia station, and targeted station activities. If technology and budget permits, the presentation and polling could be simulcast to different venues and through different media (Channel 48, web) to live audiences.
5. **Vision and Values Questionnaire** – Launched on the heels of the JCC Summit on the Future, the Vision and Values Questionnaire will provide an opportunity for residents that couldn’t attend the Summit to share their voice and ideas. This online questionnaire will align with questions asked at the Summit and will augment Summit inputs. The questionnaire will be open for approximately one month following the summit. The questionnaire design will include traditional questions and multiple-choice answer options. Incentives can be used such as local restaurant gift card giveaways to encourage participation.
6. **Community Listening Sessions** – Organizational leaders with an interest in JCC’s future will be given an opportunity to present to the CPT on a specific question posed by the CPT as well as additional information they feel is critical to share regarding the future of the County. Presenters will apply to the Community Participation Team and will be selected based on time/slot availability.

Phase 1: Listen and Envision will be memorialized through a summary report that will provide themes from the public input, documentation of activities conducted, and the participation achieved, and will include an appendix of verbatim comments and reactions from the public for transparent documentation. The report will discuss how these inputs will be used to develop the vision and goals for the plan. The report and a short

news story on the phase will be uploaded to the website at the completion of the phase. Interim results will be prepared at key milestones during the phase to evaluate engagement progress and identify hard-to-reach groups in need of targeted engagement efforts.

Phase 2: Explore and Test

1. **[Insert Comp Plan Brand] Video** – The Planning Team with input from the CPT will develop a short video focused on highlighting the results from Phase 1: Listen and Envision and encouraging participation in Phase 2. This video could include short clips from the JCC Summit on the Future, from public intercept events, Meeting in a Box opportunities, or interviews with CPT, Planning Commission Working Group, and Board of Supervisor members. It could highlight the key outcomes from Phase 1 and the Plan’s direction for vision and goals and a call to action to participate in Phase 2.
2. **Public Intercept Events** – Planning Team and CPT members will set up booths at widely attended entertainment venues or community events or where targeted efforts are needed (for example, WATA buses or Human Services Building lobby) to educate participants about the plan and encourage them to attend the assembly and complete an Exploring Future Alternatives questionnaire. Inputs on alternative futures and other fun activities can be included to engage participants within short time spans. Paper questionnaires can be provided to those not comfortable participating online. The specific events and venues are to be determined.
3. **Meeting in a Box** - Planning Team and CPT members can present the **[Insert Comp Plan Brand]** Video or provide short presentations to community groups, HOAs, and other organizational meetings to generate interest in the process, drive participants to the project website, and encourage participation at the Exploring Future Alternatives Assembly or through the online Exploring Future Alternatives questionnaire. Paper questionnaires can be provided to those not comfortable participating online. The specific meetings are to be determined.
4. **JCC Exploring Future Alternatives Assembly** – Serving as the 2nd public workshop, the JCC Exploring Future Alternatives Assembly will launch the Explore and Test phase with the community. Growth alternatives will be presented and opportunities will be provided to gather reactions to the alternatives. Exercises will be designed to engage participants in guiding the Plan’s policy direction and future land use plan. An exit questionnaire will track critical information about participants to identify any groups to target for future outreach.
Target Date: August 2020 | Potential activities could include educational presentation on growth options, station materials to educate further about growth alternatives and gather reactions to choices, visual preference survey to identify preferences for design of places and neighborhoods
5. **Exploring Future Alternatives Questionnaire** – Following the Exploring Future Alternatives Assembly, the Exploring Future Alternatives Questionnaire will provide an opportunity for residents that couldn’t attend the Assembly to share their voice and ideas. This online questionnaire will align with questions asked at the Assembly and will augment Assembly inputs. The questionnaire will be open for approximately one month following the Assembly. The questionnaire design may include use of a tailored platform, such as Metroquest, for conveying growth alternatives in a user-friendly manner.

Phase 2: Explore and Test will be memorialized through a summary report that will provide themes from the public input, documentation of activities conducted, and the participation achieved, and will include an appendix of verbatim comments and reactions from the public for transparent documentation. The report

will discuss how these inputs will be used to develop the policy direction and future land use element of the plan. The report and a short news story on the phase will be uploaded to the website at the completion of the phase. Interim results will be prepared at key milestones during the phase to evaluate engagement progress and identify hard-to-reach groups in need of targeted engagement efforts.

Phase 3: Decide and Affirm

- 1. Affirming Our Direction Video** – The Planning Team with input from the CPT will develop a short video focused on providing the highlights of Phase 1: Listen and Envision how that was used to inform engagement activities and community feedback in Phase 2. This video could include short clips from the JCC Summit on the Future, the Exploring Future Alternatives Assembly, from public intercept events, Meeting in a Box opportunities, or interviews with CPT, Planning Commission Working Group, and Board of Supervisor members. It could highlight the key outcomes from Phases 1 and 2 and the Plan’s policy direction and a call to action to participate in Phase 3.
- 2. Public Intercept Events** – Planning Team and CPT members will set up booths at widely attended entertainment venues or community events are needed (for example, WATA buses or Human Services Building lobby) to educate participants about the plan and encourage them to attend the Affirming Our Direction Public Open House or complete an Affirming Our Direction questionnaire. Policy priority activities or implementation idea activities can be included to engage participants within short time spans. Paper questionnaires can be provided to those not comfortable participating online. The specific events and venues are to be determined.
- 3. Meeting in a Box** - Planning Team and CPT members can present the Affirming Our Direction video or provide short presentations to community groups, HOAs, and other organizational meetings to generate interest in the process, drive participants to the project website, and encourage participation at the open house and through the online Affirming Our Direction questionnaire. Paper questionnaires can be provided to those not comfortable participating online. The specific meetings are to be determined.
- 4. JCC Affirming Our Direction Public Open House** – Serving as the 3rd and final public workshop, the JCC Affirming Our Direction Public Open House will confirm inputs on growth alternatives and related Plan policy directions. It will build off this work by offering opportunities for residents to react to policy approaches and gauge community willingness for new implementation strategies. Exercises will be designed to help inform development of the Plan’s policy direction and implementation strategies. An exit questionnaire will track critical information about participants to identify any groups to target for future outreach.
Target date: March 2021 | Potential activities could include stations designed by key topics or comprehensive plan elements that highlight new policy direction recommendations, keypad polling to gauge interest in implementation actions, prioritization exercise to identify most important ideas to be supporting through future strategic planning efforts
- 5. Affirming Our Direction Questionnaire** – Following the Affirming Our Direction Public Open House, the Affirming Our Direction Questionnaire will provide an opportunity for residents that couldn’t attend the Open House to share their voice and ideas. This online questionnaire will align with questions asked at the Open House and will augment Open House inputs. The questionnaire will be open for approximately one month following the Open House. The questionnaire design will focus on gauging support for critical policy directions and implementation ideas.

6. **Public Comment Periods at Planning Commission Working Group Meetings** - Community members can provide comments on agenda topics at the Planning Commission Working Group meetings.

Phase 3: Decide and Affirm will be memorialized through a summary report that will provide themes from the public input, documentation of activities conducted, and the participation achieved, and will include an appendix of verbatim comments and reactions from the public for transparent documentation. The report will discuss how these inputs will be used to develop the plan elements and implementation strategies in the Plan. The report and a short news story on the phase will be uploaded to the website at the completion of the phase. Interim results will be prepared at key milestones during the phase to evaluate engagement progress and identify hard-to-reach groups in need of targeted engagement efforts.

Phase 4: Plan and Implement

1. **Implementing Our Plan Video** – The Planning Team with input from the CPT will develop a short video focused on providing the highlights of Phases 1 and 2, and community feedback in Phase 3. This video could include short clips from the JCC Summit on the Future, the Exploring Future Alternatives Assembly, JCC Affirming Our Direction Public Open House, from public intercept events, Meeting in a Box opportunities, or interviews with CPT, Planning Commission Working Group, and Board of Supervisor members. It could highlight the key outcomes from Phases 1, 2, and 3 and identify the Plan’s “big ideas” and a call to action to participate in Phase 4.
2. **Public Intercept Events** – Planning Team and CPT members will set up booths at widely attended entertainment venues or community events to educate participants about the plan and encourage them to review the draft Comprehensive Plan. The specific events and venues are to be determined.
3. **Meeting in a Box** - Planning Team and CPT members can provide short presentations to community groups, HOAs, and other organizational meetings to generate interest in the process, drive participants to the project website, and encourage participants to review the draft Comprehensive Plan and provide their support and opinions at public hearings. The specific meetings are to be determined.
4. **Public Hearings** - Community members can provide comments at the Planning Commission and Boards of Supervisors public hearings.

Phase 4: Plan and Implement will be memorialized through a summary report that will provide themes from the public input, documentation of activities conducted, and the participation achieved, and will include an appendix of verbatim comments and reactions from the public for transparent documentation. The report will discuss how these inputs were used to develop the final public hearing draft of the Plan. The report and a short news story on the phase will be uploaded to the website at the completion of the phase. Interim results will be prepared at key milestones during the phase to evaluate engagement progress and identify hard-to-reach groups in need of targeted engagement efforts.

Part 2: Communications Plan

Key Messages for Planning Process

The following planning process messages will be used on the project website and in project communications such as news releases and social media posts. These messages are based on the feedback provided through the “Branding in a Word” exercise conducted with CPT members at the August 19th CPT kickoff meeting. Words included in parentheses below were CPT members ideas for positive project impressions.

- ***This is an important opportunity to shape our community’s future.*** The planning process will result in policies and actions that will guide change in our community over the next 20 years. (Opportunity, Future, Beyond, Shape)
- ***This process will boldly focus on educating residents and listening to their opinions.*** This process will educate residents so that they can make informed choices about the County’s future. (Educate)
- ***County leaders are listening and want to hear from you.*** This process will be carefully facilitated so that a kind and thoughtful conversation about the future of James City County can be accessed by all. (Listening, Open, Participate, Connect, Access)
- ***All opinions and ideas will be considered, and policy direction will be driven by community support.*** Ideas and opinions will be documented and themed throughout the process. Community support will be the foundation for policy direction. (Inclusion, Involvement, Participate)
- ***The new Comprehensive Plan will result in real action.*** The new Comprehensive Plan will include an actionable work plan that will be incorporated into the County’s Strategic Planning and budgeting process. (Actionable, Realistic, Workable)

Targets for Communication and Outreach

This Communications Plan is focused on anyone who lives, works, goes to school, shops, plays, or visits James City County. Specific methods will be used to attract a diversity of participation that reflects the entire County. This will include strategies for hard-to-reach populations and those who wouldn’t typically get involved in a community planning process. These strategies will be focused on making sure the word is being spread to different demographic groups, community groups and organizations throughout all the geographic areas of the town.

Communications Overview

There are two aspects of ensuring a successful public engagement process from the standpoint of spreading the word and ensuring everyone in the community is aware of the opportunities to get involved.

Communications/Publicity (creating general awareness)

- Creating a project brand and identity
- Developing publicity materials (posters, postcards, business cards, etc.)
- Leveraging media assets (ads, press releases, etc.)

Outreach (personal invitations and word of mouth)

- Identifying opportunities
- Creating best methods for communication
- Energizing networks - people/organizations
- Personally inviting people to participate in the process

Outreach is best organized through three different but overlapping aspects.

1. **Geographic:** Outreach efforts will need to ensure widespread coverage from a geographic standpoint.
2. **Demographic:** The outreach plan will be calibrated to the demographics of the town. In addition a concerted effort to engage and identify under-represented groups will be undertaken.
3. **Civic:** The community’s network of civic organizations will also be used to spread the word. Sporting, recreation, school, and community events could be good targets for poster and postcard distribution as well as key gathering locations (e.g., retail areas, restaurants, parks, etc). Opportunities to speak and/or leverage advertisement (e.g., newsletters, newspaper, social media channels) should also be sought.

Communication Channels

1. **Project Web Page.** The project webpage, [insert URL], is a platform for sharing information about the overall process, accessing specific engagement activities, sharing project news as well as online activities.

County: Develop website architecture, review content, manage website throughout the process

Consultants: Develop new website content throughout the process

Community Participation Committee (CPT): Share website URL with contacts and networks. Encourage people to visit the website. Include URL on all correspondence related to project. Make suggestions about additional content that would be helpful for residents to have access to.

2. **Social Media Platforms.** James City County’s Social Media assets will be used throughout the process. These assets include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Other community Facebook pages (i.e. Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance, etc.) should be alerted of the process and encouraged to “share” the County’s posts. The process will utilize the hashtag #[insert branded hashtag].

County: Post and manage social media

Consultants: Assist with creating post content

Community Participation Team (CPT): “like” or follow the County’s social media pages and share through personal or professional networks any posts about the planning process.

3. **Print Publicity Materials.** A series of print publicity materials will be designed to advertise the process and invite people to participate (project business cards, flyers, postcards, and posters). An electronic copy of all materials will be made available on the project website and all CPT members are encouraged to share with others in the community.

County: Print and hang posters and distribute flyers in all County-owned facilities

Consultants: Design and produce all print publicity pieces, including digital PDF versions

Community Participation Team (CPT): Distribute print materials to networks (hand out business cards at community events, distribute at places of work/worship, neighborhoods, local businesses, community bulletin boards, etc.)

4. **Promotional Items.** T-shirts, pins, magnets, and other items will be designed and created to increase visibility of the process.

County: Design, order, and distribute material

Consultants: Review if necessary

Community Participation Team (CPT): use promotional items when serving as a Plan Ambassador

- 5. Media.** Media assets, both online and print, will be utilized in the form of press releases and letters to the editor. Newspaper and online ads might also be utilized depending on the level of attention by the media and general awareness through other efforts.

County: Draft and distribute press releases.

Consultants: Assist with drafting key messages and concepts for print ads.

Community Participation Team (CPT): Write letters to the editor.

- 6. Email.** A project-specific email distribution list will be built throughout the process. This list will be built through an opt-in form on the project website as well as through the sign-in sheets collected at the public events.

County: Review content, manage distribution list, and send out all project specific email campaigns.

Consultants: Create project specific email campaigns.

Community Participation Team (CPT): Forward all email campaigns to networks. Include [insert brand] in email signature.

- 7. Mailings.** Local mailings through Williamsburg-James City County public schools, utility bills, or other opportunity can include postcards advertising upcoming events and the project website. Need to consider efficacy of this communication channel given the results of past efforts.

County: Review content, manage distribution list, and send out all project specific mailed campaigns.

Consultants: Assist with creating content.

Community Participation Team (CPT): Provide ideas for mailings.

- 8. Other County Communications.** To advance public engagement efforts, the County may choose to utilize other JCC communication channels, including the James City County podcast on Soundcloud and YouTube, JCC TV Live Stream and On Demand, Nextdoor app, Notify Me® texts or emails, and local radio opportunities.

County: Create, manage and execute communication content

Consultants: Assist with developing content

Community Participation Team (CPT): Forward communications to networks.

- 9. Public Intercept Events and Community Meetings.** Civic organizations and community events will be leveraged to spread the word. These could be in the form of a community wide event where flyers could be posted out and/or an announcement made. Smaller-scale civic organization meetings could also be utilized, where a simple presentation could be made using Meeting in a box and postcards distributed during a monthly meeting. Civic organization newsletters and mailings could also be utilized as a channel for distributing information about this process.

County: Meet with county departments and community organizations, attend community events to work at a booth

Consultants: Create resources for community events or meetings (Meeting in a box)

Community Participation Team (CPT): Attend community events to work at a booth, distribute cards, make announcement etc.